

Recovery & Rehabilitation



CENTER for PSYCHIATRIC REHABILITATION

Sargent College of Health
and Rehabilitation Sciences

Boston University

RECOVERY & REHABILITATION

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The Recovery Center

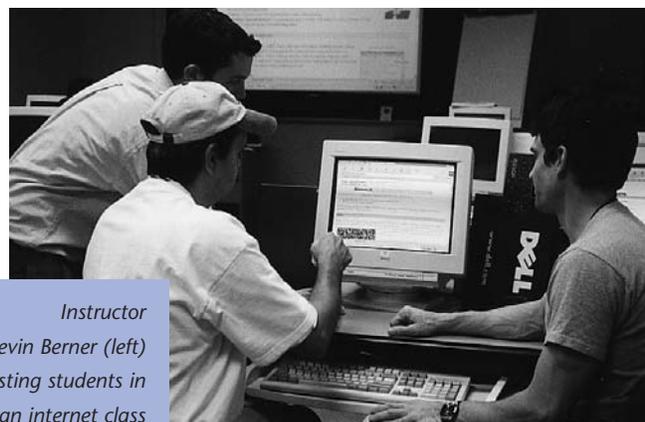
In February 2000, the Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation at Boston University launched an innovative pilot program to assist people with psychiatric disabilities in their journey of recovery. This program, The Recovery Center, is a natural synthesis of the services already available at the Center, such as Individual Rehabilitation and Recovery Services, one-to-one services that address work, school, and wellness issues; and Training for the Future, an intensive twelve-month computer training and employment program for individuals who desire an office career in computers. The Recovery Center offers education and personal support through the collaborative efforts of devoted staff members; recovery educator and author Mary Ellen Copeland; the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission; and Boston University's Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance program.

The concept of recovery is rooted in consumers' experiences and their articulation of what has helped them to heal. Only in the last decade, however, has the mental health system acknowledged that people can—and do—recover from serious psychiatric disability. While there is no consensus on the definition of recovery, people describe it as a process of empowering individuals with hope and self-esteem to find new meaning and purpose in their lives. Recovery does not imply curing the mental illness, but learning to work within and beyond the limits of the disability so that individuals' personal rights of friendships, homes, families, satisfying jobs, access to education, and decent pay can become realities.

The Recovery Center supports this process of empowerment and aims to enhance each person's ability to function more successfully and independently in the personally valued roles he or she has chosen, and in all of the environments in his or her life. It "instills the concept that people can begin

to recover not just through individual therapy or medication or self-help, but also by learning skills that apply to every aspect of their lives," says Larry Kohn, Director of Development. Students have the opportunity to engage in courses that strengthen the mind-body-spirit connection that is often disrupted by the experience of mental illness. They are supported by The Recovery Center staff members, many of whom are consumers themselves.

Through the generous support of the Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation, The Recovery Center can presently provide this groundbreaking program at no cost to its students. In exchange for enrollment, students participate in an in-depth evaluation of The Recovery Center, funded by a five-year federal research grant from the National Institute on Disability and



Instructor Kevin Berner (left) assisting students in an internet class offered through the education and training tract of The Recovery Center.

Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) and the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS). Using a management information system, this eval-

uation examines the multidimensional nature of psychiatric rehabilitation to determine if the combination of alternative wellness interventions with the traditional services of rehabilitation has a positive impact (contributes to greater functional recovery) on vocational, psychosocial, and wellness outcomes for persons with psychiatric disability. The knowledge obtained

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Rehabilitation
Recovery

The Recovery Center courses are based on the fundamental rehabilitation value that satisfying work, supported education, spirituality, and physical health are essential components of the recovery process. The Recovery Center uses an adult educational model to offer people with psychiatric disabilities educational opportunities to strengthen and broaden their knowledge of the physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual practices that may support their journey of recovery.

Fall 2000 courses include:

Work Tract

Classes in this tract include Coping at Work and Exploring Your Vocational Potential.

New! The Decision to Work: What about Social Security provides information on the rules and regulations of Social Security to teach students how to improve their advocacy.

Wellness Tract

Classes in this tract include Personal Fitness; Healthy Lifestyles for Men; Healthy Lifestyles for Women; InHarmony Hatha Yoga; Building Your Wellness Recovery Action Plan; Meditation.

New! In Dancework for the Soul, students can explore movement and space while connecting with their body, spirit, and the community.

New! Wu Style Tai Chi Short

Form—Part 1 of 2 employs the art of Tai Chi to increase and balance the body's energy, calm the mind, enliven the spirit, and remove unconscious triggers that predispose people to experience psychiatric symptoms.

Personal Development Tract

Classes in this tract include Communication and Friendships; Communicating with Your Whole Self; Opportunities Workshop; Readiness Workshop; Supported Education Program Workshop.

New! Connectedness: Some Skills for Personal Growth examines the relationship between personal growth and connectedness with oneself, with others, with their environments, and with a larger purpose in life; and it teaches the skills to strengthen personal relationships.

New! Introduction to Helping Skills is a one-hour lecture/discussion and one-hour role-playing course that teaches the basic helping skills of connecting and problem solving for students who are interested in becoming a more effective helper or for a career in human services.

