

A man with a full red beard and glasses is shown in profile, looking out a window. He is wearing a green t-shirt and holding a white mug. The background is a bright, out-of-focus view of a landscape with green hills and a body of water.

HELP for
HEROES

RECOVERY COLLEGE:
SELF-HELP GUIDES
TO RECOVERY

PREPARE:
**WHAT IS
RECOVERY?**

WELCOME

This guide is an opportunity for you to think about where you are in your recovery journey and the steps you need to take to move forward. It will take you through:

1. Defining your own recovery
2. Exploring the reasons behind personal recovery
3. Understanding what your recovery team looks like
4. Identifying your next steps.

HELP for
HEROES

BEFORE YOU GET STARTED

- + **HAVE A PEN AND PAPER HANDY SO THAT YOU CAN COMPLETE THE EXERCISES**
- + **THINK ABOUT THE FRAME OF MIND YOU ARE IN – ARE YOU READY TO APPROACH THIS SUBJECT HONESTLY AND OPENLY?**
- + **TAKE YOUR TIME, BE KIND TO YOURSELF AND REMEMBER TO TAKE FREQUENT BREAKS.**
- + **WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO DISCUSS KEY ASPECTS OF THIS GUIDE WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS.**

If you do not have any one at home to support you, please email getsupport@helpforheroes.org.uk and we will be in touch.

WARM UP ACTIVITY

Consider the following questions and jot down your answers:

- + **IF MONEY AND HEALTH WERE NOT A PROBLEM, WHAT WOULD YOU DO AND WHY?**
- + **WHAT WOULD YOUR IDEAL FUTURE LOOK LIKE?**
- + **WHAT DOES RECOVERY MEAN TO YOU?**

TIP:

When considering this last question, think about some of the following:

- + **How can I find my meaning and purpose?**
- + **What does being in charge of my recovery look like?**
- + **How do I become an expert on 'me' and what I need?**
- + **How can I maintain positive relationships with family and friends?**
- + **How can I best look after my health?**
- + **How will helping others aide my recovery?**
- + **What support do I need?**

Now look back over the notes you have made and if you'd like to, discuss these with family and friends.

**TAKE
A BREAK**

**HELP for
HEROES**

1. DEFINING YOUR OWN RECOVERY

Now that you've started to think about what recovery means to you, we're going to take a look at some different definitions. Consider each one and jot down anything that resonates with you.

At the end of this exercise, you're going to try writing down your own definition of recovery.

DEFINITION 1:

In 1993, Dr Nathan Anthony said:

“Recovery is a deeply personal, unique process of changing one’s attitudes, values, feelings, goals, skills and roles. It is a way of living a satisfying, hopeful, and contributing life even with limitations caused by the (wound, injury) illness. Recovery involves the development of new meaning and purpose in one’s life as one grows beyond the catastrophic effects of mental (physical) illness.”

DEFINITION 2:

Laurie Davidson of the Devon NHS Trust says:

" Recovery is about building a meaningful and satisfying life, as defined by the person themselves, whether or not there are ongoing symptoms or problems."

H■**LP** for
HEROES

DEFINITION 3:

Psychologists Julie Repper and Rachel Perkins say:

" Recovery is a personal journey of discovery. It involves making sense of, and finding meaning in, what has happened; becoming an expert in your own self-care; building a new sense of self and purpose in life; discovering your own resourcefulness and possibilities and using these, and the resources available to you, to pursue your aspirations and goals."

DEFINITION 4:

Psychologist Patricia Deegan says:

“Recovery is a process, not an end-point or a destination. Recovery is an attitude, a way of approaching the day and the challenges I face... I know I have certain limitations and things I can't do. But rather than letting these limitations be occasions for despair and give up, I have learnt that in knowing what I can't do, I also open up the possibilities of all I can do.”

DEFINITION 5:

According to the Oxford Dictionary:

“Recovery is the act or process of getting better; improvement.”

PAUSE FOR THOUGHT

Psychologists Julie Repper and Rachel Perkins emphasise that recovery is not about symptom reduction. It is about gaining a meaningful and valued life. Here are a few key features/themes of recovery they describe:

- + Everyone's recovery is different and deeply personal. There are no rules of recovery, or formula for 'success'**
- + Recovery does not refer to an end-product or a result. It is not an outcome but a continuing journey**
- + Recovery is not the same as cure**
- + Recovery is not a linear process**
- + Recovery is about taking back control of your life**
- + Recovery is about growth**
- + Relapse is not failure, but part of the recovery process**
- + Recovery can, and does, occur without professional interventions**
- + Recovery is about Hope, Control and Opportunity.**

A man with a beard and short dark hair, wearing a white t-shirt, is sitting at a table in a cafe. He is smiling warmly at a woman whose back is to the camera. She is wearing a green and white striped shirt. On the table are two white coffee cups on saucers and a glass of water. The background is softly blurred, showing the interior of the cafe with warm lighting.

