WELCOME!

Congratulations on your decision to take more control over your life!

As current and former recipients of services, we know it takes a lot of courage and hard work to make changes. The effects of mental illness can make even the simplest of tasks seem very difficult and drain us of our energy and resources. However, as you will learn in the first chapter, everyone can recover from mental illness and you are in control of your own recovery. You are the expert on yourself and no one can tell you what your path to recovery will look like. You will have to decide what works for you and what doesn’t. Your Workbook is designed to help you with these decisions.

For many of us traditional treatment has been only a part of our recovery. To get the most out of this program, we encourage you to develop real, authentic relationships by listening to and learning from people in your group and from others; to share your experiences with your peers; to co-lead the group; to find a buddy and to follow through on your Action steps. Real life happens outside of the clinic and your Action steps will help to make it real for you.

You are about to start on an adventure. What you do now will determine who you will become.

We wish you well on the journey,

The Bureau of Recipient Affairs
New York State Office of Mental Health
# WELLNESS SELF-MANAGEMENT (WSM) PERSONAL WORKBOOK

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WSM IMPORTANT POINTS
LESSON 02

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

What Wellness self-management is about

Building on your personal strengths
• Personal strengths are your skills, knowledge, talents, interests, intelligence, values, personal qualities and physical characteristics that you can build on to help your recovery.
• In WSM you learn how to use your personal strengths to support your recovery.

Making informed decisions
• In WSM you learn information that may help you make decisions that work for you.

How your cultural background affects your recovery
• Your family background, religious upbringing, life experiences and the language that you speak may have an effect on how you experience and deal with mental and physical health problems.
• Understanding the connection between your cultural background and the WSM program will help you make decisions that work for you.

Overcoming negative thinking
• It is very common for people to hold beliefs and ideas that stop them from taking steps to improve the quality of their lives.
• In the WSM program, you will have opportunities to identify and change ideas and beliefs that may be holding you back.

Taking small Action Steps
• The WSM Program is designed to help individuals take small steps that may result in important changes.
• Taking small steps can often make a big difference in a person’s life.
• In this program, you choose which steps you want to take.
• Some topic areas will be more important to you than others. However, the more steps you take, no matter how small, the more you will get out of the program.
• Having an action plan will increase the chances that you will follow through on taking a step that will support your recovery.
• Some Action Steps help you continue your learning between group meetings.
PERSONALIZED WORKSHEET: 
Thinking more about Action Steps

Below is a long list of possible Action Steps you may choose to take as you participate in the WSM Program. Check the steps that apply to you. If you decide to complete an Action Step after a lesson in the WSM Program, this menu may help you decide which Action Step to try.

## MENU OF ACTION STEPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When your Action Step is to better remember or find out more about the topic in the WSM Program</th>
<th>I'm interested in trying this kind of Action Step</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read written materials related to the topic.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-read the Workbook material on your own.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find out more about the topic through the internet.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk to a professional person (case manager, counselor, psychiatrist, nurse, pharmacist, etc.) to learn more about the topic.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk to a family member or friend to get his or her opinion about the topic.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk to a peer (someone who is also working on their mental health problems) about his or her experiences and opinions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk to a pastor, priest, rabbi or other spiritual counselor in your community to learn more about the topic.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When your Action Step is to practice something you learned in the WSM Program</th>
<th>I'm interested in trying this kind of Action Step</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ask someone you trust to support you in practicing a new skill.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pick a time and place where you can practice your new skill without distractions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write down the steps of the skill and carry the steps with you to read before you try it out.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When your Action Step is to express your thoughts and feelings about the topic in the WSM Program</th>
<th>I'm interested in trying this kind of Action Step</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Express your thoughts and feelings about the topic through creative activities such as writing a poem or an essay, drawing a picture, playing a song that relates to the topic, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When your Action Step involves getting support from others</td>
<td>I’m interested in trying this kind of Action Step</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk to one or more people you trust about your involvement in the WSM program. Invite them to learn about the program and let them know how they can be helpful.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When your Action Step involves connecting with resources in your community</th>
<th>I’m interested in trying this kind of Action Step</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make a phone call to set up a meeting.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask someone to join you in visiting community resources, such as self-help and advocacy groups, cultural programs, educational programs, religious or spiritual groups, social clubs or other groups in your community.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When your Action Step is to practice leadership</th>
<th>I’m interested in trying this kind of Action Step</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>During the WSM group, you may be offered an opportunity to lead or co-lead a lesson of interest. You would meet with the WSM group leader and work out a plan to lead one or more of the lessons in the WSM Program.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discussion Point:**

