Mental health recovery is an ongoing process, not a single outcome. Each person’s recovery experience is unique. By making a personalized, inclusive plan for managing a mental health condition, a person has the best chance of living a meaningful life.

Making Choices in Your Recovery Journey

Learn to Make Decisions That Are Right for YOU
Making choices begins with YOU being part of the decision-making process in whatever way feels comfortable.

Good choices are about what is best for you at a given time—they do not have only one right or wrong answer.

Sometimes, making a good choice helps to solve a problem you might have or moves you one step closer to achieving your goals.

Making choices and decisions along the mental health recovery journey is part of the process.

THE TOPIC

MAKING CHOICES
THAT ARE RIGHT FOR YOU

Some choices in your recovery journey are smaller, like what to wear or what to eat for lunch. Other choices can affect you in bigger ways and can be life changing. These choices can be harder to make and might include choosing where to live, what job to have, or what day program to attend.

One of the more important choices you may make during your recovery journey is finding the right treatment options. You and your team will work together to figure out which medications and supportive services are best for YOU and your needs at that time.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD CHOICE?

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THINKING IN THE SHORT TERM
AND THE LONG TERM

It’s easy to only think about the short-term benefit of a choice.

For example, staying in bed for an additional hour may feel great for the next hour. In the long term, it may make you late for work and get in the way of your goal of keeping a job.

Thinking about the long-term effects of choices can help you make good decisions.

Examples:

- If I start a regular exercise program—like walking for 30 minutes 3 days a week—after 2 or 3 weeks I may have more energy and could start focusing on my health.
- If I take my medication regularly, my symptoms might get under control, and I could start thinking about school for next semester.

Write down a choice you can make today and how it might affect you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My Choice</th>
<th>Short-Term Effect</th>
<th>Long-Term Effect</th>
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</table>

For more information, visit www.ChoicesInRecovery.com
When bigger choices seem hard or overwhelming—break them down into smaller pieces.

**EXAMPLE:** Getting a Job

You might decide you would like to work. As you think more about it, you realize you are not sure what type of job you want, where to work, whether to work full time or part time, or even where to start.

**Breaking down your choice into smaller pieces**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problems that might get in the way of working</th>
<th>If I want or need to go back to school</th>
<th>Whether I am ready and able to work</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jobs I might like</td>
<td>Getting a Job</td>
<td>What skills I have</td>
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<tr>
<td>When I would like to start working</td>
<td>Full time or part time</td>
<td>Who can help me in my job search</td>
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**Things to Consider**

- **Knowledge is power.** Get enough information so you have the facts to make important choices and really be part of the decision.
- **Make a list of pros and cons** and understand the trade-offs for each choice.
- **Get advice from someone you trust who shares your values.** Talking it out might help make the decision clearer.

**TIPS**

**Making Choices That Are Right for YOU Worksheet**

You might find it helpful to fill out and discuss this worksheet.

**In what areas of your life are you currently facing choices?**

Circle the ones that are important to you.

- Where to Live
- My Job
- Therapy/Support Groups
- School
- Meditation
- Relationships
- Other____________________

Who might be helpful to talk with about choices you are facing?

- Family Member
- Friend
- Social Worker
- Case Manager
- Peer Counselor
- Doctor
- Therapist
- Housing Specialist
- Other____________________

**Break down your choices into smaller pieces.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHOICE ONE:</th>
<th>CHOICE TWO:</th>
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<tbody>
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Making Choices That Are Right for YOU

MEDICATION OPTIONS

If you live with schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder, antipsychotic medication is an option that can help you control some of the symptoms of your illness.

If you believe medication might help you, there are options and choices. You should always speak with your doctor about the risks and benefits of any medication.

SHORT-ACTING MEDICATION

Oral medications are taken every day or multiple times a day.

Short-acting injectables are used mainly for emergencies or crisis use—like in the emergency room.

LONG-ACTING MEDICATION FOR SCHIZOPHRENIA

Long-Acting Injectable Medication

Long-acting injectable medication slowly releases medicine into your body over time to control symptoms.

These injections are given by a healthcare professional once or twice a month or even less frequently depending on the specific product.

Long-acting medication stays in the body longer, which is why you don’t have to take it as often.

Making Choices That Are Right for YOU Worksheet

SUPPORTIVE TREATMENT

Medication plays one part in the mental health recovery process. Other supports are also a part of the treatment mix and helpful for many people.

Circle the types of support services you think might be helpful to you.

- Therapy
- Employment Support
- Housing Support
- Peer Support
- Support Groups
- Other

MEDICATION CONSIDERATIONS

If medication is part of your treatment plan, you can begin a conversation with your doctor about the best medication for YOUR needs.

- What symptoms do you need help with?
- What do you and your doctor expect the medicine to do?
- What medication have you tried in the past?
- What risks and side effects are you most worried about?
- What is the difference between short-acting and long-acting medication?
- How will you pay for the medication?
- Do you have issues taking your medication regularly?
**Editorial Review:**
This Choices in Recovery newsletter received editorial input and review from Dr. Ronald Diamond, former Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Wisconsin. Dr. Diamond was actively involved in the community-based treatment of people with serious and persistent mental health conditions for more than 30 years. Dr. Diamond was compensated for his editorial support by Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc.

**Strategies for Success**

- **Learn from past experiences.** When making choices, think about past experiences where you’ve been faced with a similar decision. How can you apply lessons you learned before to your current choice?

- **Get the facts.** Collecting information and facts about the choices you are making will empower you to be part of decisions.

- **Ask for advice.** No person can be an expert in everything. There’s nothing wrong with getting help and advice from someone you know and trust, particularly when a choice is not your area of expertise.

For more tools and worksheets that can help you make choices that are right for YOU, visit [www.ChoicesInRecovery.com](http://wwwchoicesinrecovery.com)