


The Road to Recovery



hafal's guide for people
with a serious mental illness



This guide gives you tips on how to move forward on the road to recovery when you have a mental illness. It's designed for people with serious mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and other illnesses which involve psychosis (losing touch with reality or experiencing delusions) or high levels of care, and which may require hospital treatment.

This guide is based on the experiences of Members of mental health charity Hafal – people who have direct experience of serious mental illness.

Starting your journey...

When you've got a mental illness it's important to **stay positive, keep safe and plan your journey to recovery.**



If you think you have a mental illness the **first** thing to do – if you haven't already done it – is to **go to your doctor.** They will be able to help you directly, or to refer you to other services.

This guide gives you some advice on what you can do yourself, but we recommend that you discuss your plans with your doctor, care coordinator or another health professional who you have contact with.



What is recovery?



This is how Hafal Members describe recovery:

“Being in control.”

“Moving forward.”

“Achieving a better quality of life.”

“Feeling happier.”

“Having good mental health again.”

Can anyone recover from mental illness? **Yes.** Recovery is for everybody. Some people may not get completely better but everyone can make important improvements to their lives.

Hafal Members have found that recovery depends on **three key things:**

1. Taking control.
2. Planning ahead.
3. Looking at all areas of your life.



We'll look at these three things in the next few pages...

1. Taking control

To recover, you need to be in the driving seat. Other people can help you along your journey. But you need to be at the wheel!



Hafal Members have found that in order to recover they needed to take control of their own lives. In practice this means **making your own choices and acting on those choices.**

There are many ways you can take control of your recovery. These are just some examples:

- **Deciding your own future.**
- **Giving your opinions.**
- **Making sure your voice is heard.**
- **Feeling you are equal to everyone else.**

Being in control doesn't mean doing everything on your own. Family, friends and health professionals can support you. But it's important that you take the steering wheel and make choices about where you want to go!



2. Planning ahead

When working towards recovery you have to map the road ahead!



Hafal Members have found that planning for the future is key to recovery. We've found that the best way to do this is to think of recovery as a journey:

1. Think about where you are in your life right now.
2. Think about where you want to get to. What are the goals you want to achieve?
3. Think about the steps you need to take towards those goals.

Planning ahead and having goals helps you focus on getting better – and gives you ambition for an improved quality of life.

One of our Members said: “For me the first step towards getting better was writing down where I wanted to be in a year’s time. As soon as I had that vision I felt I had something to work towards.”



3. Looking at all areas of your life

Recovery means exploring all areas of your life and making improvements.



Hafal Members have found that recovery isn't only about getting the right treatment. It's about setting goals for improvement in all areas. For example, getting a job or finding a new place to live may be an important step towards a better quality of life.

These are the areas we think you need to cover as you plan ahead:



When planning your future, we advise that you look at **all** of these areas in turn.

We are Hafal!

Hafal is a Member-led charity run by the people it supports: **people with serious mental illness and their carers.**

We believe that people who have experienced mental illness at first hand know best about how to recover.



To find out more, or to get involved, visit www.hafal.org or contact us at:

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Facebook: search for 'Hafal'



For a detailed guide to recovery **including your own plan to fill in** download "My Recovery" from www.hafal.org or ask us for a copy!



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