

Getting in the Driver's Seat of Your Treatment: Preparing for Your Plan

Janis Tondora
Rebecca Miller
Kimberly Guy
Stephanie Lanteri

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To me recovery means I try to stay in the driver's seat of my life. I don't let my illness run me. Over the years I have worked hard to become an expert in my own self-care. Being in recovery means I don't just take medications ... Rather I use medications as part of my recovery process ... Over the years I have learned different ways of helping myself. Sometimes I use medications, therapy, self-help and mutual support groups, friends, my relationship with God, work, exercise, spending time in nature – all these measures help me remain whole and healthy, even though I have a disability. (p. 10)

Pat Deegan, 1993

Recovery is one word to use that describes the journey of living with a mental illness and/or an addiction. You might choose another word for yourself, but the main idea is finding out what works for you in getting what you want out of life. For many of us that have lived with a mental illness and/or an addiction, it has been a long journey and we may not have felt in the 'driver's seat' much of the time. The tools here are designed to help you feel more in control and to help you discover what you want to work towards getting (or getting back) in your life. This might include things like, getting a job, moving to your own apartment, making new friends, going back to church/mosque/synagogue, or whatever else you'd like to do.

For some of us, this may feel very different than how we've ever been asked to do things – many of us have not been asked questions by our providers like, "What do *you* want to work on?" or "What's really important to you?". It may even feel overwhelming at first, and you might have a lot of feelings that come up for you.

A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.

Lao-Tzu,
Chinese Philosopher

Take it at your own pace – you can always save your work and come back to it at another time. Or, ask someone to help you work on it: a friend, a family member, your provider, whoever you feel most comfortable with.

This toolkit can be useful for anyone – regardless of whether they have a psychiatric disability or an addiction. Everyone needs help at times setting goals, and figuring out what they want. This toolkit has some specific parts that are helpful to people with a mental illness or addiction, but could be really used by anyone.

We hope you find this helpful – remember, it's the journey, not the destination!

For many people that we talked to in designing this booklet they talked about encouragement/support from others as being really important to their recovery and moving forward in their life. Is there someone you can think of right now who you would like to have involved while you complete this worksheet?

Name _____ Contact Information: _____

Maya Angelou

African American Poet

Getting in the drivers seat of your treatment and recovery

Within your mental health and/or addictions treatment, a **“recovery plan”**, sometimes called a **treatment plan or service plan**, is the **document that you create with your team** to help plan how you want to move forward towards your goals. It is used:

- To help decide on goals that are important to you in your recovery and well-being.
- To help decide on the things that you personally need to do to make progress toward these goals.
- To help decide on the types of services and support your team can offer to help you achieve these goals.
- By your mental health team so they can document, and get payment for, the supports they provide to you.

The following booklet tells you about your rights, and helps you to prepare for your recovery planning meeting so that you can get as much out of it as possible. It will help you to start identifying some of the areas of your life that you want to work on, and how to talk to your team about planning for next steps.

But first, a bit more explanation about a recovery planning meeting.

What is a “recovery planning” meeting?

It is a meeting:

- where you work in partnership with others to create your treatment plan.
- that happens on a regular basis – usually every 6 months (although the plan can be updated as needed).
- where you have a right to invite anyone you would like to have involved. This can include professional staff (e.g., such as doctors or therapists) as well as friends or family members.



What is YOUR role in this meeting?:

For this meeting, it is useful to:

- think about your priorities and goals ahead of time.
- ask for the types of support that would be most helpful to you.
- SPEAK UP and share your ideas and needs with your team!
- Think about your own responsibilities in working towards your goals.



What kinds of things can I bring up at this meeting?

This is YOUR meeting. You can:

- Bring up anything you think is important to you and what you want out of your life.
- Discuss ways to pursue your goals, both clinical treatment goals and also your goals and dreams for employment, education, social activities, and your living space.

What happens after this meeting?