New! Readiness Workshop is a more in-depth exploration of the Opportunities Workshop, meeting for six two-hour sessions, to determine individual readiness for change. This workshop is developed and presented by the Mental Health Consumer Partnership Program in Cambridge, MA.

New! Supported Education Program

Workshop addresses the purpose and benefits of supported education, using the Choose-Get-Keep process, while providing a forum where students can interact, support, and encourage others interested in pursuing further education.

Education and Training Tract

Classes in this tract include Introduction to Computers.

New! The Internet: Episode II is an intermediate internet course for students who have taken Introduction to the Internet; it introduces the skills of downloading images and files, multimedia, and e-commerce safety.



Instructor Joseph Wyse offers assistance in The Recovery Center's Tai Chi class.



Cheryl Gagne, (left) Assistant Director of Services, with students Barbara Grace and Robert Eaton.

Student Reflections...

"A year ago, I started on my journey of recovery. I am an alcoholic, a drug addict, and a nicotine addict. I survived all three. I have been in deep depression my whole life, as long as I can remember. I am a survivor, I don't die easy. I had already lived fifty years in agony....I have been isolated my whole life. It's been like walking down a silent corridor, I am on one



side and everyone else is on the other side, but all I can do is look, I can't communicate with them at all. My feelings were never validated. When I came to The Recovery Center, I was hop-

ing...all I had was hope. I came here and I found people who are sensitive to my feelings, I found people who tell me that what I feel has meaning and is real....I am in an atmosphere where I can trust to communicate these feelings. I am living in the world of mental illness and the people at the Center are looking into that world. The Recovery Center has been a catalyst in helping me communicate and live and trust in the world again....Living life has been a torment, The Recovery Center has given me hope that I can make the next step in a life that has a bit of comfort and caring."

—Robert Palmer

"This is a bold, wonderful, esteem-giving program. It's the best thing I've ever done to try to help myself overcome mental illness.... it's such a relief to have found a program that gives me not only a sense of purpose, but an opportunity to take a proactive stance in my own recovery."

—Michelle Martinez

"The Recovery Center is the missing next step in the mental health system. The current system creates dependency....Staff members are so limited in existing programs that one must act out in order to get attention. The Recovery Center's staff makes the time to hear about [your] needs before they become overwhelming problems. A person requires support during the entire recovery process.

The Recovery Center's emphasis is on wellness and health. Other programs do not provide you the opportunity to take an active role in your own treatment. I ignored my own health problems to the point of being at major risk of having a stroke.

Thanks to the Center's health and fitness programs, I have the motivation to keep doctors' appointments and take my medications. I have lost fifty pounds in five months. I have never been healthier in my whole life.



...People around me are shrinking. I no longer speak to people's ties. I'm standing taller and prouder... I'm looking people straight in the eye. I've made friends with my peers, something that has been impossible for me my whole life. This is a significant improvement for someone who has been a shut-in his entire life."

—Robert Eaton

"The Recovery Center staff are warriors compassionately helping us fight for the life, freedom, and victory of our spirit....They have a commitment to being educators and facilitators, of 'getting out of the way' so that the spotlight stays on our values and our empowerment."

—Shanti



Students and staff from The Recovery Center pose for a picture on the Boston University campus.

"The Recovery Center is the missing next step in the mental health system."



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will enhance the ability of rehabilitation professionals to provide services that promote an integrative recovery of the mind, body, and spirit of the individual.

The Recovery Center offers a multitude of choices for the different paths people select in their healing process. The majority of The Recovery Center students are “matriculated students,” which requires a two-year commitment; participation in an evaluation that includes interviews every six months by Recovery Center research staff; enrollment in three to four Recovery Center classes per semester; and participation in a Recovery Workshop, the core recovery course originally developed by Leroy Spaniol, Martin Koehler, and Dori Hutchinson. Students select an advisor who provides them with support and guidance during their involvement with The Recovery Center. They receive support as needed, ranging from assistance with choosing classes to meet their goals, to receiving wake-up calls that help them to get to class.

Holistic in its breadth, The Recovery Center places considerable emphasis on educating consumers about the role of healthy lifestyles in the recovery process. Students have access to fitness, nutrition, and exercise facilities at Boston University, along with coursework in the specific tracts that adhere to their unique path of recovery.

Additional Resources about Recovery

For more information about recovery, you can visit the Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation's website at:

<http://www.bu.edu/sarpsych>, where you will find abstracts of articles from the *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal* and ordering information for the following recovery publications:

- *The Recovery Workbook* by L. Spaniol, M. Koehler, and D. Hutchinson (Available in English and Spanish.)
- *Leader's Guide: The Recovery Workbook:* by L. Spaniol, M. Koehler, and D. Hutchinson
- *The Experience of Recovery*, edited by L. Spaniol and M. Koehler

Additional publications used in The Recovery Center are the following books by Mary Ellen Copeland, available at:

<http://www.MaryEllenCopeland.com>.

- *Wellness Recovery Action Plan*
- *The Loneliness Workbook*
- *The Worry Control Workbook*
- *Healing the Trauma of Abuse: A Women's Workbook*

For information about The Recovery Center

For information about The Recovery Center or to receive an application, please contact:

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