

The **Leader's Guide**
Recovery **Workbook** **THIRD EDITION**

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*Practical Coping
and Empowerment Strategies
for People with Psychiatric Disability*

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The Leader's Guide Recovery Workbook

THIRD EDITION



Practical Coping and Empowerment Strategies for People with Psychiatric Disability

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CHAPTER 1 Introduction

Purpose of the Leader's Guide

The *Leader's Guide* is intended to guide leaders (consumer/survivor, professional) in using the *Recovery Workbook* to facilitate the recovery process for people with psychiatric disability. Recovery is not something that can be forced on a person. Although ultimately the process is in the hands of the person who is recovering, it is a process that can be encouraged and facilitated. The leader, therefore, is a guide. This guidance is carried out by providing people with the knowledge, skills, and support that can help them to rebuild the personal, social, environmental, and spiritual connections that are so frequently devastated by the illness, by stigma (negative attitudes, beliefs, and practices), and by multiple and recurring trauma.

This third edition of the *Leader's Guide* provides ideas and strategies that the authors have found to be useful after extensive pilot trainings of the *Recovery Workbook*. We encourage leaders to test out these ideas and strategies and to rely on their own past experience in training people. Be creative and flexible in how you use the material. We do not assume that what we present is the best way, but only a way that has worked for our students with psychiatric disability. Feel free to add your own content and exercises as the need arises in the class.

Benefits of Class Membership

In recruiting students it is sometimes useful to be able to explain the benefits of being in the recovery class. Orientation can be given individually or in an introductory class. The orientation gives people an opportunity to become familiar with the leaders and the content and process of the class. It also provides an opportunity to decide not to take the class. We strongly believe the recovery class should be voluntary and not a requirement. The benefits include:

- Acquiring information about recovery;
- Learning from watching others (modeling, mentoring);

- Reducing the sense of isolation;
- Learning to feel hopeful, to feel there is a way;
- Getting feedback on how we view ourselves and others;
- Learning new ways of thinking, feeling and acting; and
- Having a place to go where we can feel successful.

*General Guidelines
for Leading the
Recovery Workshop*

Time frame. We have piloted this class in 30 weekly 2-hour sessions for a total of 60 hours. This seems to be a good time frame within which to create the readiness for beginning the recovery process or for enhancing it in those who have already begun it. Other time frames might work better in other settings; however, it is important not to compress the learning experience too much. The recovery process needs ample time. A sample class outline is presented in *Table 1* (page 4).

Stay focused. It is important to stay focused on the general content of the section you are studying. At the same time it is important to be responsive to the expressed experiences, needs, and wants of the students. We know some things about recovery from psychiatric disability and from stigma, yet there is still much to be learned. Your students will be your best teacher. As in all teaching situations students can get distracted from the topic of the class. If the discussion or questions begin to go too far afield, gently bring the discussion back to the topic. Getting distracted is normal. Helping students to refocus on the topic is good teaching. One technique might be to ask the person how what he or she is saying relates to the topic of discussion.

Do not assume responsibility for other students. Remember that we do not know how to lead someone's life better than they do, especially if we think we do. Leaders and students should not assume responsibility for changing the students. This is something only they can do. We can act responsibly by bringing our own knowledge, skills, support, and hopefulness to the teaching process. Hopelessness is challenged by helpfulness. Helping people to be helpful to themselves, to feel empowered, creates hopefulness.

How to deal with "giving advice" to other students. Rather than giving other students advice, we ask our students to do two things:

- 1) Tell the person what you have done that has been helpful to you in this situation.
- 2) Tell the person the feelings that have arisen in you because of what they have said. Just listening to what others are saying is difficult, yet this is what most people need, i.e., to be listened to. This will be discussed further in the text.

Recruitment. We have recruited students to our classes at Boston University through mailings to self-help organizations, family groups, clubhouses, and mental health professionals. Our primary criteria for acceptance has been the willingness to attend and to make a commitment to the class. Level of disability or type of mental illness have not been used to eliminate anyone. We have also not attempted any particular mix in the class. Our students have included both men and women, people who are homeless, people with dual diagnoses, people from a variety of minority backgrounds, people who came from the hospital on passes, and professionals with psychiatric disability. Also, we have led classes in programs such as clubhouses or community residences. In these instances, recruitment might be limited to individuals from these programs.

Planning. The leader and co-leaders meet 15 minutes before the class to plan the class. They decide what will be covered and who will lead what section. They also discuss any issues arising in the class. The leaders also meet for 15 minutes after the class to debrief what happened and to support one another.

Training of leaders. It is very useful if the primary leader has had some teaching or group work background. The Recovery Workshop is not therapy but does require some teaching or group process skills. Some of these skills are listed in the Appendix.

Supervision of leaders. The leaders provide supervision for each other in their planning meetings. It is helpful if the leaders also have an opportunity to have supervision from someone else within the program who understands psychiatric disability and the teaching process.

The workshops have been very moving experiences for us as leaders. We feel confirmed in our belief in the capacity of people to heal themselves. We hope your experience will be similar to ours.