After this meeting:

- Your clinician will work to include the things you talked about in a written document.
- This document is both a summary of the meeting and an outline of upcoming action steps for you and your team members (both professional supporters and friends/family who may be involved).
- You should review the written plan with your clinician and make sure you understand it. Ask questions if you don't.
- You should sign the plan and ask for a copy for your records. Keep it in a safe place to protect your confidentiality.
- **WORK YOUR PLAN!** Follow through on your personal action steps and take charge of your life!



Next page: Your Rights in the mental health system



Your Rights

One of the important parts of being in the driver's seat of your treatment and your recovery is knowing your rights. It's sort of like knowing the 'rules of the road' and can let you feel more confident in speaking up for yourself and advocating for yourself and asking for what you need. It would be a good idea to familiarize yourself with the information provided by the State of Texas entitled ***Your Rights as a Client or Patient*** (which can be found at the end of this document). As a person in the mental health system you are still afforded all of the rights that any other person living in the United States enjoys. Some of the rights you might want to be aware of and take interest in, in terms of your mental health care, might be:

- The right to be treated with dignity and respect.
- The right to privacy and confidentiality.
- The right to access your medical record.
- The right to a written treatment plan developed **with** you and your input, and tailored to your needs.
- The right to being fully informed about medications, treatments and medical procedures.
- The right to refuse medications or treatments that you do not want.
- The right to file a grievance if you feel your rights have been violated by a provider of your treatment facility.

Please remember that this is just a glimpse of the information you should be aware of concerning your rights. This information should in no way be a substitute for legal advice from an attorney or advocate. There are some situations where these rules may not apply or they may be applied differently. For example, rules in inpatient hospitals may be different from rules in an outpatient mental health center. The rules also change depending on whether or not you are in treatment voluntarily or if you have been "mandated" into treatment because of concerns that you might hurt yourself or someone else. If you feel as if your rights have been violated or you would like to learn more about your rights you are encouraged to contact the following legal rights offices:

- Consumers of BTCS services and/or their families may access the Consumer Rights Protection hotline at 512-244-8324.
- Disability Rights Texas -(512) 454-4816 or toll free intake line (800) 252-9108.
www.disabilityrightstx.org

For more information about planning ahead for times when you are in crisis, or unable to make decisions for yourself, see Appendix A at the end of this document.



Next page: Forming your team of supporters

Forming your team

Circle2.

