

# Words of Recovery



A collection of poems, writings and  
quotes by service users of St Ann's,  
Haringey.

2019

# *Words of Recovery*



Printed in 2019

*Words of Recovery* is an unpublished print.



This booklet has kindly been funded by Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health NHS Trust.



## Welcome to Words of Recovery



This booklet is a collection of writing by service users, ex-service users and carers of mental health services at St Ann's, collected between May 2018 and February 2019.

We particularly wish to thank members of My Recovery Group, who meet in the Halliwick Unit, where the idea of the booklet was born. Members of the group contributed many of the writings and assisted in the editing and preparation. All artwork and installations are made by service users from the various creative activities of this group.

We wanted a booklet that could be accessible to service users in waiting areas in St Ann's and which could play a small part in inspiring others, building hope and sharing valuable lessons of living.

In the words of one contributor, we hope that it shows how

*“wounds can be turned into wisdom”...*





## *Forewords*





*Foreword by*

**Helen Price**

Trust Wide Enablement Lead



The road of mental health recovery is a journey that is unique and individual to each person. This collection of the most insightful personal experiences enlightens and enables us as readers, to peer into that journey to see, hear and feel the possibilities, strengths and hopes of such courageous people. This book is an amazing privilege that emotionally touches us all.



*Foreword by*

**Helen Brindley**

Haringey Psychological Therapies Lead



I have been touched and moved in reading this collection of prose and poetry from service users at St Ann's. The shortest contributions, as much as those that are longer, evocatively capture the intensity of feelings, as well as the resilience, of those who have been working to integrate distressing experiences. The simplicity of what appears to me to be a hopeful message is of the importance of finding kindness and humanity in all of us, in those who are struggling and in those who are listening.



*Foreword by*

**Rebecca Sare**

Project Lead, Trust Wide Enablement Partnership



My recovery is, and will always be, such a precious part of me. It is the part that reminds me to be kind to myself on my bad days and the part that reminds me to celebrate my good days. It's the part that works so hard every day to be me, and that knows that I never ever have to be ashamed of who I am.





# *Writings*





## *A quote*



It is great how equality has evolved into allowing all to be who they want to be.



## *A quote*



The optimist fell ten storeys,

And at each window bar,

He shouted to his friends,

*All right so far!!!*



## **Challenging stigma: mental health**

### **What is stigma?**

Making assumptions about someone just because an idea of what a condition might be like.

An inconsiderate expression towards an individual or a group of people who share something in common.

Bad intentions who use people; cruel people.

A feeling of shame, a perceived defect.

Lack of understanding; lack of empathy.

Judging people by appearances.



### **How and why is it important to challenge stigma?**

It is unproductive, unhelpful and you may miss out on a good friendship.

Important for empowerment, to “feel good” about self. Being more mindful of how we behave with others.

***Words of Recovery***

Be polite and stand up for yourself in a good manner. Explain without getting scared because sometimes you can get anxious and fearful from people who are racist and mean. Respect. Listen to kind people and professionals.

Challenge stigma, show respect, be supportive, chat.

Keep talking about it, keep reading about it.

*Don't be boxed in by others. Others are happy to put us in boxes. But don't stay in the box yourself!*



Don't be boxed in



## Heart in the park



## Thoughts for another



Every rainfall was a teardrop,

I'll go back to heaven and bring you back,

I've been in dark nights, in the darkest place,

And had a glimmer of light.

In the darkest light,

I love God for protecting and loving me forever,

God bless everyone.



## I wish



I wish I could help those with mental health. So that they can have a better journey. No one can see my mental illness. It's not like a broken hand. It is invisible. People think I am OK because they can't see it.



## Everything is going to be alright tomorrow



According to Faithless, to Maxi Jazz.

And yes, it is 'going to be alright tomorrow'.

The thought gives you something to look forward to...



## When trouble comes...



It's not easy. I feel very upset, anxious, stressed. After a while I think, why am I in this condition? I think of the beautiful word God and I don't feel so anxious. For nothing I am without you and this makes me calm. And I can think positive again.



## Turning my wounds



Turn your wounds into your wisdom.