**TAKE
A BREAK**

**HELP for
HEROES**

ACTIVITY

Now try writing or recording your own definition of recovery. Read or listen to it often and amend it whenever you see fit.

“Everyone’s journey of recovery is unique. Each of us must find our own way and no-one can do it for us.”

Julie Repper and Rachel Perkins

HELP for
HEROES



2. **EXPLORING THE REASONS BEHIND PERSONAL RECOVERY**

In order to fully understand your own recovery journey, you need to identify what it is you are recovering from.

ACTIVITY

From this list, make a note of the things you feel apply to you. Add anything else that comes to mind at the bottom of the list:

- + PHYSICAL INJURY,
PSYCHOLOGICAL INJURY –
OR BOTH**
- + LOSS OF IDENTITY**
- + LOSS OF SELF-ESTEEM AND
CONFIDENCE**
- + LOSS OF EMPLOYMENT**
- + MEDICAL SET-BACKS**
- + LOSS OF OR IMPACT ON
RELATIONSHIPS**
- + LOSS OF MOBILITY**
- + MONEY ISSUES.**

UNDERSTANDING WHERE YOU ARE ON YOUR RECOVERY JOURNEY

The Kubler-Ross Change Curve is a model that represents the stages of emotions experienced by a person who has suffered a traumatic incident or major change in life. The stages included in this model are shock, denial, frustration, depression, experiment, decision and integration.

We do not move along the stages in a linear direction or step by step. A person tends to move into the stages in a random order and may sometimes even return to a previous stage after a certain point in time.

Each stage can last for a different time period, and it is possible for a person to get stuck in a particular stage and not move on from there.

UNDERSTANDING WHERE YOU ARE ON YOUR RECOVERY JOURNEY

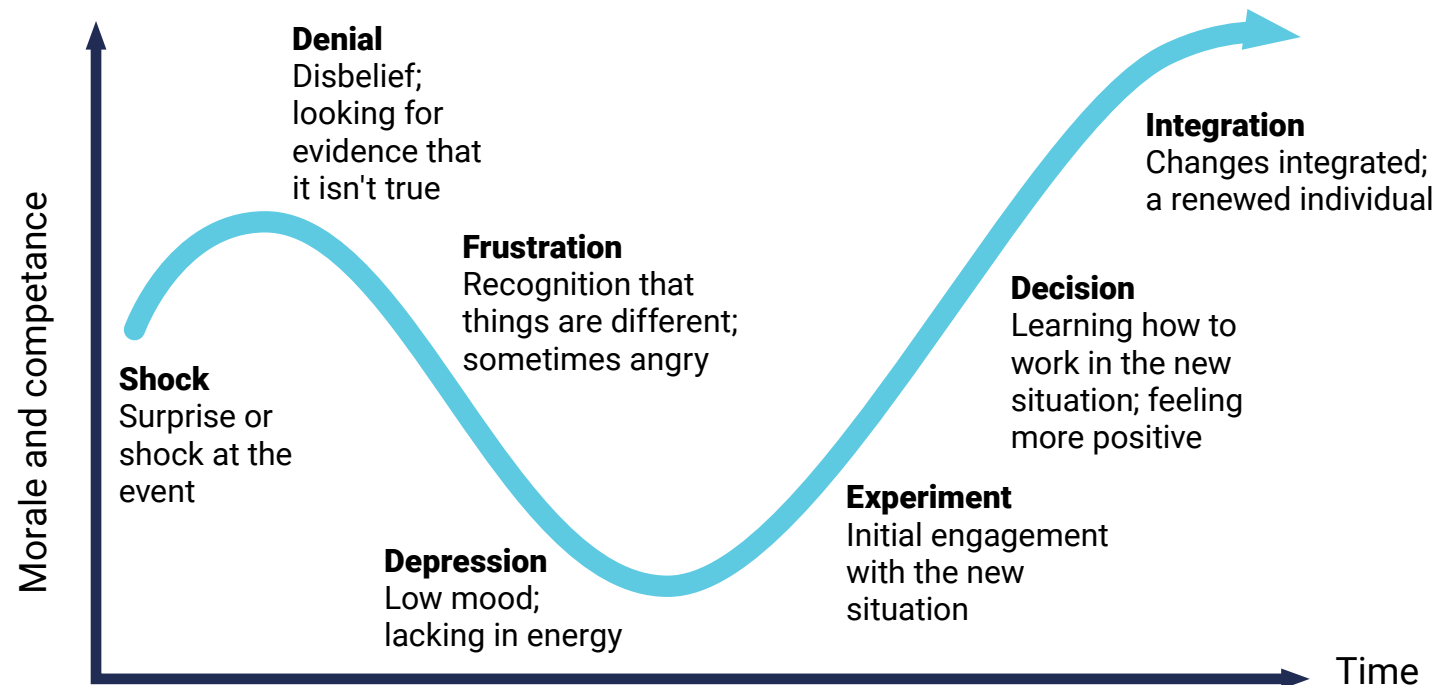
Take a look at the following 'Change Curve' diagram.