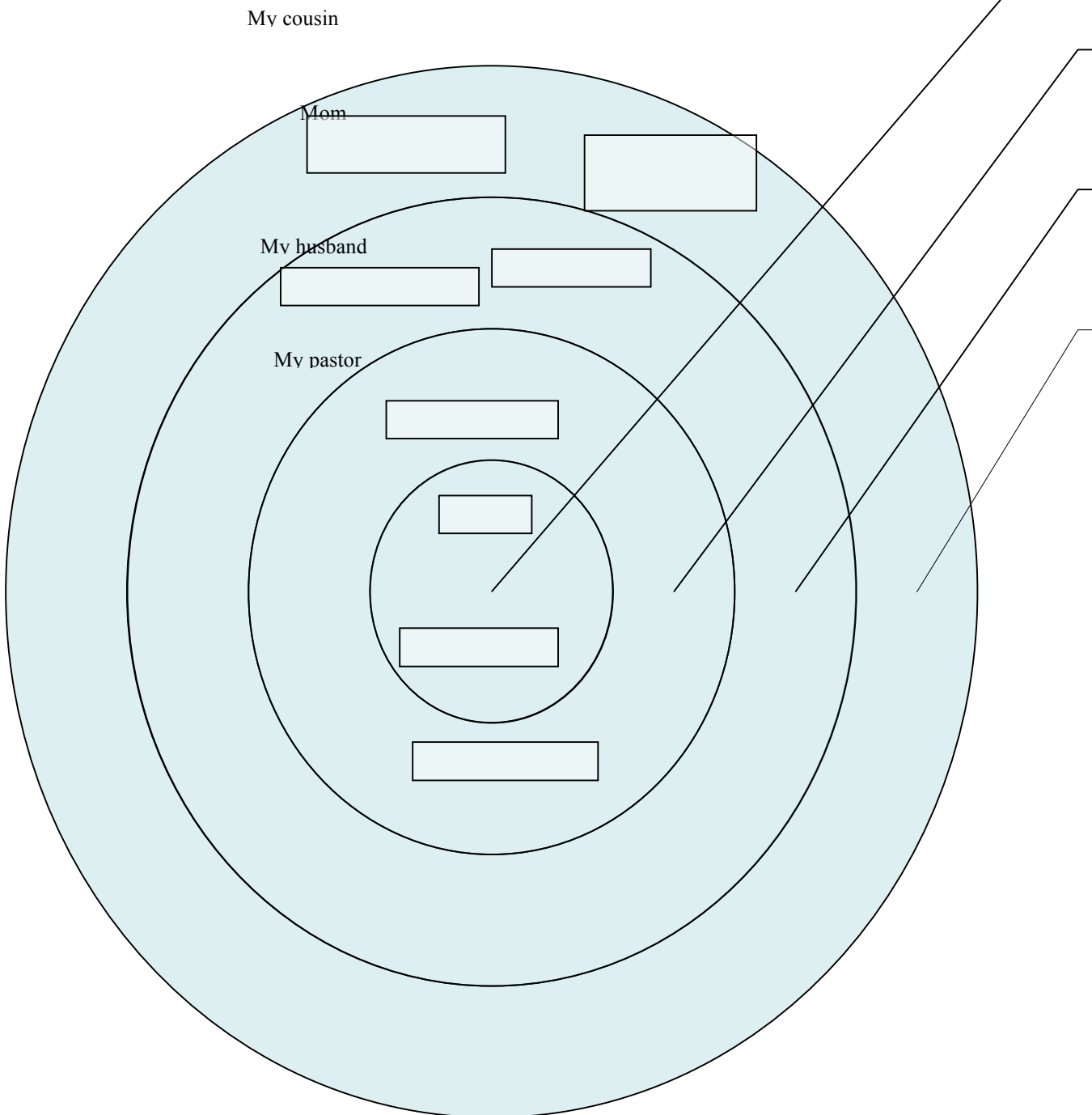
For some it is easy to identify all the important people and supports in life. For other people it can be hard to think of people off the top of your head. Some people have found the *Circle of Support* tool useful in really taking a look at who is important to you in your life, and especially in thinking about who you might invite to help you in your treatment plan – remember, you can invite others who are supportive!

Circle3.

The *Circle of Support* worksheet, and will help you to map out who is important in your life right now.

Here's an example that was completed by a person in recovery:

Circle4.



Circle 1.

Now here is one for you to fill out. Some guidelines that might help:

Circle 1: People you love, people who love you, people you would not want to live without