Life is painful, especially when you have mental health problems. In society they study you. They do not accept you. They see us as monsters. Watch out. Life is not easy, every-day is a struggle. Is my mind my enemy? One thing I did not forget is to love other people. Just as it should be.



## My hope



To be free men so to have a brighter future. And hope to find security instead of living in the dark. It is hard when we live in fear. With mental illness you feel you have been caught and it is hard to break out of it, because you want to break free. Talking to someone does help so that you don't need to live in fear but to be free...



## My recovery group



Other people are a mirror to our lives...



## Poem

*A group poem*



My smile hides my pain,

Nobody knows my sorrow,

Know when to protect myself,

Thanks to God I am alive and kicking.

I am who I am. No one can judge me.



## **Quiet**

*A group poem*



Peace, calm, freedom.

Seeing what is around, contemplation.

Concentration.

Meditation, prayer, loneliness.

Relaxing.

Sleep.

Quality time.

Searching.

Care.

Mindful.



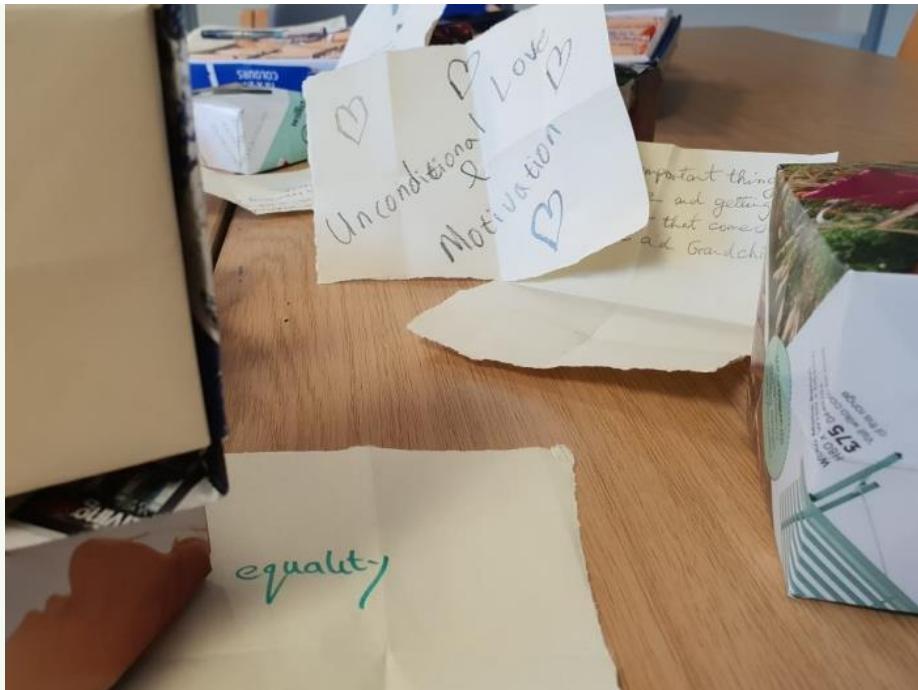
## Dear recovery



Dear recovery, I found that after going to my granddaughter's birthday party that there was a lot to live for.



## Note to self



## Remembering myself at Christmas



◎

## Reminder



Remember how far you have come; be kind to yourself. You are enough. You are worthy of love and belonging.



## *A quote*



I'd rather have a broken arm or leg. Easier to repair. The mind is another story.



## *A quote*



I still need time to heal. Life can be difficult, but still we are fine.



## My recipe for strength



I have certain key ingredients for living, including: being chatty, creative, I appreciate learning, I like to drive to new places of interest and cook different kinds of food.



On a *BAD DAY*, I can remind myself to talk to someone, someone I know or a new person, and to find ways of using my ingredients (above).

I can also try to be creative; listen to creative music, or make art, or create food. Or take a drive to new places...



On a *GOOD DAY*, I can use my creativity/talking in a different form, such as write a journal, cook a meal for loved ones, and ‘be open’...



## *A poem*



We all have experiences of mental health troubles and we all related to these poems and writings. Be strong, the road is rough. Life isn't easy, but look for inspiration.



