



# Recovery for people with Bipolar Disorder

Medical science has not identified a straightforward “cure” for bipolar disorder but Hafal believes that all people with bipolar disorder can work successfully towards recovery. Recovery means regaining mental health and achieving a better quality of life. It is focused on enabling people to improve their lives in all areas rather than just maintaining an adequate existence. Hafal’s clients have found that recovery depends on these three components:



**Empowerment and self-management** means exercising rights and responsibilities in making choices about life (for instance, having the first and last word in any discussion about you) and taking the actions required to lead a life based on those choices (for example, writing a recovery plan in your own words or administering your own medication). *But it is acknowledged that occasionally it may be necessary for others to take control for reasons of safety.*

A **commitment to progress** involves actively taking steps to improve life. When planning your recovery it is vital to agree and act upon a step-by-step, goal-focused plan and work according to a timetable.

A ‘**Whole Person**’ approach (sometimes called a ‘holistic’ approach) means addressing all key aspects of life which together contribute to well-being. By setting goals in all areas of life people can approach recovery more comprehensively. Here we set out the Whole Person Approach along with some options for goals which people might set in the eight areas:

## Physical Health

You may choose to:

- Make sure you are registered with a local GP
- Take care of your health – paying attention to your diet, smoking, exercise and drinking
- Avoid taking illegal or street drugs
- Go to the dentist for regular check-ups
- Go to the optician
- Attend well man or well woman clinics

## Medication for Mental Illness

(You should consult your doctor before changing your medication regime) You may choose to:

- Find out about the latest medical treatments for severe mental illness
- Ask your doctor to prescribe the most appropriate medication for you as an individual
- Find out about side-effects and management requirements of your medication and talk to your doctor or nurse about them
- Take the right amount of medication which has the most benefit for you with your doctor’s advice

For more information on recovery, visit:

[www.hafal.org](http://www.hafal.org)

## About hafal

Hafal (meaning 'equal') is the principal organisation in Wales working with individuals recovering from severe mental illness and their families.

We are dedicated to empowering people with severe mental illness and their families to: **achieve better quality of life, fulfil their ambitions for recovery, fight discrimination, enjoy equal access to health and social care, housing, income, education and employment.** For more information, contact us at:

## Employment

You may choose to:

- Work full or part-time in general employment
- Get specialist support to sustain you in general employment
- Use a specialist supported employment service
- Use occupational therapy services
- Be a volunteer

## Other Treatment and Therapy for Mental Illness

You may choose to:

- Find out about a range of therapies and non-medical treatments for severe mental illness
- Ask your doctor about Cognitive Behavioural Therapy – CBT
- Ask your doctor about other psychotherapy/ talking therapies
- Find out about other therapies, e.g. art therapy
- Explore alternative therapies

## Training & Education

You may choose to:

- Study in full or part-time education
- Get special support to sustain you in training or education
- Use distance learning packages, e.g. Open University
- Follow work-related or interest-related adult education courses
- Take up self-study through reading, internet

## Money

You may choose to:

- Earn a salary or wage
- Apply for a student grant or loan
- Maximise your social security, disability or other benefits
- Enhance your budgeting skills
- Get information about debt or savings management

## Accommodation

You may choose to:

- Manage your own accommodation
- Share your home with family or friends
- Live in your own home with support
- Live in shared accommodation with support
- Stay in specialist 24-hour supported accommodation
- Live in hospital when you are seriously ill

## Social Life

You may choose to:

- Maintain relationships with your family
- Maintain relationships with your friends
- Live in a personal relationship with a partner
- Engage with a religion of your choice or tradition
- Be supported while using leisure facilities
- Use specialist supported leisure facilities
- Follow your hobbies or interests individually/ in a group

## Hafal

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