Think about your recovery journey so far. Where do you feel you are on the curve?

After defining where you are on the curve, what is your plan to move forward?

Write down your ideas.

The Kübler-Ross Change Curve



UNDERSTANDING THE THREE PRINCIPLES OF RECOVERY: HOPE, CONTROL AND OPPORTUNITY

Recovery is about finding ways to live a secure, healthy and fulfilled life, despite the challenges of an ongoing injury or illness. All the courses we run are based on the three principles of Hope, Control and Opportunity.

- + HOPE: THAT, IN THE FACE OF WHAT CAN SOMETIMES SEEM LIKE OVERWHELMINGLY CHALLENGING ODDS, A MEANINGFUL LIFE IS POSSIBLE.**
- + CONTROL: BY FOCUSING ON YOUR WELLBEING, ABILITY TO SELF-MANAGE AND INDIVIDUAL STRENGTHS YOU CAN FEEL IN CONTROL OVER WHAT YOU WANT IN LIFE, THE PATH YOUR JOURNEY TAKES YOU ON AND THE HELP YOU MIGHT RECEIVE ALONG THE WAY.**
- + OPPORTUNITY: TO DO THE THINGS YOU WANT AND THAT MAKE LIFE WORTHWHILE, AND TO FEEL A SENSE OF PURPOSE AND A CONNECTION TO THOSE AROUND YOU, OFTEN MEANS SEIZING OPPORTUNITIES OR CONDITIONS FAVOURABLE FOR ACHIEVEMENT OF YOUR GOALS.**

ACTIVITY

1. WHY DO YOU THINK THAT HOPE IS ESSENTIAL TO AN EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINED RECOVERY JOURNEY?

TIP:

When considering this question, think about the importance of some of the following:

- + **FOCUSING ON THE POSITIVES NOT THE NEGATIVES**
- + **HAVING A DESIRE TO MAKE THINGS HAPPEN**
- + **LOOKING FORWARD NOT BACKWARDS**
- + **HAVING AN ACTIVE PART IN YOUR FUTURE**
- + **COMING TO TERMS WITH YOUR CONDITION AND CIRCUMSTANCES.**

2. **WHY IS CONTROL BENEFICIAL TO YOUR RECOVERY JOURNEY?**

TIP:

When considering this question, think about the importance of some of the following:

- + YOU KNOW WHAT WORKS FOR YOU WHEN YOU HAVE RECEIVED SUPPORT AND WHAT COULD WORK AGAIN**
- + YOU ARE THE EXPERT IN YOURSELF**
- + YOU LEAD THE WAY IN YOUR RECOVERY, NOT SOMEBODY ELSE**
- + YOU CREATE YOUR OWN GOALS TO SUPPORT YOUR RECOVERY**
- + YOU TAKE CONTROL OVER YOUR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH**
- + YOU DEVELOP YOUR OWN RECOVERY JOURNEY AND IMPROVE YOUR OWN QUALITY OF LIFE.**

3. **WHY IS OPPORTUNITY VITAL TO YOUR RECOVERY JOURNEY?**

TIP:

When considering this question, think about the importance of some of the following:

- + TAKING UP OLD HOBBIES OR STARTING NEW ONES**
- + SETTING GOALS THAT WILL GIVE MEANING TO YOUR LIFE AND OPEN UP NEW OPPORTUNITIES**
- + STARTING NEW TREATMENTS OR THERAPIES**
- + GOING BACK TO WORK OR VOLUNTEERING, REMEMBER THAT EVERYONE IS DIFFERENT AND AT DIFFERENT STAGES OF RECOVERY**
- + LEARNING NEW SKILLS**
- + TAKING RECOVERY COLLEGE COURSES**
- + GOING TO NEW PLACES, TRYING NEW THINGS**
- + SUPPORTING SOMEONE ELSE'S RECOVERY JOURNEY.**

ACTIVITY

Focusing on the importance of hope, think about the four key questions on this chart and fill in your answers. These questions are not designed to provoke negative emotions, but to give you a chance to reflect on key areas of your life and how you hope your future might look.

Before	Now	Future
Q: What was your passion/zest for life?	Q: What is your passion/zest for life	Q: What will be your passion/zest for life
A:	A:	A:
Q: What were your hobbies/sports?	Q: What are your hobbies/sports?	Q: What hobbies/sports will you be involved with?
A:	A:	A:
Q: Describe what your circle of friends was like	Q: Describe what your circle of friends is like	Q: What would you like your circle of friends to look like
A:	A:	A:
Q: How hopeful were you?	Q: How hopeful are you?	Q: How hopeful would you like to be in the future?
A:	A:	A:

Psychologist Patricia Deegan says:

“Recovery is about building a meaningful and satisfying life, as defined by the person themselves, whether or not there are ongoing symptoms or problems.”



**HELP for
HEROES**

3. **UNDERSTANDING WHAT YOUR RECOVERY TEAM LOOKS LIKE**

Having a support network around you is an important part of the recovery process. Here, we ask you to consider who your support network is and how they might best aid you on your journey.

HELP for
HEROES



ACTIVITY

Write down a list of who is in your recovery team. Break it down into two groups:

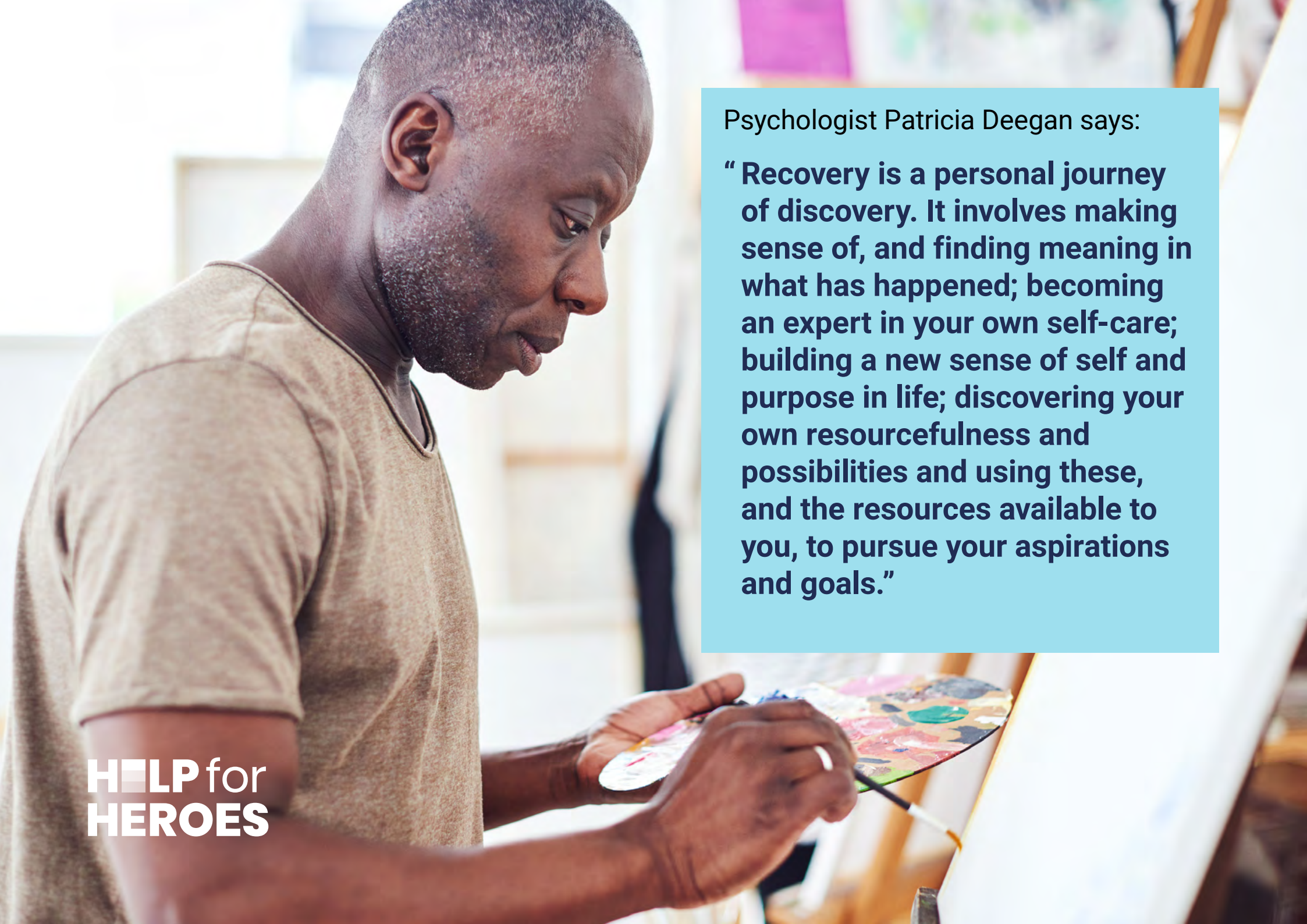
- + **NON-PROFESSIONAL
(FOR EXAMPLE FAMILY, FRIENDS, COLLEAGUES, FELLOW VETERANS)**
- + **PROFESSIONAL (I.E. YOUR DOCTOR, MENTOR, COACH, PHYSIO).**

