



RECOVERY ORIENTED LANGUAGE

Why is recovery oriented language important?

- Intentionally or not, language communicates collective meaning, attitudes, expectations, and actions of a society in both positive and negative ways.
- We should be striving to be:
 - Respectful and non-judgemental,
 - Hopeful and committed to the potential of every individual and their recovery journey.

Recovery oriented language:

- Is reflective of what other messages we may be sending,
- Is reflective of how others might understand what we are saying/writing/thinking,
- Conveys a sense of hope and potential for the individual,
- Conveys an expectation for recovery and progress,
- Is person centred, respectful, and empowering.

For more information about **Recovery Oriented Language** or to request a presentation about mental health, stigma, recovery oriented language, or suicide awareness, contact:

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Recovery oriented language:

Is person centred

- "People with mental illness" vs "The mentally ill".

Is not discriminatory or insulting

- "He is not himself" vs "He is acting crazy".
- "She is experiencing hallucinations" vs "She's lost her mind".

Doesn't equate diagnosis with identity

- "She has schizophrenia" vs "She is schizophrenic".
- "His name is Jack" (no mention of his mental illness) vs "He's bipolar".

Emphasizes abilities over limitations

- "They are committed to psychotherapy" vs "They refuse to take medication".
- "She feels she can use her coping skills to manage the illness" vs "She is resisting additional treatment".

Doesn't imply that people who recover are an anomaly

- "They are moving along in their recovery journey" vs "They actually recovered from schizophrenia!".

Doesn't sensationalize

- "She is living with anorexia" vs "She is a victim to her anorexia".

Doesn't equate suicide as a crime or as a success

- "He died by suicide" vs "He committed suicide".
- "She attempted to take her own life" vs "She had a failed attempt at suicide".
- "He suicided" vs "He was successful at suicide".

Doesn't minimize, stigmatize or promote difference

- "I like order" vs "I'm really OCD about that".
- "That frustrated me" vs "That made me crazy".
- "It changes often" vs "It is really schizoid".

* Adapted in part from Recovery oriented language guide, (2013). Rozelle, N.S.W.; Mental Health Coordinating Council.