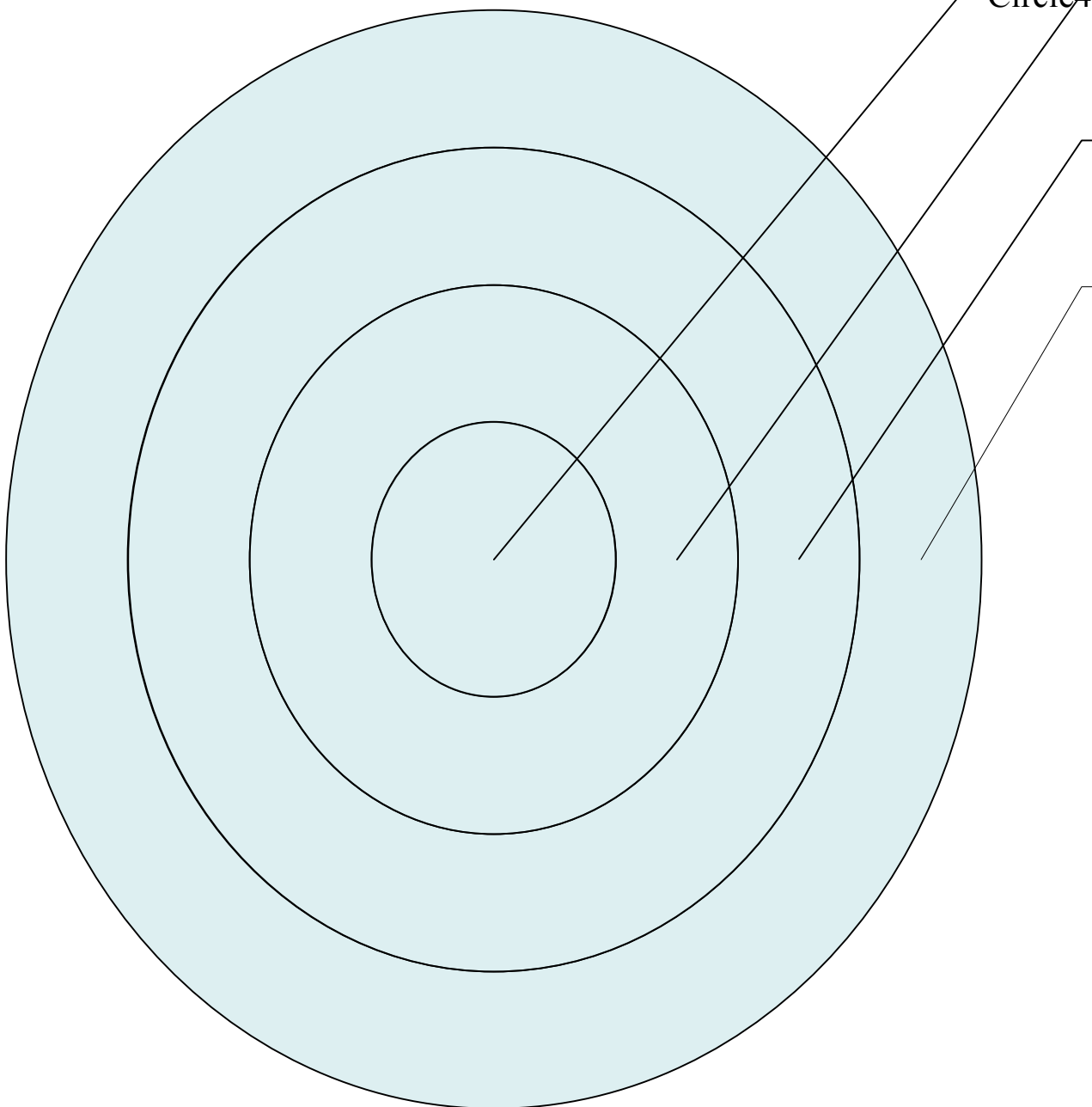
Circle 2: Close friends or relatives, people you count on, people you trust most

Circle 3: People you know from clubs, hobbies, work, etc.