Looking at your list, jot down your answers to the following questions:

Are all areas of your recovery covered?

- + **PHYSICAL?**
- + **PSYCHOLOGICAL/EMOTIONAL?**
- + **MEDICAL?**

Have you identified any gaps in your support? If so, who do you need to speak to in order to address them?



Psychologist Patricia Deegan says:

“Recovery is a personal journey of discovery. It involves making sense of, and finding meaning in what has happened; becoming an expert in your own self-care; building a new sense of self and purpose in life; discovering your own resourcefulness and possibilities and using these, and the resources available to you, to pursue your aspirations and goals.”

**HELP for
HEROES**

4. **IDENTIFYING YOUR NEXT STEPS**

As you have worked through this guide, you will have made lots of notes that have helped you to think about:

- + YOUR DEFINITION OF RECOVERY**
- + WHAT YOU ARE RECOVERING FROM**
- + WHAT YOUR HOPES ARE FOR THE FUTURE**
- + WHO IS IN YOUR SUPPORT NETWORK, AND ANY GAPS THAT NEED TO BE FILLED.**

HELP for
HEROES



SO WHAT'S NEXT?

There are three practical steps you can take to keep your recovery journey moving forward.

1. ASSEMBLE A 'RECOVERY TOOLBOX'.

You've already started to assemble one in this guide, by writing down your thoughts and feelings about recovery and identifying the areas you'd like to focus on. Keep the momentum going. Lots of people find keeping a 'recovery journal' helpful – jotting down their thoughts about their journey as they go along. You could try adding motivational quotes to it too, such as the ones supplied in this guide.

2. SET YOURSELF SOME RECOVERY GOALS!

Goal setting is important - it will help you to focus and keep moving forwards in your recovery journey. In the next guide in this series, we'll talk about how to set yourself achievable goals, using the SMART goal technique.

3. WORK THROUGH OTHER RELEVANT SELF-HELP GUIDES

Once you've set your SMART goals, you'll be ready to move forward by working through the rest of our self-help guides and continue your recovery journey.

Psychologist Patricia Deegan says:

“Everyone experiences the challenge of recovery at some point in life. Recovery is a process of healing physically and emotionally, of adjusting one’s attitudes, feelings, perceptions, beliefs, roles and goals in life. It is a painful process, yet often one of self-discovery, self-renewal and transformation. Recovery is a deeply emotional response. Recovery involves creating a new personal vision of one’s self.”



H■**LP** for
HEROES

AND FINALLY...

Remember that everyone's recovery journey is unique to them, and that there is no 'set path' that should be taken.

This is a chance for you to reflect on your recovery journey to date, do a 'stock take' of where you feel you are and make positive steps to continue at your own pace. Now is the time to look forward to manageable, achievable, and rewarding progress.

If you have any questions at all, take positive action by contacting a member of our Recovery team:
getsupport@helpforheroes.org.uk