Evidence shows that people with challenging mental health issues do get better! You must be part of your recovery though - no one can do it for you. Fortunately, there are lots of supports available in our San Diego community that can help - for treatment, friendship, and information. Your community cares! You might believe, as I did, that there is no one who feels like you, no one on the same path you are on. It might surprise you that 1 in 4 people will experience a serious mental health event in their lifetime. So, there are lots of us right there on that path with you.

The important thing is that you take action to find support from your family, your friends, your doctor, a psychiatrist, the mental health system, or your community of faith. Reach out, and when you do, you will find that lots of people can relate to what you are experiencing. Almost everyone has had a big experience in their life that they have had to recover from. It might not have been a mental health crisis, but everyone recovers from something and the experience is very similar. Our life changes in some significant way, and we have to find a way to keep moving through life with the challenge that now accompanies us. Remember you are strong, and You are Not Alone!

Lisa
Hope is the cornerstone of recovery! We have to have hope that we can recover in order to believe that it is possible for us. Hope can come to us in lots of ways. There may be a family member, friend, co-worker, or a healthcare team member who helps us remember our gifts and strengths during challenging times. You might find hope in a wellness class, a clubhouse, a volunteer job, or by reading a book. You will find our unique tools for wellness!

Recovery is real! Believe in the Fact of Recovery!

What Helps You Feel Better?
We can also support our own recovery. Each of us knows when we feel more well and less well. We can begin to look at the things that we do, or what happens when we feel more well. For instance, if we feel happier after helping a neighbor bake a cake, we can realize that helping others supports our wellness. Or, if we find that taking a walk and window shopping or being out in nature and sunshine really cheers us up, then we will want to do more walking. Each of us will find our unique tools for wellness!

How can your Loved Ones Support you in Helpful Ways?
Your friends and family can be great supports. It will be important that you share information about what helps you. A Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) can help your supporters understand how to assist you and help you help yourself. (WRAP is available through Recovery Innovations of California all around San Diego County.) If you have supporters, treasure them. Remember, supporters need your permission to assist you in clinical locations. You can create an advance directive to help family or supporters you trust assist and make sure your wishes for care are respected and followed whenever possible. A WRAP Crisis Plan can act as an advance directive, or you can search the Internet for Mental Health Directives, or Mental Health Power of Attorney to examine various tools and find the one that works best for you.

Family members are often torn between the desire to help and assist you and the concern that they do not know what to do to help or when to help. Help your family members by using good communication describing what you need calmly, and if comfortable, help them become part of your wellness team.

For Information or Referrals: 24/7 Access & Crisis Line 1-888-724-7240

Quick Reference Numbers:
County Access and Crisis Line Counselors can answer your questions about mental health and provide referrals for County mental health programs and services. 24 hours a day/7 days a week. 1-888-724-7240 TTY 619-641-6992

County Network of Care Website Information about services, programs, community connections, resource library. www.networkofcare.org

Recovery Innovations of California (RICA) Mental health services based on shared experience, focusing on wellness to maximize the growth of hope, knowledge, skills, and supports to allow each person to move forward in their recovery. San Diego County: 1-858-274-4650 National: 1-866-481-5361 www.recoveryinnovations.org

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Support, education, and advocacy for people with mental illnesses and their families. 1-800-523-5933 www.nami.org or www.namisandiego.org

Mental Health America of San Diego County Dedicated to promoting mental health, preventing mental disorders and achieving victory over mental illnesses through advocacy, education, research, and services. 619-543-0412 www.mhasd.org

You are important to the people who love and care about you. Help supporters stay strong by giving them support when they need it. Friendship, love, and support work best when they are given and received equally.