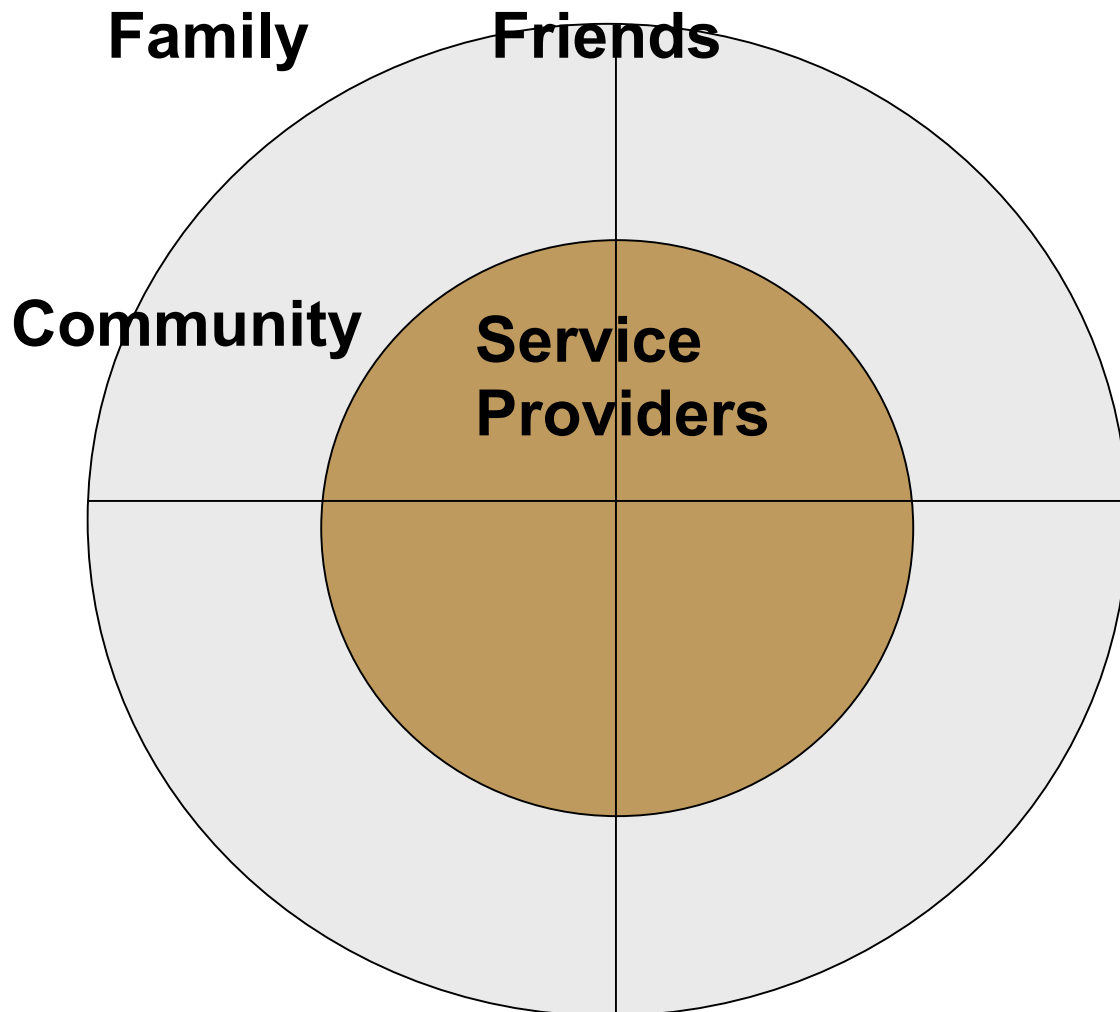
Circle 4: People who are meaningful but you are not that close

Circle 5.

Circle 4.



Here's another sample of how you can think about people in your life. The inner circle are those people you are closer to, and the outer circle are those who you may see less often, but are people who are important to you.



From www.mindtools.com



Next page: Getting down to goals



Getting down to goals

Figuring out your goals can be a challenge. Sometimes it's easy to know exactly what you want and where to start, but other times it may be more difficult. If you already know what you want to work on, skip right to the next section. Otherwise, the following questions may help you to better decide on what you want to work on right now in your life.

Interests and activities

This might include your hobbies, like playing music, writing, collecting, or whatever else you like to do. What are some of your interests or hobbies? What do you love to do? Are there things you would like to do more of?

Is this something you want to work on right now? Yes No/Maybe Later

Living environment

Are you satisfied with your living situation right now? Do you like your neighborhood? Maybe you want to get your own place, or improve relations with a roommate? How would you like to change your living situation, if at all?

Is this something you want to work on right now? Yes No/Maybe later

Employment

Would you like to work? What would you like to do? If you're working, do you enjoy your job? What would you like to improve about your work situation?

Is this something you want to work on right now? Yes No/Maybe later

Learning

Are you interested in going back to school? Would you like to get your GED or go to college? What kinds of things are you interested in studying?

Is this something you want to work on right now? Yes No/Maybe later

Financial

How is your financial situation? Is money something you worry about? Would you like help with managing your money or budgeting?

Is this something you want to work on right now? Yes No/Maybe later

Lifestyle and Health

Do you have any concerns about your overall health? What do you do to take care of your health? Are you interested in taking better care of your health? Are there any habits you'd like to change, such as smoking?

Is this something you want to work on right now? Yes No/Maybe later

Faith and Spirituality

How important is faith/spirituality in your life? What type of spiritual or faith activities do you participate in? How satisfied are you with your opportunities to participate in your spiritual practice or attend the congregation of your choice right now?