## Dear future me



Worry less, get more exercise, eat more regularly, tidy up more, fix drawer, nicotine cut down, find replacement, try lozenges. Troubles look at more carefully, look at causes + effect, establish what is important in life.



## Dear future me



I can see you looking calm and collected, like you've got your thoughts together. Guessing you've got a new job now and are doing ok. Lost weight too! Never a bad thing. Can see you so clearly but at the same time it's like you're a thousand miles away from current me.



What I want to ask is...

*how did you get there?*



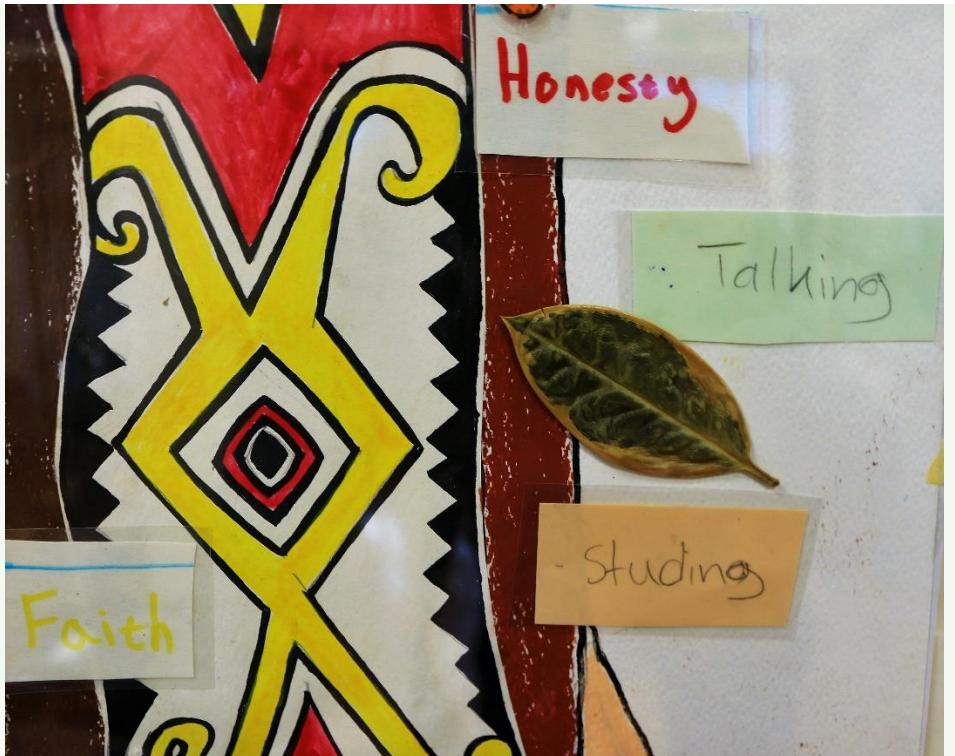
*A quote*



*Be honest.*



## Keeping clear



## Resilience



## Dear recovery



I have a desire to extend and reinforce you. I skate around the edges of true recovery, without truly being involved. I would like to immerse myself in everything that could develop and enhance my recovery so that I feel totally involved.



## Dear recovery



From me to you,

The future is insight road to recovery,

Beyond every plight step forward into the light,

Let me know if you gain any sight.



## Dear God



Holy Father, thank you for every moment and special days. I would like to say to the cruel people in my life to look at what they have done and caused a lot suffering to me and everyone. I have been to dark places only God knows. I don't need conditional love, from people, I need some understanding from people, put yourselves in my place and then laugh and take the piss out of me. It's not a laughing matter, I am not a stress ball or a robot, people have made me and threatened me to do mistakes, assessed me wrongfully instead of letting me speak for myself. Let me speak. If I speak everyone starts putting guilt trips and shuts me up. Long live God & my close family.



## *A quote*



I hope to have:

Good food,

Good education,

Good life,

And love.



## A personal view



I feel, recovery is as recovery does. It means different things to different people. Whether on the path of recovery, or still walking or stumbling through your recovery, or indeed feeling your personal, recovered.

The power of kindness in words and actions from others, notable professionals along with their often invaluable knowledge towards the soul, going through the stages of recovery should be taken seriously, gently, and never under-estimated.

