

About Recovery Tools

The purpose for using a Tool List is to enable newcomers to more easily and rapidly participate in a Recovery meeting. We encourage you to use this list when you initially attend our meetings, until you feel comfortable without it. Your Group Leader may have other guidelines for you regarding the use of this list in meetings.

These tools are quoted or adapted from Dr. Low's books: *Mental Health Through Will Training* (MH), *Selections from Dr. Low's Works* (SEL) and *Manage Your Fears, Manage Your Anger* (MYF).

Some Basic Recovery Tools

Treat mental health as a business and not as a game.....	MH ch.25
Humor is our best friend, temper is our worst enemy.....	MH p.108
If you can't change a situation you can change your attitude to it.....	MYF p.108
Be self-led, not symptom-led.	MYF p.114-118, 280-283
Nervous symptoms and sensations are distressing but not dangerous.....	MH p.115
Temper is, among other things, blindness to the other side of the story.....	MH p.159
Comfort is a want, not a need.	MH chs.13, 22
There is no right or wrong in the trivialities of everyday life.....	SEL p.39, MH p.157, 195-196
Calm begets calm; temper begets temper.....	MYF p.245, SEL p.31
Don't take our own dear selves too seriously.....	MH p.109
Feelings should be expressed and temper suppressed.....	MH p.178
Helplessness is not hopelessness.....	MH ch.7, MYF p.184
Some people have a passion for self-distrust.....	MH ch.29 & MYF Lecture 2
Temper maintains and intensifies symptoms.....	MH p. 219
Do things in part acts.....	MH p.246-249
Endorse yourself for the effort, not only for the performance.....	MYF p.13, SEL p.46, 132
Have the courage to make a mistake.....	MH p.203, ch.30, MYF p.60, SEL p.108
Feelings are not facts.....	MH ch.9, MYF Lecture 14
Do the things you fear and hate to do.....	MH p. 329-330, MYF p.197
Fear is a belief -- beliefs can be changed.....	MYF p.266-269
Every act of self-control leads to a sense of self-respect.....	MH p.166
Decide, plan and act.	MH p.42
Any decision will steady you.....	MYF p.5
Anticipation is often worse than realization.....	MH p.114-115, 146
Replace an insecure thought with a secure thought.....	MYF Lecture 1
Bear the discomfort in order to gain comfort.....	MH p.149
Hurt feelings are just beliefs not shared.....	SEL p.21
Self-appointed expectations lead to self-induced frustrations.....	SEL p.35
People do things that annoy us, not necessarily to annoy us.....	MH ch.48
Knowledge teaches you what to do, practice tells you how to do it.....	SEL p.118
Muscles can be commanded to do what one fears to do.....	SEL p.123
Temper is frequently uncontrolled, but not uncontrollable.....	MH p.39



HOW A RECOVERY EXAMPLE SHOULD BE CONSTRUCTED

Step 1 Report a single situation or event that occurred, an everyday event when you began to work yourself up. Focus on a brief description of what happened: specifically, what triggered temper and symptoms?

Step 2 Report the symptoms you experienced, both physical and mental. (*For instance, angry and fearful thoughts, confusion, palpitations, disturbing impulses, tightness in your chest, lowered feelings, sweaty palms, and so on.*)

Step 3 Report your spotting of fearful and or angry temper, the Recovery tools you used to help yourself, and your self-endorsement for your effort.

Step 4 Begin with "Before I had my Recovery training," and describe the temperamental reaction and symptoms you would have experienced in former days. What would have happened then versus what happened now? (*This will help you to note the progress you have made.*)

Learning to give an example simply and clearly in the four-step sequence is one of the most important parts of the Recovery Method.

This allows us to become objective. The best way to learn, is to practice constructing and giving a "good average" example. Here are the basics to work on as you go through each step.

Step 1: When describing the situation or event, be clear but brief. It's tempting to go into a lot of "background" and detail, but this is almost always unnecessary and even distracting. Practice describing the event in just a few sentences of basic information that outlines the situation. Descriptions in Step 1 must be both brief and precise.

Step 2: Describing symptoms. This step, like the others, should be kept brief. An important part of the Recovery Method is learning how to recognise and describe our physical and mental responses. This objectivity makes those responses seem less threatening and overwhelming. Avoid diagnosing "I became paranoid" and spotting (that comes in the next step). Just describe your physical and mental sensations "I felt flushed and angry, my head hurt," etc.