Is this something you want to work on right now? Yes No/Maybe later

Relationships

Who are the most important people in your life right now? Who do you spend your time with? Do you have a romantic or intimate relationship? Are you satisfied with your sex life? Is there anyone you'd like to spend more time with?

Is this something you want to work on right now? Yes No/Maybe later

Psychiatric treatment and mental health symptoms

How much are your psychiatric symptoms interfering with your life? How much are your medications helping you? Are you being bothered by medication difficulties or side effects? How do you cope with your symptoms?

Is this something you want to work on right now? Yes No/Maybe later

Safety and Legal issues

Are you dealing with any legal issues right now? Is probation or parole interfering with parts of your life? Are there ways you or others could help with these issues?

Is this something you want to work on right now? Yes No/Maybe later

Drug and alcohol use

Is your use of drugs or alcohol causing you problems in any way? Are you interested in cutting back or getting help to stop using?

Is this something you want to work on right now? Yes No/Maybe later

Personal Strengths – We all have different personal strengths and abilities. Sometimes it can be harder to remember them, though. Knowing your strengths will help you work towards and accomplish the things you want from your life. The following statements may help you identify some of your own:

My best qualities as a person are _____

Something I would NOT change about myself is _____

I am most proud of _____

My sense of humor is _____

The times I am most at peace are when _____

People like that I am (people say they like my...) _____

I feel really good about myself when _____



Goal Setting Tips

The following ideas might help you when thinking about setting goals:

- *State each goal as a positive statement:* Express your goals positively - "Find a Job" is a much better goal than 'Stop being unemployed'.
- *Be exact:* Set an exact goal, putting in dates, times and amounts so that you can measure achievement. If you do this, you will know exactly when you have achieved the goal, and can take complete satisfaction from having achieved it.
- *Set priorities:* When you have several goals, give each a priority, or importance. This helps you to avoid feeling overwhelmed by too many goals, and helps to direct your attention to the most important ones. As a rule of thumb in setting goals, it is sometimes helpful to remember that "less is more" and most people only actively work on a few areas of their life at one time. Even though there may be many things you would like to see improved, you have a better chance of success if you focus on a few areas at a time. Then, when you feel like you've made progress in these areas, you can move on to the next priority.
- *Write goals down:* This crystallizes them and gives them more force. Organizes thoughts ahead of time so we remember to be firm about what is most important to us... and makes us get the most out of what is often a shorter meeting than we would like with time constraints...
- *Keep the goals small:* Keep the low-level goals you are working towards small and achievable. If a goal is too large, then it can seem that you are not making progress towards it. Keeping goals small and incremental gives more opportunities for reward. Derive today's goals from larger ones.
- *Set realistic goals:* It is important to set goals that you can achieve. All sorts of people (employers, parents, media, society) can set unrealistic goals for you. Sometimes other people can push you too hard, or have goals that are their goals for you and not really your goals. Sometimes we all might set goals that are too big for us to do right away, and we need to think about what we can do with what we have at the time.



Next page: Planning your meeting

Planning your meeting

Great! Now that you've done all the hard work thinking about your goals. Now it's time to plan for your meeting, it's time to talk about how you want the meeting to go.

First, who would you like to be included in your meeting?

Where would you like the meeting to be held?

What are days and times that are convenient for you?

What about for the supporters that you'd like to include in the meeting?

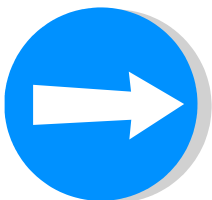
Who would you like not to come to the meeting?

What topics are most important to you to discuss in the meeting? Think about what is most important to you – sometimes meetings are limited in the amount of time everyone has, and you want to prioritize, or decide on, what is most important for you to talk about.

What topics should not be addressed in the meeting?

How would your team know if you are not having a good meeting experience?

What would you like to happen if the meeting is not going well?



Once you work out the date and time, fill in the next page!

My Meeting

The Basics:

Date:	Who will attend?	Invitation sent?
Time:	1. Me	
Place:	2.	
	3.	
	4.	
	5.	

