

Welcome to Summer!

SUMMER is here, and hopefully there's going to be plenty to write home about!

Summer 2021 is in high gear and most of us are planning things that were on hold during the summer of 2020. It's a favorite season for many and for most of us it means more time outside enjoying summer meals and spending time with friends and family. Wisely, we are taking things in stride according to the most recent safety protocols. Being the patient patient isn't new to us, but following such an unusual year as 2020 we've had lots of practice! The process from going from leadership to self-leadership consists of adapting the values of Recovery as your own and doing so in an environment of continuous practice in meetings.

Dr. Low said that it takes time to replace our system of values

with the values of Recovery, and that requires the guidance of a leader. When we give an example and follow the four steps and practice applying the recovery tools, we are training ourselves to think Recovery. When we lead an example, we are training our leadership skills. The goal we aim for is self-leadership outside of the meetings. That is when we are able to remember and apply the principles we have practiced in meetings in our daily lives.

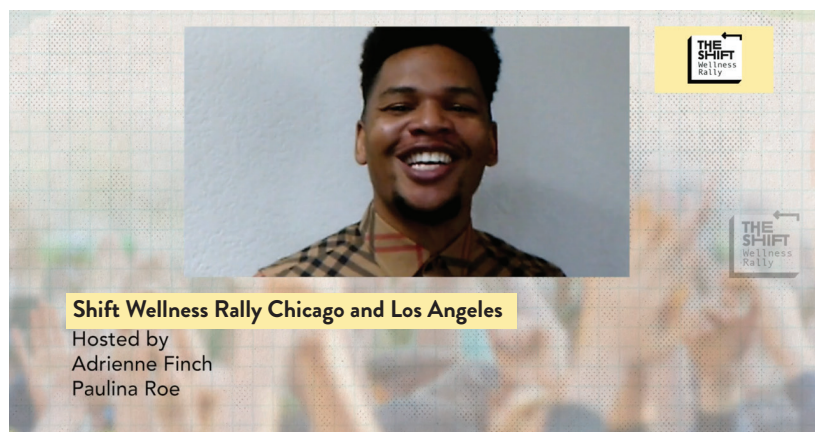
We've all worked hard over the past year, so endorse! What we know for certain is that there is always hope for our mental health regardless of circumstances.

Wishing you a happy, healthy SUMMER Season.

Your editors, Helen and Dave

Power Your Mind featured in The Shift

Power Your Mind and RI were featured in a virtual wellness rally held in Chicago on May 15 sponsored by The Shift, a non-profit organization with the goal to "empower every voice, enable access to mental well-being, and stop the stigma around mental health so we can live our best lives." Angela Sullivan showcased *Power Your Mind*, and Cory B., "a proud, new member of Recovery International," spoke about how Recovery tools help him deal with symptoms, temper and anxiety. He told how it helps him deal with stressors in day to day activities, like losing his car keys, being late with a homework assignment, or studying for midterms. See the video by typing <https://bit.ly/2U3ZgzC> into your browser.



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News from Headquarters



2021 Summer Update

As I am writing this, some RI Leaders are still determining whether they will re-open for in-person meetings post-pandemic. Some are choosing to continue meetings by phone or online. Some leaders are retiring. Recovery International will be a very changed organization! We must redouble efforts to train new leaders, to offer a wide variety of meeting options, and to reach out to people who need help.

People have many options to choose from in managing their mental health, and while we may not be the right solution for everyone, we are a good, solid option for nearly anyone. Anyone who is willing to take the time to learn our basic concepts of temper, environment, spotting and endorsement. Anyone who is willing to practice the 4-Step Method to identify and manage symptoms. Anyone who is interested in reading and learning the background and context of the spots we learn by heart in order to apply them in our daily lives.

We also must move forward to embrace new technology and new ways to communicate our materials and method to others. Ironically, we have made leaps and bounds in this area during the past year as so many of our members switched from in-person to remote meetings. We are less intimidated by using a phone or computer to attend and participate.

Whichever way works best for you—welcome! And help spread the word about RI and how beneficial it can be. Welcome and mentor others, too. Together, we can make a difference in eliminating the stigma by supporting each other and living more peaceful and productive lives.

With best wishes,

Sandra K. Wilcoxon, CEO

Wisdom of Dr. Low

Self-leadership

The group sets down rules, and we call them standards, standards of behavior. And the standards of behavior that the group sets down are not just in force this afternoon but over long periods of time. And the group tells you, you must always think of your work, not only of comfort. And where work collides with comfort, there you must make your choice in the direction of work. Again, you must make an effort and not look for comfort. But it's difficult to know what comfort is permissible and what effort is dispensable. And when the patient, for instance, wants some comfort, why shouldn't he get it? And he should get it if it can be provided. But if it interferes with a duty and obligation, for instance, the duty to get well, then I would advise the patient not to look for comfort and rather to make an effort to reach the goal of health.

