

How To “Make Lemonade Out of Lemons” When Going Through Relapse, Remission and Recovery

Presented by Mike Buatti

“Life is like a blanket that is too short. You pull it up and your toes rebel; you yank it down and shivers meander about your shoulder; but, cheerful folks manage to draw their knees up and pass a very comfortable night.” --- *Marion Howard*

How To Make The Best of a Difficult Situation

Agenda

- Definitions
- Experts Say/Personal Story of Relapse
- Experts Say/Personal Story of Remission
- Experts Say/Personal Journey – Recovery
- Conclusion

Definitions

- “To make the best of something” – to do as well as possible with something that is not too promising
- Relapse – a deterioration in someone’s state of health after a temporary improvement
- Remission – a period during which symptoms of a disease are reduced (partial) or disappear (complete)
- Recovery – a return to a normal state of health, mind or strength

Self Management Prevents Relapse

- Identifying Your Warning Signs
- Taking Action
- Seeking Outside Help When Needed



Early Warning Signs - Relapse

- tension or agitation
- eating problems
- concentration problems
- sleeping too little or too much
- depression
- social withdrawal
- irritability
- decreased compliance with treatment anxiety
- idiosyncratic signs - behaviors that are different or “out of character” for this individual

Triggers - Relapse

- Go Back in Time – Remember
- Identify Triggers When “Well”
- Take Action Early

Taking Action - Relapse

- Building Healthy Coping Skills
- Identifying Stressful Situations
- Managing Stressful Situations



Building Healthy Coping Skills

- Eating Well
- Exercising Regularly
- Getting Enough Sleep
- Relaxation Skills
- Healthy Thinking Skills
 - Overgeneralization
 - Filtering
 - All-or-nothing
 - Catastrophizing

Identifying Stressful Situations

- Physical Signs
- Emotional Signs
- Cognitive or Thought Signs
- Behavioral Signs

Managing Stressful Situations

- Practical steps or tips:
 - Start Slowly
 - Give Yourself Time for Self-Care
 - Cut back on Ongoing Responsibilities
 - Make Sure Your Own Expectations Are Realistic

Self Management Prevents Relapse

- Seeking Outside Help When Needed

Personal Story of Relapse

- Hid from the truth/forgot what truth was
- Fetal position for 6 weeks
- Spun out of control into a deep depression
- Crashed on April 26th, 2012
- Destroyed, severed and crushed
- Wake up call

Reviewing Relapse



Planning Ahead - Remission

- Develop a plan when you are “well”
- Formal or informal agreement
- Outlines what happens if you relapse -
 - You or someone else sees warning signs appear
 - Defines what is next for you
 - Determines where to go for help; treatments to provide
 - A list of current medications
 - Contact information for your health professional

Personal Story of Remission

- Thought like an athlete – was proactive
- It started with a promise...
- Acceptance of diagnosis
- Built a treatment team
- Made a plan if it happened again
- Medication was one of my life savors

Recovery Line

Patient Zone

Empowerment Zone

Relapse

Dysfunction
Symptoms

Remissions

Stability
Awareness
Signs

Recovery

Education
New Life-Style
Higher Functioning

Recovery

“Recovery is the point in someone’s illness in which the illness is no longer the first and foremost part of his or her life; it is no longer the essence of all his or her existence.” –

Author unknown

Recovery - Transitions

- Lesson #1: Let go.
- Lesson #2: Try to make lemonade out of lemons.
- Lesson #3: Everything works out in the end.



Personal Story of Recovery

- Focused on wellness
- Stayed busy – developed a routine
- Exercise
- Good sleeping habits
- Humor
- Aware of stress
- Spent time with positive people
- Spirituality