What I want to have on my plan:

Goal area	Work on now?	Goal	People to help
Interests/activities	Yes/No		
Living Environment	Yes/No		
Employment	Yes/No		
Learning	Yes/No		
Finances	Yes/No		
Lifestyle/Health	Yes/No		
Spirituality	Yes/No		
Relationships	Yes/No		
Psychiatric symptoms/mental health	Yes/No		
Safety and legal	Yes/No		
Drug and alcohol use	Yes/No		
Other	Yes/No		

After the meeting – Things for me to follow up on:

Next Steps

Congratulations! You've gotten this far, and taken some important first steps in moving forward in your life. You've made a plan for how you'd like your treatment plan meeting, and you may have even scheduled it.

If you're nervous about having the meeting, know that most people are when going into a treatment planning meeting, especially if it is something new for you. Change and new things challenge us all, and sometimes it is helpful to have someone come with you. This might be a friend, a family member, a peer specialist, or a pastor or spiritual counselor. Whoever you feel would be supportive to you is someone who can join you in your meeting.

This is a first step of many. You can feel proud to be starting this journey towards recovery and wellness, and towards whatever you seek in your life.

The next few pages have some additional resources that you might find helpful, including a sample of a treatment plan, so that you can see how it might come together. Your provider may use a different style of form, but the pieces of it should be there; in other words, it might look different, but it will still have a goal, a short term objective, and what you and your provider will do to help you get there. Take a look!



Next page: Planning ahead

Appendix A

Planning Ahead

It's important when you are driving your treatment plans and goals to plan ahead for those times when you might not be in a position to make decisions for yourself. This can happen due to a medical emergency (being unconscious, for example) or a psychiatric emergency (losing touch with reality, an increase in symptoms so that you can't care for yourself, for example).

One tool to help with those times is called an **Advance Directive**. This is a legal document that lays out what you want to have happen in certain situations – what kind of medications you do or do not want to take, what kinds of treatments work for you and what does not work for you, who you want to act as the legally designated person to make decisions for you (also called a conservator) in the event that you are found unable to make decisions for yourself.

These are all very important things to think about to keep you in the driver seat of your care. Take a look at the Advance Directive document found here

www.nrc-pad.org/content/view/354/80/

and start to think about how you would like to see your care directed during a crisis. When you are ready to put the document in motion it would be a good idea to make an appointment to sit down with an attorney or legal advocate to make sure everything is put together the way you want it.

More information about using advance directives can be found here:

❖ www.nrc-pad.org/content/view/187/67/

Another resource for planning ahead for difficult times is Mary Ellen Copeland's **Wellness Recovery Action Plan**, or WRAP. This is a plan that *you* put together as the expert of your own experience. It includes identifying daily wellness tools, what happens when things start to get worse for you, how you would like things handled in a crisis, and what to do after a crisis has passed.

What is the difference between a WRAP plan and a Recovery Treatment Plan?

A WRAP plan and your Recovery Plan may share some things in common, but they are different in many ways. On the next page, we compare a WRAP plan and a treatment plan so you can see some of the similarities and differences.

WRAP	Treatment Plan
A WRAP plan is yours . While you may decide to share it with your clinician or provider, it is not required by anybody. You also do not need to share with anyone, unless you want to. Some of the things in your plan may be very helpful in forming your goals or planning for a crisis.	A treatment plan is something you develop with your treatment team or your individual provider, and involves making shared plans. As you may not always see things the same way as the staff, treatment plans may involve making compromises.
A WRAP plan identifies all the things you want and need to do to maintain your daily wellness. It also includes identifying things that happen to you in a crisis and how you want to handle them.	A recovery plan identifies your long-term goal(s) that might take months or even years to get to. It then identifies the short-term objective that will bring you closer to your goal over the next 3 or 6 months. It doesn't include a crisis plan and may not include all of your daily wellness strategies.
You can revise your WRAP plan anytime, and decide when and how to use it.	A treatment plan is generally revised every 3 months, although you can change it earlier.
A WRAP plan includes things you do that keep you well on a daily basis	A treatment plan is more specific: it includes small steps for you to work on that will get you closer to your goal
A WRAP plan focuses mostly on what you will do to keep yourself well. While that may include other people, and may include things like going to a group or a therapist, the plan focuses on your steps towards wellness.	A treatment plan includes both your action steps, but also identifies what your provider , like your psychiatrist or job coach, is going to do to assist you in moving towards your goal.