And you will realize now that there are many opportunities where you don't know. Should I go after my comfort or should I go after my effort? Should I go after my obligation or inclination? After what I want or what I need? And in order to decide that, in many instances you must apply to a person who has excellent judgment, fine training, and solid experience. And that's what we call the leader. And in Recovery this whole choice is made easy for you because we have leadership. And the leader can tell you in what situation you may safely go after your comfort, and in what other situation you have to do, not what you want, but what you need, not to look for comfort, but to apply effort. And in order to be advised by the leader, you must have leaders, of course. And in Recovery we have to supply leadership, this means many leaders that will advise you. And that requires training.

And if the leader has to advise the patient that is in his group, then he must train the patient, for instance, how to understand what the leader tells him, how to use our language, the Recovery language, and all of this requires time. It requires time to train the leaders, and it requires time for the leaders to train the people in their group. And in order to take one's time, you must wait, and waiting is an effort. It is against comfort, and we come back to the whole, well, circle of the terms that I explained.

And the only thing that I can tell you, and you have heard me tell you repeatedly, if you want to get well, you must be prepared to wait. There is no task that can be performed on the spot if the task is significant. And where is there a task that is more significant than to restore your health? And then finally to effect a cure and to give you final comfort, not transient comfort. And that requires time, I must add again. And it must require particularly much time because we don't want you always to depend on leadership, but finally you must learn to establish self-leadership. And that's what we call self-help.

From *Manage Your Fears, Manage Your Anger*, page 274

Stories of Hope

“Averageness versus perfection - Don't let the things that you can't do stop you from doing things that you can do.

I have had therapists and other methods for my mental health symptoms, but I think that RI is a far better fit for me. With therapists, they tell you to talk about your issues but they don't give you any tools to deal with them.

I have intrusive thoughts. With the Recovery method, I get the tools to combat the thoughts that I have in the brain. When my symptoms come up I give them a name now. It's not all cluttered up in my head, with me trying to figure it out. It's easier for me to release things now.

When I used to get upset I would stay at home. Once I didn't go anywhere or do anything for a year. I don't do that now. Today, I felt depressed and I didn't feel good. I was having all these negative thoughts, but then I thought to myself, "I'm not going to do that today. I'm going to take a shower, put on my clothes, comb my hair and then put on a little makeup so that people can see me on Zoom." I knew that if I hadn't done that I would feel even worse about not being consistent with the things that I know that I need to do to help myself.

The one tool that saved me a lot was that "I can be average and not perfect." I used to say, "Don't let the things that you can't do stop you from doing things that you can do." But for some reason all those sayings would go away. When I found out that I could be average and not perfect, it took a lot of the tension away from me having to do things a certain way all the time.

I used to comb my hair for an hour trying to get it a certain way. But then I told myself, "You don't have to be perfect," so I stopped it and walked out the door. I think about that a lot now. Just be average about things.



The other tool I use is: "Things might be disturbing, but they're not dangerous." I always assigned danger to any and everything that used to happen to me. One time I went to open the patio door and I couldn't open it. I got really scared. Then I asked myself, "Why are you getting scared about that?" When I saw that I didn't have to assign danger to everything, it took a lot of that fear away.

Lastly, there is the tool about expectations leading to frustrations. I have all these expectations about every little thing. That's not reality either. That's what I'm working on now.

I need to keep working on memorizing these tools and coming to meetings to the point where I get this all down and I can rattle it off like other members do. I want them in my head all the time, so when something hits me I can bring up a tool. ”

Elaine A., Livermore, CA

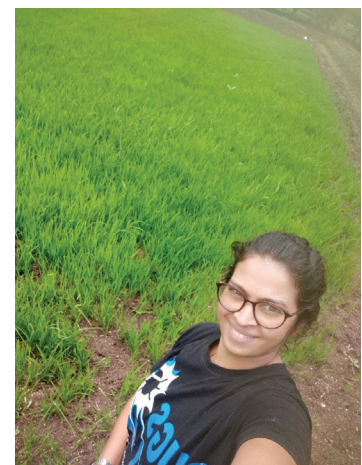
“Spreading the word.

I have been attending the Recovery meetings in Pune, India.

I am currently working at our farm, as well as preparing for my diploma course in Cyber Law. This photo is from last year's rice paddy. Now we are thinking of growing vegetables without pesticides and some flowers.

I have shared our Recovery tools with my new neighbor. She needs it. I am happy to see that she smiles. She was feeling relaxed while reading the tools. ”

Regards,
Padma G., Pune, India



Recovery Examples

Great improvement over former days

I had to call support to get help reinstalling an app on my cell phone, and reconnecting the app to my credit card. I was angry that I had to go through this situation and had fear of having to experience emotional distress. I had air hunger and body tension. I had fearful temper at my lack of technological know-how and angry temper at modern technology and its demands for increasing knowledge and skill.