*What Action Steps are you most interested in trying?*
WHAT IS YOUR ROLE IN THE PROGRAM?
LESSON 03

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

This lesson focuses on ways to get the most out of the WSM Program. Some ways to do so are described below:

**Be an active participant.**
- You can do a number of things to get the most out of this program.
  - Take your participation very seriously.
  - Attend scheduled group meetings.
  - Follow your program’s policy for learning the material if you miss a group. Depending on the program, this may include attending a make-up group, covering the material in an individual session, reviewing the material with another group member or reviewing the material on your own.
  - Complete the Action Steps at the end of each lesson. It isn’t enough to learn something in the group. It is important to take what you have learned and then use it in real life. The more Action Steps that you complete, the more that you will learn.
  - Think about how your cultural values and beliefs influence what you are learning.

**Learn from each other.**
- WSM group members have an opportunity to learn from each other.
- Group members have a great deal of knowledge and experience to share that adds a lot to the information printed in the Workbook.

**Follow the ground rules.**
- For everybody to benefit from the group, ground rules are needed.
- Ground rules allow everybody to feel safe and learn together.
- Some common ground rules are listed here. Your group may want to make additional ground rules.
  - Treat people with respect.
  - One person speaks at a time.
  - Stay on topic.
  - What is said in here stays in here.

**Choose to practice leadership in the WSM group.**
- In many WSM groups, you may be offered a chance to be the group leader for a lesson of interest to you. Usually, two group members choose a topic that they are interested in leading. The group leader meets with these members and supports them in planning a lesson.

**Involve others.**
- Most people accomplish important things in life with support from others. Research has shown that getting support from people you trust, such as family members, friends or peers who are also dealing with mental health problems, may help your recovery.
- You may want to invite at least one important person in your life to support your work in this program. What kind of support you want is up to you to decide. Per-
Perhaps you just want others to know about the positive steps you’re taking to improve your life.

- Here are some ways a person can be a support:
  - Reading the Workbook with you
  - Helping with your Action Steps
  - Giving you encouragement to stick to the program
  - Asking about your progress from time to time.

**NOTE:** In some programs, your group leader or another mental health professional may be able to talk to the person you want involved over the phone or in person. The group leader may be able to provide:

- Information about the WSM Program and answers to questions about the program
- Ideas on how this person might be a support to you in the WSM Program
- Information about resources in the community that may be of value to this person.

If you would like the group leader to meet with or speak directly to the person that you want involved, please arrange to discuss this with your group leader. In many programs, a brief WSM brochure is provided as a way of explaining the program to others.

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**PERSONALIZED WORKSHEET:**

**Choosing and inviting others to support you in the WSM Program**

In this worksheet, you may want to write down the name of one person you are thinking about inviting to support you in the WSM Program. You may also think about how you want that person to help.

The person that you choose to invite may be a relative or friend or a peer who is also involved with mental health services. Please write the name of one person you would like to invite to support your work in the WSM Program. Then, check all the ways that you might want the person to support you in the program.

The person I want to invite is ____________________________

I would like this person to support me in the following way(s):

- [ ] Reading the Workbook with me
- [ ] Helping with my Action Steps
- [ ] Giving me encouragement to stick to the program
- [ ] Asking me about my progress from time to time
- [ ] I just want this person to know I’m involved in the WSM Program
- [ ] Other ways: ____________________________
ACTION STEP: Invite a person to support you

If you have decided to invite a person to support your work in the WSM Program, please talk to that person. You may want to tell this person about your involvement in this program, the goals that are important to you and how accomplishing these goals will make a difference in your life. Many programs will provide you with a brochure explaining the WSM Program and/or a copy of the Workbook to give to the invited person.

Who will you ask? ______________________________________________________________________

When will you ask? ______________________________________________________________________

Where will you ask? ______________________________________________________________________

What information will you give?

☐ The WSM brochure
☐ A complete copy of the WSM Workbook
☐ I'll share my copy of the WSM Workbook
☐ I'll explain it in my own words

What might keep you from completing this Action Step? _________________________________

How will you remind yourself to do it? ________________________________________________
HOW YOUR CULTURAL AND FAMILY BACKGROUND AFFECTS THE DECISIONS YOU MAKE ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

LESSON 13

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

What is meant by the term “culture”?