*Beginning the
Recovery Workshop*

Leader's Introduction

For the purpose of these instructions the authors assume that one professional leader and two co-leaders with psychiatric disability are involved. We have found it helpful to have a male and a female co-leader to provide mentoring and modeling to the students. The leaders introduce themselves, commenting on how they became involved in recovery training and saying a few words about how this class began and evolved. The leaders ask the students to say their name and anything else about themselves they want to add. One helpful technique is to have students identify something they enjoy doing.

Table 1: *Sample Class Outline* In addition to following the exercises in the *Recovery Workbook* as suggested below, assign a reading from *The Experience of Recovery* at the end of each class, beginning with the second class.

Session	Focus of Class from <i>Recovery Workbook</i>
1	Chapter One: Introduction
2	Chapter Two: Recovery
3	Chapter Two: Recovery (<i>cont.</i>)
4	Chapter Two: Recovery (<i>cont.</i>)
5	Chapter Two: Recovery (<i>cont.</i>)
6	Chapter Two: Recovery (<i>cont.</i>)
7	Chapter Three: Increasing Knowledge and Control
8	Chapter Three: Increasing Knowledge and Control (<i>cont.</i>)
9	Chapter Three: Increasing Knowledge and Control (<i>cont.</i>)
10	Chapter Three: Increasing Knowledge and Control (<i>cont.</i>)
11	Chapter Four: Managing Life's Stresses
12	Chapter Four: Managing Life's Stresses (<i>cont.</i>)
13	Chapter Four: Managing Life's Stresses (<i>cont.</i>)
14	Chapter Four: Managing Life's Stresses (<i>cont.</i>)
15	Chapter Four: Managing Life's Stresses (<i>cont.</i>)
16	Chapter Four: Managing Life's Stresses (<i>cont.</i>)
17	Chapter Five: Enhancing Personal Meaning
18	Chapter Five: Enhancing Personal Meaning (<i>cont.</i>)
19	Chapter Five: Enhancing Personal Meaning (<i>cont.</i>)
20	Chapter Five: Enhancing Personal Meaning (<i>cont.</i>)
21	Chapter Five: Enhancing Personal Meaning (<i>cont.</i>)
22	Chapter Five: Enhancing Personal Meaning (<i>cont.</i>)
23	Chapter Six: Building Personal Support
24	Chapter Six: Building Personal Support (<i>cont.</i>)
25	Chapter Six: Building Personal Support (<i>cont.</i>)
26	Chapter Six: Building Personal Support (<i>cont.</i>)
27	Chapter Six: Building Personal Support (<i>cont.</i>)
28	Chapter Seven: Setting Personal Goals
29	Chapter Seven: Setting Personal Goals (<i>cont.</i>)
30	Chapter Seven: Setting Personal Goals (<i>cont.</i>)
31	Graduation

Class Expectations

Agreements. Ask students to take a beginning step in taking control of their lives by agreeing to the following:

1. Ask students to make an agreement to come to each class even if they do not want to for a particular class. Although, they may not want to come, they can still come. Because recovery is a process and not an event, ask them to make a commitment to the process of the class so they can experience this recovery process fully.
2. Ask students to arrive 15 minutes prior to the class so they can greet and share with one another. Remind them that the class will start promptly and end at the designated time.
3. Ask students to agree to be available to start on time and to remain throughout the class.
4. Ask students to agree to put their feelings into words and not into actions. This gives students permission to express their feelings and provides safety and protection for them in the classroom.
5. Ask students to agree to protect the names and identities of their fellow class members. As in any class, it is important to discuss what happens in the class, but ask students not to link the content of the discussion to any one person. This provides anonymity to the students and permission to be open in their discussion of their recovery process. If the class is part of an agency, the boundaries of what will be shared with whom should be discussed.
6. Ask students if there are any other agreements that would help them to feel safe in the class.

Time frame. Each class will last about 2 hours with a break in the middle. This amount of time will give the students sufficient time to work through the material for each class. We ask that students come 15 minutes early to say hello to other students. We have coffee, soda, and some snack available to the students.

Educational/nontherapeutic focus. Explain that the focus of the class will be on the teaching of new information and skills. The class is not intended to be group therapy. Although teaching is therapeutic in a broad sense, the leaders will not focus on individual therapeutic issues. Leaders should avoid interpreting what people share. Listen to their stories and comments during the class. Focus on the present and the future. The educational focus can be enhanced by meeting around a table rather than in a circle. Circles remind people of therapy.

Design of the class. Tell the students that this class combines didactic presentation and experiential learning. They will be asked to partici-

pate in a variety of activities, including group discussion, sharing of personal experiences, exercises, and periods of quiet reflection.

Responsibility. Let the students know that it will be their responsibility to create value and meaning for themselves from this class. The leaders will not be able to do this for them.

Availability of leaders. Inform the students that the leaders will be available for brief individual contact as the need arises. Individuals requiring or wanting more personal time can negotiate it with the leaders. Referral to other resources may be made if needed or requested by a student.