Step 3: Here you identify the Recovery tools (the "spots") that helped you deal with your symptoms. Use Recovery language and concepts only; avoid mixing in material from other methods. Be clear about how the spots apply to the symptoms and event, but don't worry about using lots of tools. Often just one or a two good spots are all that you need for an example.

Step 4: A crucial part of getting well through will training comes when we see how we've improved through our use of the Recovery Method. This step is important in helping us to see that improvement.



Some Basic Recovery Terms & Concepts

- 1) **Angry Temper** *negative judgments* directed against another person or situation. (resentment, impatience, indignation, disgust, hatred)
- 2) **Fearful Temper** *negative judgments* directed against oneself (discouragement, preoccupation, embarrassment, worry, hopelessness, despair, sense of shame, feelings of inadequacy).
- 3) **Muscle Control** controlling the impulse to do something that would *be bad for our mental health*. (Example: controlling your speech muscles.)
- 4) **Muscle Movement** commanding the muscles to do something that we are *resistant to do*. (Example: Keep walking when we would prefer to rest.)
- 5) **Sabotage** when we ignore or choose not to practice what we have learned in Recovery. When we don't do what's best for our mental health.

Averageness most of the things we experience, including nervous symptoms are average most people have experienced them. Only our tendency to work them up makes them seem exceptional to us.

Self-endorsement self-praise for any effort to practice the RI Method. We recognize the value of every effort we make regardless of the result.

Trivialities the everyday events and irritations of daily life. Compared to our mental health, most events are trivial

Inner Environment everything **inside** yourself: feelings, sensations, thoughts, impulses and muscles.

Outer Environment everything **outside** yourself: places, other people, events, and the past.

Spotting identifying a disturbing feeling, sensation, thought or impulse, previously unseen, then applying the right Recovery tools.

THE BIG FIVE

The 'Big Five' is a review of the first five elements above that are found in each example. We can spot on each element to reduce/eliminate our symptoms. This part is only done, after members of the group have finished giving their spots.



Recovery Examples

Ciaran and the hospital appointment

Step 1: I was in the waiting room at the hospital waiting to see the doctor, but people who arrived well after me were being called in first. I was clearly the first person and I got worked up.

Step 2: I could feel my face getting red and my legs were shaky. I got into a nervous coughing habit, I was sweating. I felt agitated and wanted to jump up and give out and complain. What was wrong here? I was being overlooked; these people don't have a clue how to run this place. I have to do something or I will be forgotten. I'm not putting up with this insult.

Step 3: My Recovery tools were 1) I have a judgement going against these people, and for the sake of my mental health I have to drop the judgement 2) I told myself that there is no danger in the situation, only discomfort 3) I told myself to 'remain cool, calm chilly and unemotional 4) I decided, planned and acted, and went to talk calmly with the receptionist 5) I fumbled and functioned. After the appointment was over and I was driving home, I thought about the situation again and I endorsed for how well I handled myself in spite of temper.

Step 4: In former days, I would have gotten into huge fight about the situation, I would have shouted at the receptionist to do her job, and I may even have walked out of the clinic in temper. I would have fumed and complained about it for days, upsetting myself and everyone around me about what had happened. I might even have picked a fight with somebody else that day, I would have been in such a temper.

Siobhan and the computer file

Step 1: I was running out of space on my computer, so I deleted some old files to make some more space. However, I accidentally deleted an important financial file permanently.

Step 2: My body went cold and my mouth went dry. I could feel blood rushing to my head, cold sweat on my forehead and I became dizzy. My thoughts were "Oh my God, what have I done", "This is going to ruin me", "I cannot cope, I'm so stupid". My mind was racing and racing, not even proper thoughts, just panic.

Step 3: My Recovery tools were 1) Have the courage to make mistakes 2) There is no danger in the situation, only discomfort 3) If you cannot change a situation, change your attitude 4) I gave myself the secure thought that "It's only the file that was deleted, and not my actual savings". I got some relief, but then later that night the symptoms came back, but I kept spotting. I endorsed for using Recovery, and for being objective.

Step 4 In former days, I would have gotten into a full-blown panic. I would have kept blaming myself, and I would have become depressed. I might have gone to the doctor and asked for some medication to calm me down. Now instead I was just in a bad mood for a few hours, then I just accepted the situation. I have learned to tolerate and accept things more, specifically bad things.