The power of words of assurance to someone in their turmoil can change the thoughts of a person's feelings and direction for the better or worse. Sometimes.



## Dear past, present and future me



Life is about experiences and that includes struggles along with all the positive things that will happen. Never give up; nothing is too old or too late. Be happy and be free. Do what you want, when you want and don't worry about social norms or chitchat (talk, gossip). You know who you are the good bad and ugly. Everyone has a time and can relate you somehow someway. Be kind, but don't waste your time.



## *A quote*



Solitary confine me.

Not going to jail us tonight.



## Vulnerability is NOT ME!



Look in the mirror, what do you see?

I see vulnerability looking at me.



I am vulnerable, scared and alone.

I don't know where to begin,

Yet the voice in my head says,

“Give up, you're STUPID!”

I won't accomplish anything worthwhile,

Vulnerability is all consuming.



I am vulnerable, fearful and worried,

Yet the voice in my head says,

“Give up, you're STUPID!”

The voice is a LIAR, I am not that voice,  
I have strength, I am brave,  
Vulnerability is not me.



I am vulnerable, caring and kind,  
Yet the voice in my head says,  
“Give up, you’re STUPID!”  
Have compassion for yourself,  
Self-compassion,  
Self- love.



I can survive this,

*Vulnerability is NOT ME!*



## Stigma



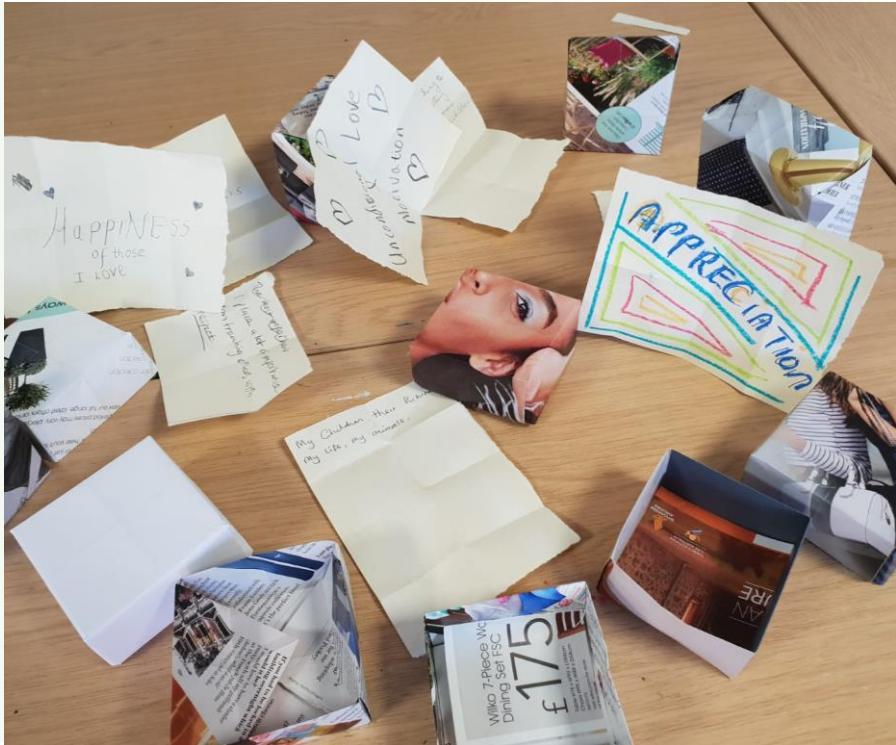
Treat everyone with respect, everyone is born with gifts and talents, your true friends are with you when you are feeling lonely and neglected, go to your friends who cry with you, ignore the ones who laugh at you, everyone needs love and care...



## Circle of care



## Message in a box



## *A quote*



*You are not alone.*



## Lost and found



*Lost* you during that time (I said goodbye, not you...).

Away with all our memories of music-making, we can never sound the same as before.

My mind and body no longer feel, except my fingers (they feel stiffness and pain).

Lost a part of me, my identity.

Thinking of you made me feel sad and empty, to the point that I hid from you and your music; denied your existence and that we ever crossed paths; tried to replace you.



Recovery set in, time passed.

