

This is an excerpt from *The Experience of Recovery* by LeRoy Spaniol and Martin Koehler. Copyright © 1994. Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation, Trustees of Boston University. All rights reserved under International Copyright Convention. No part of this text may be reproduced, transmitted, downloaded, or stored in or introduced into any information storage or retrieval system, in any form or by any means, whether electronic or mechanical, now known or hereinafter invented, without the written permission of the Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation, Boston University.

The title graphic consists of a rectangular box with a thin black border. Inside the box, the words "The Experience of" are written in a white, cursive script font. Below this, the word "RECOVERY" is written in a large, bold, black, serif font. The background of the box is a light gray gradient.

The Experience of **RECOVERY**

Edited by

LeRoy Spaniol and Martin Koehler

Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation
Sargent College of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences
Boston University

Contents

- 1 Introduction
LeRoy Spaniol and Martin Koehler
- 3 They Said I Would Never Get Better
Andrea Schmook
- 6 Poem: Up in the Morning
Moe Armstrong
- 8 My Life with Schizophrenia
Barry McQuillin
- 13 The Challenge of Recovery
Anonymous
- 21 Poem: Transportation
Moe Armstrong
- 22 Mental Illness and How I Overcame It
Diane Zagrodnik
- 23 My Road to Recovery
Martin Koehler
- 25 Coping and Recovery
Anonymous
- 27 Keeping Time in Chaos
Gloria Dickerson
- 30 Overcoming the Black Garden
Gaston Cloutier
- 37 Poem: Sounds of Songs
Moe Armstrong
- 38 A Death-Rebirth Experience
David Alexander
- 42 Lithium's Other Face
Robert Berman
- 48 Poem: Jack Kerouac Didn't Have a Case Manager
Moe Armstrong
- 50 My Struggle for Freedom
Dana Lynn
- 52 What Happened and How "What Happened" Got Better
Moe Armstrong
- 54 Recovery: The Lived Experience of Rehabilitation
Patricia E. Deegan
- 60 On My Own: A Personal Journey Through Madness and Re-Emergence
Rae Unzicker
- 64 Transforming Depression into Creative Self-Expression
Betty F. McDermott
- 68 My Self Story
Barbara E. Watson
- 77 The Risks and Rewards of Advocacy
Richard Weingarten
- 80 From Both Sides: The Experience of a Psychiatric Survivor and Psychotherapist
Virginia R. Wentworth

Introduction

LeRoy Spaniol and Martin Koehler, Editors

Mental illness and the negative personal and societal attitudes surrounding mental illness often leave those who suffer from the illness disconnected from themselves, from others, from their environment (i.e., living, learning and working), and from meaning and purpose in life. This sense of disconnectedness may extend even to other people with mental illness. Yet it is peers who have lived with this experience who can often provide the modeling or mentoring needed for recovery from the devastating effects of the illness and of negative personal and societal attitudes.

This anthology of self-reports written by people with mental illness was organized to help overcome the sense of disconnection many people with mental illness experience. It was organized to provide models and mentors for how others have struggled, coped, and developed a more solid sense of themselves, their relationships to others, to their living, learning, and working environments, and to meaning and purpose in life. We believe these stories will inspire hope in people with mental illness.

This anthology was also written for families of people with mental illness. Families have their own experience of the mental illness of a family member. They feel their own sense of devastation as they grieve for the suffering their family member has to endure and for their family member's struggles to reclaim their lives. They deal with their own anger and frustration at the lack of resources to adequately assist their family member in their

recovery. We have written this anthology so they also may learn from the recovery experiences of people who have lived with this illness. We believe these stories will inspire hope in families.

Finally, we have prepared this anthology for mental health professionals. Unfortunately, many professionals in the core mental health disciplines are not provided the essential information, skills, attitudes, or support, to assist people with mental illness in their recovery process. Because professional training programs frequently fail to address these issues, mental health professionals are often left with feelings of helplessness and hopelessness in their work with people with mental illness. We believe these stories will inspire hope in mental health professionals.

We have prepared this anthology so it can be used as a companion book to *The Recovery Workbook*. While *The Recovery Workbook* provides people with mental illness with information, strategies, and skills for working on the various tasks of recovery, this anthology describes the personal experiences of people in their own recovery process.