



THE ABC'S OF MENTAL HEALTH: ONE CLIENT'S GUIDE TO RECOVERY

Appropriate – Much as I rebel against the idea, it serves me well to act appropriately at all times. Like it or not, we are judged by what we say and what we do.

Balance – Maintain balance. It's the middle of the road, not the extremes that lead to mental health.

Commitment – Commitment gives us power to make things happen in our lives. Make a commitment to yourself: I will do everything it takes to work my way back to mental health.

Down – It's natural to feel down at times. Learn the cycles of your illness and know that when you're up, "This too shall pass." And when you're down, "This too shall pass."

Eat – Eat balanced and nutritious foods. Bodies need "fuel" to go on.

Fun – Plan for fun in your life so you will have something to look forward to on a daily basis.

Gratitude – Make a "gratitude list" of the things you are thankful for. Read it over when you feel the need to be uplifted.

Happiness – I once thought that I could never again experience happiness. I was wrong!

Integrate – Integrate what you experienced with the person who you are today. For me that included accepting the fact that mental illness was part of my experience and making necessary adaptations in my life to accommodate that reality.

Joy – Find your unique talents and use them to create joy in your life and in the lives of others.

Key – I no longer believe that a single key will be found to unlock the mysteries of mental illness. Rather, many keys will be found and I can choose to use those, which help me to unlock the mysteries of my many-faceted self.

Love – Ask yourself, am I acting from love or fear? Then choose to act from love.

Mental Illness – Mental Illness is what I have, not what I am.

Negative – What we think does make a difference. We must use our cognitive powers wisely, choosing to fill our minds with positive rather than negative thoughts and ideas.

Open – Be open to new experiences and ideas. One never knows what gifts they will give or receive.

Persist – Persist and keep on going, day after day, one day at a time. As Winston Churchill said, "Never, never, never, never, never, never, never, never give up!"

Quiet – Take time to be alone and experience the quietness of your soul.

Reality – Dare to see life as it really is giving up false notions of how life “should” be. Look reality straight in the eye and face it.

Spiritual – Discover your spirituality. Having a reliable belief system removes a great deal of stress from life.

Time – Time is the only thing you own. Use it wisely by scheduling your days and weeks.

Understand – Seek to understand yourself, your illness, and your life. Self-awareness leads to greater capabilities and successes.

Victim – Move away from thinking of yourself as a victim and towards thinking of yourself as a creative participant in your own life.

Well-being – Your own well-being is a priority in your life. But don't forget you live in a world of other people and their well being is as important to them as yours is to you.

X – “X” marks the place to begin your own recovery process. The time is now!

Yes – Say “yes” to healthy, positive choices in your life.

ZZZZZZZ – Get plenty of sleep on a regular schedule. Your body needs to renew itself at night so it can tackle the challenges of the new day.

-Jeanette Keil