Didn't think I'd have the courage to go back to you and reconnect.

But here I am, picking you up and saying, "Let's start over?"

Testing the waters – note by note; marching my fingers – one by one; feeling your beauty – string by string; sharing in your expressions – emotion by emotion.

You are filling the void in my heart and I start to find myself again,  
but more so,

*Found* you again, my *violin* (I may have said goodbye, but you  
had never let me go).



## Tree



Without the root, there is no life to survive. The trunk holds us, the leaves fall and come new. Without the root, there is no life.



## *A quote*



Hello, goodbye,

Reach up for the sky.



## Stigma and stereotype



Don't stereotype me, I am just human like you. We all bleed the same. Don't put your stigma on me, there is no animal living here. The road is rough already, don't stereotype me. I don't want you to make my life hard. Don't you just see face and eye and ear like you? Come and learn from us, open your mind, learn something new.



*A poem*



Life is for everyone,

Life is free everyone,

No harm/money,

Harmony.

Anything worthwhile for a smile.



*A poem*



My vision and mission.

God says:

‘Money is paper, value people’.

All deserve a free, gentle east, beautiful life!

Amen!



## *A poem*



Life: life is for enjoying.



The world whirled, whirls, revolves around love.



***UNITE = U - N - I - Together - Everyday***



## Is it me?



Is it me or

The illness?

Am I one or the other?

Is there a vein of in our condition?

Am I blue today and,

Indigo tomorrow?

Who will break in and find out,

What I think is true?

Will it be it false?

Eyes aren't decided as before,

but my mind is in fog.

There is no way of finding,

the needle in the haystack.

Run a mile, but I'm still here.

Even if I've travelled oceans.

Close my eyes,

And give me a reality check.



## The most important thing to me



The most important thing to me is my life and getting well...

Appreciation.

My children, my life, my animals.

Equality.

Unconditional love.

I place a lot of importance on treating others with respect.

The happiness of those I love.



## *A poem*



God is the centre of my life.

Love is God. God is love.

“Let the love show, grow, glow, know, flow and sow” it everywhere.



## *A quote*



When words fail, music speaks...



## Never give up



You are alone with your voices,

It's unreachable, it's untouchable,

No one is there to help.

But hoping that you will never give up.

I see my mind like the weather and it can be dark.

Please don't stigmatise me.



## Gratitude... the magic word



Whenever I am asked the easiest way to feel happy and get out of low mood, my answer is always *practice GRATITUDE!* This is something which has changed my entire life. As a human being it's natural to feel sad, lonely, lost even badly depressed. In this situation we forget other things which are going well around us. We are the best creature in this world. We have the power to think! Do we ever think about that? We are so blessed! Most of us focus on only negative things, lack or things that we don't have. It makes us sad, depressed, unhealthy and also lonely. Then slowly we build up the habit of complaining.

Have we ever thought about our breath? Every single breath is important! I am so thankful that I am still breathing and I am writing on a computer, I am grateful that I have an internet connection, am grateful that I ate twice today and I felt full. There are lots of people who lives in poverty! Some people can't even afford food to eat, clothes to wear and a home to live. Human beings want more and more. But we forget to be happy and feel grateful for what we have already. Don't we? This is called lack of appreciation.

Gratitude is a feeling of appreciation and the advantages of practicing gratitude are unlimited. People who regularly practice gratitude by taking time to notice and reflect upon the things they are thankful for, attract more happiness in their life, feel happy and alive, feel more blessed and stay happy forever. It doesn't mean we

can be always positive, sometimes our circumstances or situations make us feel horrible and low. But we need to move on as being sad.

Depression is not the solution at all. It makes us go to low vibration, which is a complete disaster to focus on other things. The best thing to do is to recognise the problem and face it. We can only do it by feeling grateful for what we already have, then automatically it will raise your vibration and you start to think of different ideas. A happy mind thinks and focuses in a better way.

Gratitude remarkably increases wellbeing and life satisfaction. So it's important to write at least three things every single day that you feel grateful for. Trust me! If you make it a habit it will change your life.

*It's simply a Magic!!!*





*End.*

*Thank you.*







*We would like to thank all the service users for sharing  
all their words and art.*



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