

Dedication

*To all those who have died before recovery became
a reality: if there is an after-life, may you find recovery
and healing there. To all those who still await recovery:
it is yours for the taking.*

Contents

Acknowledgments

Introduction to the Third Edition

1. **The Making of a Schizophrenic**
2. **Steppingstones to Recovery**
 - Travelling the recovery road: Navigators
 - Travelling the recovery road: Mapmakers
 - Travelling the recovery road: Anchors
 - People
 - The self
 - Ownership
 - Recovery and discovery
3. **Defining Recovery**
 - What do we mean by recovery?
 - Clinical recovery
 - Spot the difference
 - Defensive practice
 - Medication
 - Stopping medication: A dangerous dilemma
 - Electro-convulsive therapy
 - Psychosurgery
 - Damage limitation
 - Social recovery
 - Economic and residential independence
 - Abnormal behaviour
 - Criminality
 - Social relationships
 - Methodology

4. **Construction, Deconstruction, and Reconstruction . . .**

.....

- Power or empower: Is that the question?
- The hearing voices movement
- The role of the self
- Ownership

5. **The Professional as an Agent of Recovery**

- Recovery for the worker and the workforce
- A team approach to time management

6. **Organisations as Vehicles of Recovery**

- Developing recovery practice
- Recovery and the statutory sector: Reclaiming the role
- Collaboration and reconfiguration

7. **Recovering Recovery: The Role of Person-Centred
Planning . . .**

- Care planning vs. recovery planning*
- Person-centred planning*
- The COPS recovery programme*
- Choice*
- Personal development planning*
- The PIE approach*
- A case example: Jenny*

8. **War or Peace, What's it to be?**

- The road to recovery*

References

Index

Introduction to the Third Edition

Mental illness, madness, or whatever you choose to call it, has been a preoccupation of mine from the first day that I walked - or rather was dragged - into the Royal Free psychiatric unit in London. That was the day that a psychiatrist who had known me for less than one hour concluded that I was suffering from a mental illness called schizophrenia. This one-hour meeting changed my whole life. Admittedly my life up to this point had not been the most enjoyable life on record. Indeed, it had been a fairly lonely and unhappy existence. A few months as an in-patient changed all that. Far from being lonely and unhappy, I became totally isolated and depressed. For the next ten years my life was to be controlled by the psychiatric system. In that time my brother-in-law, on meeting me for the first time, thought: "What the hell is that?" He was referring to the pitiful sight that I had become when he met me five years after my admission into hospital. He later told me he wanted to shoot me to put me out of my misery.

Far from being a sanctuary and a system of healing, the psychiatric system became for me, like for so many others, a system of fear and continuation of illness. Like so many others, recovery was a process that I did not encounter within the system. Indeed, I can honestly say that it was not until I left the system that the recovery process really got underway in my life.

It was as if the system had no expectation of me recovering; instead the emphasis was on maintenance. I am not saying that those who worked in the system did not care for me. They did: they clothed me, fed me, housed me, and ensured that I took my medication. What they did not do was consider the possibility that I could return to being a person. Not as I once was, but the person that I could become; perhaps even more than I once was. Indeed, I could become Ron Coleman.

Within the pages of this book I hope to explore with you the possibility that recovery can be a reality: not just for the lucky one or two, but a real option for every person who enters the psychiatric system. In this new millennium there is a need to reflect on the past and to learn the lessons of history. Recovery:

An Alien Concept is an attempt to do just this. It is not an academic book, I hope, though students may find it useful. Rather it is an exploration of recovery, hopefully a guidebook, and perhaps a book that will encourage professionals, clients, and carers to begin their own personal journeys towards recovery.

This is the third edition of *Recovery: An Alien Concept* and it is my intention to make this edition the final edition. The main reason I am amending the book is to bring it up to date with my own thinking about recovery, both as a theory and as a practice. This edition contains new chapters as well as revisions of the original material.

In Chapter One I describe my own journey into madness, the life events that precipitated it, and the response meted out to me by the psychiatric system. In contrast, Chapter Two outlines my personal 'steppingstones' to recovery, including individuals who helped steer and guide my recovery process, and the importance of self and ownership in reclaiming one's life. In Chapter Three I explore current definitions of recovery, particularly the dominant constructs clinical and social, and discuss some of the inherent limitations in these descriptions. Chapter Four provides an alternative viewpoint, in which I examine the reclamation of personal power within recovery, including ideas on deconstructing the power of the psychiatric system and reconstructing power as a personal commodity. Chapter Five discusses the role professionals have to play as agents of recovery, both as individuals and as part of a team approach, and Chapter Six develops these ideas by exploring how the diversity of the recovery experience can be promoted more effectively within the statutory sector. In Chapter Seven, I provide practical guidance by considering the role person-centred planning has to play in ensuring a person's journey through the mental health system has an end as well as a beginning. Finally, Chapter Eight contains some of my reflections about the current crisis facing the psychiatric system, and suggestions for embracing not just the theory and concept, but the practice and reality of recovery.

I hope that those who read this book will find in its pages not only criticism of the present system, and the pain of those whom the system has failed, but also hope for the future, the inspiration of those who have recovered, and finally a desire to

make recovery a reality in this now decade old millennium.

Ron Coleman

Isle of Lewis, Scotland, 2011

Chapter One

The Making of a Schizophrenic

There is a joke that many service users know that goes like this: *What is the difference between God and a psychiatrist? Answer: God does not think he is a psychiatrist.*

There is another major difference between God and a psychiatrist. Whereas it took God six days to create the world, a psychiatrist can change a person's world in little under an hour. If the journey to recovery is a difficult one for many, it is often the case that the journey to illness is far too easy. My own journey to illness, far from being a series of biological or chemical events, was in simple words the culmination of personal life events that I had never dealt with.

Before I tell my story, I would like to point out that it is not that much different from the millions of others worldwide who have been in, or are still in, the psychiatric system. I am no braver or deaverer than most others in the system, neither am I somehow different. My story is an ordinary one, and should be treated as such.

Those of you who read the introduction to this book will know that a doctor in London diagnosed me as having schizophrenia. If you did not know this, then you have not read the introduction and should do so now. But my story does not start with an enforced meeting with a psychiatrist in 1982, it starts a long time before this. It starts, in actual fact, in 1969 with a young boy's desire to become a Roman Catholic priest. I was that young boy,