Commitment to each other. Ask students to be available to each other for support and sharing over the course of the class. After the first few classes we ask students for their permission to have their telephone numbers listed in a class roster. Each student is asked to call at least two other students during the week to say hello. This increases their feeling of connectedness. Leaders and co-leaders also list their work and home phone numbers. We wait several classes to do this in order to give the students a chance to get to know one another and to feel safe in the class.

Personal journal. Ask students to keep a personal journal during the class. Ask them to set aside 15 minutes each day and to use a time of the day when they have energy. Encourage them to focus on what is happening in their lives, their accomplishments, and what they have done for themselves.

Anonymity agreement. Tell students that they need to agree to protect the names and identities of other class members. It is OK to talk about what happens in class. But they should not link what happens to any particular person. This agreement is necessary for building trust and frankness.

Workbook. Ask students to sign their name on the cover of the workbook. The workbook is intended to serve as their personal record. Ask students to agree not to look at another's workbook. Emphasize that they do not have to share anything they write in their workbook that they don't want to. This helps students to feel free to be open and honest in recording experiences and feelings.

Purpose of the Class

Have students read the purpose section. Ask if there are any questions or comments. Highlight key points.

Goals of the Class

Ask a student volunteer to read the goals section. Ask if they have any questions or comments. Highlight key points.

Teaching note. We have found it useful to have a student volunteer to read one paragraph at a time from the workbook. This gives the students a chance to speak even if they don't participate actively. It also helps students who may not be able to read the text because of language or learning difficulties to participate in the class. When the paragraph has been read, ask what thoughts or feelings came to the students about the paragraph. This discussion can go on for quite awhile depending on the responses. The leaders may also add their comments on the paragraph after the students have commented. Also, we usually do not ask specific students to share their responses. We tend to wait until they are ready to participate.

Suggestions for Getting Started

Have students read the "suggestions" section. Ask if they have any questions or comments. Highlight key points.

Practice Exercises

Practice Exercise 1.1 ► *Relaxation exercise.* Ask each student to put down anything they might be holding and to get into a relaxed position. Tell them they can close their eyes, or keep them open, whichever is most comfortable for them, and ask them to take several deep breaths. Ask them to then breathe at their normal pace for several minutes. Then, ask them to focus their attention on the various parts of their body as described in the exercise. Tell them that if thoughts come into their mind, to gently return their attention to their body. Continue this for about 10 minutes.

Suggestions for debriefing. Ask students to share their reactions with the class. Ask what it was like for them. Explain that focusing on the body can be very relaxing and that it may also have important physical benefits such as lowering heart rate. Stress can cause shallow breathing. Taking a few deep breaths can prepare people for the stresses they may experience in the class. Relaxation also helps people to let go of what they have been doing prior to the class and to focus their attention on the current task. Acknowledge that some people might find an "activity" more relaxing. People are different—each individual needs to learn what works best for him- or herself. Ask students what is relaxing for them.

Practice Exercise 1.2 ► Ask students to complete *Practice Exercise 1.2* by themselves. It should take about 5 minutes. When completed, ask students to find one other student with whom to share their responses. This encourages students to get to know one another and builds connectedness

skills. Each subsequent exercise should be shared with a new person so each student gets to meet each other student one-on-one. When completed, ask students to share their responses with the class.

Suggestions for debriefing. The primary function of the leaders during debriefing is to hear what people are saying and to respond to and clarify feelings and content. They do not need to solve the issues or problems. Solutions will evolve out of the process for both the leaders and the students. Comment that most people already do things for themselves, but when people feel stressed, they often ignore those things that take care of themselves best—just when they need them most. It is important for people to take care of themselves—to make a habit of it. Ask students what they can do every day that would be relaxing. What is something special they can do for themselves this week? Take some time to discuss the “authors’ comments.”

Practice Exercise 1.3 ► Ask students to complete *Practice Exercise 1.3* by themselves. It should take about 5 minutes. When completed, ask students to share their responses with the class.

Suggestions for debriefing. Ask students to share what they would like to change with the class. Comment that these may be modified as the class progresses.

Closing

Remind students to set aside 15 minutes each day for their personal journal. For homework, ask students to do one thing for themselves each day (from *Practice Exercise 1.2*). Other homework can be provided based on your experience with the needs and wants of the class. Indicate that the session is over. If any work remains, begin the next session where you ended. Say good-bye.

Teaching note. We end each class after the 2 hours. We do not try to cover any particular amount of material but go with the pace of the class. At the end of each class we give the students a homework assignment based on the content of the day, and at the end of the second class, we assign a reading from *The Experience of Recovery*. At the beginning of each class we ask students to say their name, report on their homework, and bring up anything left over from the previous class. We then have them discuss their reactions to the article assigned from the previous week. Then, we move into the text where we left off the past class. Some classes have found it useful to read some of the self-reports from *The Experience of Recovery* in the class itself—going through it paragraph by paragraph.