Culture is a way of describing the thoughts, languages, practices, beliefs, values, customs and traditions of a racial, ethnic, religious or social group.

People often see themselves as belonging to a number of different cultures. For example, a person may have an African background (race), grow up in Haiti (ethnicity), follow the Catholic faith (religion) and be a recent immigrant to the United States (social).

Some parts of your culture may be easy to recognize, such as skin color or the language that you speak. Other parts of your cultural background are hard for others to know about unless you choose to tell them or they ask you. This includes one or more of the following:

• Spiritual practices
• Healing practices
• Family customs, including the roles expected of mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, grandparents, etc.
• Types of foods and drinks you like
• Holiday celebrations
• Values related to privacy and disclosing of personal information

• Customs related to marriage and intimate relationships
• Music and art preferences
• Preferred ways of leisure or recreational activities
• Sexual orientation (this is an example of a social group).

Most people learn cultural beliefs, attitudes, values and traditions from parents, other family members and people in their local community. For many people, religious and cultural traditions influence their ideas about many parts of life. This is also true for beliefs and attitudes about mental health and mental illness.

Why is understanding your cultural/religious background important?

The connection to your cultural background will often influence:

• Your decisions about treatment for mental health problems
• How you feel about your mental health problems
• Your comfort with the people you meet in mental health programs
• Your interest in seeking help for your mental health problems.
Being aware of your cultural and religious beliefs and values may support recovery by helping you:

- Find community connections and build a sense of belonging that matches your cultural beliefs and values
- Make other people, including mental health professionals, aware of your beliefs about mental health problems and treatment so you can form a helpful relationship

- Find ways to improve your mental health that respects your cultural beliefs and values
- Better understand the sometimes confusing messages that you may get from family, friends, or other community members AND the messages you may get from mental health professionals.

**Discussion Points:**

*What ideas do people in your community (family, friends, neighbors, people in your religious community) have about the questions below? Are some of their ideas different from ideas you get from your doctor, therapist, mental health professional, or this Workbook?*

- *What is mental illness?*
- *What causes mental health problems?*
- *What is the best way to help someone with mental health problems?*
PERSONALIZED WORKSHEET:
Understanding your cultural background

Below is a list of YES or NO statements designed to increase your awareness of the connection between your cultural, family and religious background AND mental health decisions. Consider each statement and circle YES or NO.

**My religious beliefs affect:**
1. The decisions I make about taking medication and receiving treatment for my mental health problems
   - YES
   - NO
2. How I feel about my mental health problems
   - YES
   - NO

**My preferred language affects:**
1. Who I want to help me with my mental health problems
   - YES
   - NO
2. How I get along with the staff and clients in the mental health program
   - YES
   - NO

**The customs and beliefs of my family affect:**
1. The decisions I make about taking medication and receiving treatment for my mental health problems
   - YES
   - NO
2. How I feel about my mental health problems
   - YES
   - NO
3. Who I want to help me with my mental health problems
   - YES
   - NO

**My sexual orientation affects:**
1. Who I want to help me with my mental health problems
   - YES
   - NO
2. How I feel about my mental health problems
   - YES
   - NO
3. How I get along with the staff and clients in the mental health program
   - YES
   - NO

**My gender affects:**
1. Who I want to help me with my mental health problems
   - YES
   - NO
   (Do you have a preference for a male or female mental health provider?)
   - YES
   - NO

**My racial or ethnic background affects:**
1. Who I want to help me with my mental health problems
   - YES
   - NO
   (Do you have a preference to work with a mental health provider who shares your racial/ethnic background?)
   - YES
   - NO

If you answered YES to any of these questions you may choose to complete an Action Step to learn more about how your cultural background affects the decisions you make about mental health treatment.
ACTION STEP:
Learn more about how my cultural background affects my decisions

Choose one of your YES responses and learn more about it by talking to someone or getting more information about how this aspect of your cultural, religious and family background affects the decisions you make.

I want to learn more about: ____________________________________________________________

What will be your first step? ________________________________________________________

When? __________________________________________________________

Where? __________________________________________________________

How will you remind yourself to do it? ________________________________________________

Who could help you complete your Action Step? _________________________________

What might get in the way of completing your Action Step? ___________________________

____________________________________________________