Next page: A sample of a recovery plan

Sample Recovery Plan - Thomas

The following is a sample plan for Thomas, whose goal is to get a job and go back to work. First is the goal, followed by Thomas' strengths, and also the "barriers" that are getting in the way of him working. For Thomas, he is having trouble right now with feeling anxious and somewhat depressed, and this is holding him back from going back to work. The short-term objective (small first step) for Thomas is for him to work at a job for 5 or more hours a week. This might seem small, but it would be a good step for Thomas to work towards his longer-term goal of going back to work full-time and getting off of disability. Take a look – the plan should tell a story about how Thomas is going to move towards his goal.

GOAL	<i>Goals are what you want to work on in your life, and should be in your own words.</i>	
I want to go back to work. I really want a job.		
BARRIERS	<i>Barriers are things that stand in the way for you in accomplishing your goal.</i>	STRENGTHS <i>Strengths are those things that you're good at, your talents, abilities, skills, and also past experiences,</i>
<p>Thomas feels nervous and anxious during attempts to fill out applications or look into job openings</p> <p>He has difficulty getting up in the morning, due to intense sadness and crying</p> <p>He needs assistance with filling out paperwork and creating a resume</p>		<p>Strong work ethic</p> <p>History of previous work as a cashier</p> <p>Good communicator</p> <p>Strong connection to peer recovery mentor at mental health center</p>
OBJECTIVE	<i>An objective is the short-term step that moves you towards your bigger goal.</i>	
In the next 90 days, Thomas will work in paid employment at least 5 hours per week.		

INTERVENTIONS

Interventions are the actions that you, your provider or your natural supporter will do to help you accomplish your objective and get you towards your goal.

Psychiatrist to meet with Thomas 1 time monthly for 30 minutes for the next 3 months to adjust medication and decrease symptoms

Primary clinician, LCSW, to meet weekly with Thomas for 45 minutes for 3 months to provide CBT coping strategies (e.g., thought stopping, visualization, deep breathing) to help manage his symptoms which increase when he is pursuing job related activities

Job Coach to provide support to Thomas by helping him work on his resume and job applications, for 3 months.

Thomas to finish his resume in the next 6 weeks, with the assistance of his job coach.

Thomas to participate in Wellness Recovery Action Planning group (facilitated by his peer recovery mentor) every other week to come up with simple, safe, and effective strategies for staying well and increasing his sense of control over his life and symptoms.



Next page: Other resources

Other Resources

For resources in TX, www.viahope.org the for information about mental health and peer support services.

By phone you can call 211 Infoline for more information and referrals to services

For more information about Mary Ellen Copeland's Wellness Recovery Action Plan, visit here: www.mentalhealthrecovery.com

For advocacy resources in Texas, Texas Catalyst for Empowerment, www.mytce.org, and Disability Rights Texas www.disabilityrightstx.org

The National Empowerment Center, www.power2u.org

The National Research and Training Center (NRTC) in Chicago, IL, has several good tools on their website <http://www.cmhsrp.uic.edu/nrtc/tools.asp>

The UPenn Collaborative on Community Integration also has some interesting resources on their site, www.upennrrtc.org/resources/index.php



Next page: Your rights in the CT Mental Health system



FOR RIGHTS VIOLATIONS/QUESTIONS

Please call our Rights Protection Officers:

**AMBER FELLER
KRIS ANN TAMEZ**

24-hour HOTLINE (512) 244-8324

Or you may contact:

**The Office of
Consumer Services and Rights Protection
1-800-252-8154**

FOR ABUSE OR NEGLECT

Please call and report to
The Department of Family and Protective Services
24-hour HOTLINE 1-800-647-7418

