

Copeland Center For Wellness and Recovery



Wellness Recovery Action Plan – WRAP

The Wellness Recovery Action Program or WRAP is a structured system for monitoring uncomfortable and distressing symptoms and, through planned responses, reducing, modifying or eliminating those symptoms. It also includes plans for how you want others to respond when your symptoms have made it impossible for you to continue to make decisions, take care of yourself and keep yourself safe. Reports from people who are using WRAP indicate that it helps them feel prepared. It works by helping them to feel better more often and by improving the overall quality of their life.

This system was developed by people who have been dealing with a variety of psychiatric symptoms for many years and who are working hard to feel better and get on with their lives. Mary Ellen Copeland has shared it with people with other illnesses and they too believe that it can be easily adapted for use with other disorders.

The person who experiences symptoms is the one who develops their personal WRAP. We recommend using a three ring binder, a set of tabs or dividers, and lined three hole punched paper. The WRAP binder will include a Wellness Toolbox and six part monitoring and response system. The person creating their personal WRAP may be assisted in the process by the supporters and health care professionals *of their choice*.

WRAP Plan Structure and Content

Section 1 is a daily maintenance plan. Part 1 is a description of how you are when you feel well. Part 2 is a list of everything you need to do every day to maintain your wellness. Part 3 is a list of things you might need to consider doing that day.

Section 2 deals with triggers. Part 1 identifies those events or situations that, if they occur, might cause uncomfortable symptoms to begin. Part 2 is a plan of what to do if any of these triggers occur.

Section 3 deals with early warning signs. Part 1 involves identification of those subtle signs that may indicate the situation is beginning to worsen. Part 2 is a plan of what to do if any of these early warning signs are noticed.

Section 4 deals with symptoms that occur when the situation has gotten much worse but has not yet reached a crisis, where you can still take action on your own behalf. Part 2 is a plan of what to do if any of these symptoms occur.

Section 5 is a crisis plan. It identifies those symptoms that indicate you can no longer continue to make decisions, take care of yourself, or keep yourself safe. It is for use by supporters and health care professionals on behalf of the person who developed the plan.

The process for creating a crisis plan begins by developing a Wellness Toolbox--a listing of skills and strategies that you have used or want to use to keep yourself well and to help yourself feel better when you do not feel well.

Part 1 is information that defines what you are like when you are well. Part 2 identifies the symptoms that suggest that others need to take over responsibility of your care. Part 3 names those supporters and identifies their roles. Part 4 identifies those medications that, if necessary, are all right with you, those that are not, and the reasons why. Part 5 gives you the option of developing a home, community care or respite center plan to use, if possible, instead of hospitalization. Part 6 identifies the treatment facilities that, if necessary, are all right with you, those that are not, and the reasons why. Part 7 identifies the treatments that, if necessary, you are all right with, those that are not ok, and the reasons why. Part 8 is an intensive description of what is wanted from supporters and what is not wanted when symptoms become this intense. Part 9 gives information for supporters to use in determining when you no longer need to use your crisis plan.

Section 6, Post Crisis Planning is a more recent addition to the plan. It is different from other sections of your Wellness Recovery Action Plan in that it is constantly changing as you heal. For instance, it is anticipated that two weeks after the crisis you will be feeling much better than you did after one week and therefore your daily activities would be different. The post crisis from leads you through the process of outlining your own post crisis plan.



Key Recovery Concepts:

Hope

**Personal
Responsibility**

Education

Self-Advocacy

Support

FIVE STEPS TO DEVELOPING A STRONG SUPPORT SYSTEM

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1. Become an active member of a support group.

Support groups provide an opportunity to be with people who have similar problems, people who understand and can be mutually supportive.

They are a wonderful place to make new and lasting friendships.

They counter social isolation.

Basic support group rules assure us that we can feel comfortable in support groups.

They are:

- No criticism or judging.
- Sharing is optional. It is neither encouraged or discouraged.
- What a person talks about is not limited in any way.
- Everything discussed at the meetings and who attends the meetings is strictly confidential.
- Attendance is optional.

2. Participate in community activities, special interest groups and church groups.

The hardest part is going the first time. Give yourself a pat on the back for getting there.

If you see the same person several times, suggest an activity of interest to both of you. If you enjoy being with this person, get together again.

Check your newspaper and listen to the radio for announcements of activities and events which interest you.

3. Volunteer!

Find a worthy organization that-needs help and lend a hand. It's an excellent way to meet new people while doing something nice for someone else and building your self-esteem. Many communities have an organization that coordinates volunteer opportunities.

4. Keep in touch with friends and acquaintances.

Always have a plan for your next time to get together. Get together for fun activities - like movies, walks and ball games.

Make regular phone calls, send notes and cards.

Help them out whenever you can.

5. Make mutual support a high priority!

Be there for others as much as they are there for you. If your supporter is not asking as much of you as you are asking of them, treat them to lunch or some other fun activity, or do them a needed favor.

WHAT IS WANTED FROM SUPPORTERS

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You need lots of support to help you get well and stay well. You need support from friends, family, community, health care providers and peers. You also give support to those with whom you have mutually supportive relationships.

Supporters are people who:

- care about you
- empathize with you
- affirm and validate you and your experience
- accept you as you are
- don't have you all figured out
- listen to you and share with you
- advocate for you
- enjoy sharing fun and interesting activities with you
- can make decisions and take action in your behalf when you can't do this for yourself
- are willing to follow your predetermined plans

The most valuable thing a supporter can do for us when we are experiencing psychiatric symptoms is to LISTEN.

A good supporter knows that unsolicited advice, criticism and judgments won't help and may even make matters worse!

1. Who are your supporters?

2. Who are some people you are a supporter of?

3. What qualities do you more appreciate in supporters?

PEER COUNSELING

Peer counseling is a structured form of mutual support where we express ourselves any way we choose, while supported by a trusted ally. Two people agree to spend time together, dividing the time equally, paying attention to each other. The person who is listening remains neutral, providing positive support only. They are not judgmental or critical and DO NOT give advice. The person who is listening provides comfort and safety so that the other person can express themselves - talking, crying, laughing, hitting a pillow, ranting - whatever feels right

Peer counseling sessions often total one hour, but can vary. Half of the time is spent on each person while the other person pays attention. Complete, ongoing confidentiality is agreed upon. Feedback is allowed ONLY when requested. Some people may feel that, because they are having a difficult time in their own life, they can only listen or share for a short time. Honor those feelings, increasing the length of the peer counseling sessions, as it feels right to do so.

- 1. Agree on an amount of time to exchange.**
- 2. Find a place where you will not be disturbed.**
- 3. As a listener, give your complete attention.**
- 4. As a (talker, trust the listener by sharing all that you can and say what you really think as much as you can.**
- 5. Bring up what will help you most.**
- 6. Start sessions by recounting something new and good that happened in the past week.**
- 7. End sessions by sharing something you are looking forward to.**

For some, peer counseling is the key component of their wellness program. They may find someone comfortable and attentive and agree to exchange time listening to each other on a regular basis (weekly, daily, bi-weekly).

When used consistently, it is a free, safe, and effective self-help tool that encourages expression of feelings and emotions, thus reducing stress and symptoms.

What is Peer Support?

- Giving and receiving help with mutuality and respect.
- Understanding through the personal experience of "having been there".
- Sharing personal experiences of hope and recovery.
- Encouraging each person's uniqueness.
- Focusing on each person's strengths.
- Promoting recovery through relationship/friendship.