

Selecting Stories

Contributions will be carefully considered before placing on the website.

Things to think about:-

Does this Story come from a helpful perspective/viewpoint?

Does it show that a person has reflected on their own experience.

Those submitting stories would need to agree in writing to their stories being shared with a wide audience.

Any restrictions on distribution of a story in terms of confidentiality or identification would need to be explicit and achievable.

Stories should be created with the following considerations in mind:-

- To consider the experience of emotional distress and mental disorder and what it feels like when going through it
- To pass on any insights into what was helpful or unhelpful in your experience; things which could be useful to others, to make their experience less painful, or by staff to change their practice
- To identify self help approaches which have been particularly meaningful or helpful
- To offer hope to others and to identify achievements however small
- To look beyond self help skills towards self development, 'thriving' and living a good life and how this may be achieved
- To show the whole person, who is more than the label or diagnosis
- To be honest and real in order to connect and 'speak' to a wide audience of readers/listeners
- If written, to be within an agreed length appropriate to publication in a book or on a website. This will probably be less than 3,500 words. There is no minimum length.
- To use if available, and according to the media chosen, personal material which illustrates the story, e.g. photos, poems, sketches, paintings, etc

Please contact us with your story at <mailto:recoverydevon@gmail.com> or by phone on 07779 729525.

Recovery Devon is a community of people supporting mental health recovery and well being.



Sharing Recovery Stories

Recovery Devon invites you to
share your
Stories of Personal Recovery
from
Mental Illness

Sharing Recovery Stories

Helping Ourselves - Helping Others - Stories of Hope

Do you feel able to offer hope and practical help to others?

Do you support a person in recovery? If so, this leaflet may help.

Many people struggle to overcome mental health difficulties. One in four of us will experience some form of mental illness at some point in our lives.

Recovery is possible. As we each learn how best to manage episodes of difficulty, we can share our experiences and our journeys of recovery.

When we are able to choose a more meaningful life, even when there are still occasional or ongoing difficulties, we feel more in control of our lives.

This gives us strength and gives hope to others.

Often small details and people who take special care, make a big difference.

We want to help people wishing to tell their own stories.

As people are more open about health and well being issues, we learn together and the spirit of hope and the voice of Recovery grows stronger.

People who have overcome mental ill health are speaking up and speaking out.

By sharing stories of personal recovery from emotional distress and from mental disorders, we can offer help and renewed energy to others experiencing similar challenges. We may also offer practical ways forward.

If you have personal experience, we would value your reflections and insights.

We all have many Stories

Many things happen that can make a real difference to our journeys toward wellness. Though the facts remain the same, over time our understanding and interpretation can change. As each person understands such events better, each may make changes in order to live a more fulfilling and satisfying life.

While you don't have to be fully well to share your story, you will need to feel at a safe distance and strong enough to reflect on your experiences, so that you can identify the people or things that made a real difference to your recovery.

In Devon we were inspired by Julie Leibrich's book 'A Gift of Stories'. Her chapter on 'Gathering and Presenting Stories' records how people deal successfully with mental illness, and live many faceted, yet, everyday lives and for some mental illness is a gift. We can discover talents and inner resolve, unknown before.

Many things affect our Well Being and Recovery

Connection – Belonging; community, friends, family, having meaningful activities, sharing, loving, being at one with ourselves and with others

Time – for learning and healing to take place, for kindness and forgiveness, to reflect and to make helpful choices, and to take control of our lives.

Safe Places – healing communities, environments where we feel safe; shared experiences, places where we can nurture our sense of self, be present in the moment, places where we can speak for ourselves and be heard and supported in ways that will work for us. Places where we can begin to act for ourselves

Opportunities – to make changes we want, to receive help to build our self help skills, so we can enjoy our lives more fully including leisure, education and work. This allows us self respect and a chance to give back.

Check out the Five Ways to Wellbeing.

Choosing How You Tell Your Story

When we choose to share our story of hope we need to be brave and also able to share the lessons we've learnt and the hope that we've gained.

There are many ways to share stories; eg through art work, photos, video, music, poetry, written and spoken words and combinations of these.

Some times, talking things through with a friend, can help us think through what happened to give us hope. Who were the people and things that made a difference?

We hope you can choose a way to share your story that suits you. If you feel adventurous, you may want to try out different ways of presenting your experiences. Choosing the words and pictures that feel right takes time. Don't feel you have to rush. 'A Gift of Stories': by Julie Leibrich (1999) has many creative ideas for presentation too. It remains a classic.

The Recovery Devon website has an area in the Creative Café for people to share stories, pictures and poems. The website also offers a download of 'Beyond the Storms - Reflections on Personal Recovery in Devon' ed. Laurie Davidson and Linden Lynn (2009), via the 'resource library'. It is a fine collection of many people's stories, poems and artwork.

Visit the Recovery Devon website – www.recoverydevon.co.uk