The recovery tools I used were:

- Nervous symptoms and sensations are distressing but not dangerous.
- Comfort is a want, not a need.
- Do the things you fear and hate to do.
- Any decision will steady you.
- Anticipation is often worse than realization.
- Bear the discomfort in order to gain comfort.

I endorse for writing out this example and sharing it with my group. Before I had my Recovery training I would not have had a means of gaining objectivity about my situation.

Phil R., grateful RI member!

Courage to make a mistake

I was trying to set up a shared Google calendar with my wife. No matter what I did, it wasn't working.

I had angry thoughts about Google and fearful thoughts that despite all the time I was spending, it might end up in failure. I had tension and lowered feelings. I engaged in the complaining hobby.

My fearful temper was self-blame for my inability to figure out simple technology that I thought everyone else could do. My angry temper was that Google was bad for making things so difficult. I spotted that I needed to have patience, that temper blocks insight, and that I had the courage to make a mistake. I endorsed for moving my muscles in spite of my discomfort.

Before my RI training, I would have feared the possibility of getting into symptoms and avoided trying it altogether. As it was, I discovered the key and now we are sharing a calendar that makes planning our activities a lot easier.

David W.

Area News

A “Double Feature” for Mental Health Awareness Month

The Recovery International Annual Meeting on May 22 took a starring role in a “double feature” for San Diego Area 25 Members. First, we enjoyed viewing the virtual Annual Meeting at the San Diego RI office. Three of the group were introduced to viewers: Board Member/Program Committee Chair Judi Bakke, Program Manager Lisa Garcia, and Administrative Assistant Debbie Newell.



Then San Diego Members participated in the annual NAMI San Diego Walk. As with last year's walk, it was an abbreviated version as we marched around the RI office building, in keeping with current health guidelines. San Diego RI has organized a team for the NAMI Walk for over a decade now, along with other mental health organizations.

The new 2021 RI NAMI Walk T-shirt is powder blue with “Better Mental Health” on the front and “Plan, Decide & Act” on the back. A limited supply of the new T-shirts is available for a donation covering the postage. If interested, contact Debbie at the San Diego office at Debbie@recoveryinternational.org.

Kimberley M., San Diego Area 25

From L to R: Kimberley M, Judi B., Jeff B., Lisa G., Debbie N.

Roaming the Globe



Anyone, Anywhere, Anytime - from India to Uganda



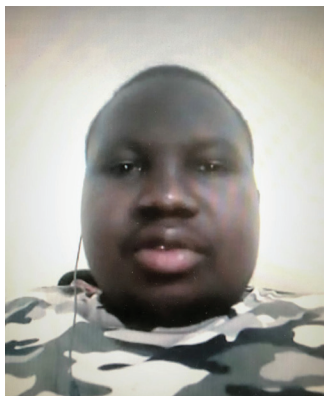
My name is Deepak. I live in Pune, India. I've had depression for seven years. I used to have panic attacks. Now, all of these things are very much in control. I've been attending Recovery International meetings for two years. These meetings are sponsored by the Schizophrenia Awareness Association. It's a diverse group, not only limited to people with schizophrenia.

We used to have face-to-face meetings but recently we are meeting on Google Meet. When we start the meeting, we divide up a list of tools that have been translated into the local language, Marathi. Someone in the group asks the four questions in the example format, and a person answers, telling the tools that he used. Then the other members tell him the tools that he used that he hadn't mentioned.

डॉ. अब्राहम लो यांच्या रिकव्हरी मेथड मधील काही महत्वाची मदत तत्वे.

SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT SPOTTING TOOLS OF DR. LOW, FOR DAILY USE

1. अंतरिक शांतता टिकवणे हे माझे सर्वश्रेष्ठ ध्येय आहे.
Maintaining inner peace is my supreme goal.
2. माझी मनःशांती ही माझ्या रागापेक्षा जास्त महत्वाची आहे.
My internal peace is more important than my anger.
3. असहायता म्हणजे सर्वस्व संपले असे नव्हे.
Helplessness is not hopelessness.
4. अस्वस्थतेची लक्षणे त्रासदायक असली तरी धोकादायक नसतात.
Nervous symptoms are distressing but not dangerous.
5. बाह्य परिस्थितीवर माझे नियंत्रण नाही पण माझ्या स्वतःच्या मनावर मी ताबा ठेवू शकतो.
I can't control external but only my internal environment.
6. अपयश हा नेहमीच्या जीवनाचाच एक भाग आहे. मी एक सामान्य व्यक्ती आहे.
Setback is part of life. I am an average person.



I'm Dickson from Uganda. I came to Recovery because I was going through depression and having panic attacks. I was not sleeping well. I was so stressed.

The first meeting I attended was a Zoom meeting in the United States. Because of the different time zones I started going to meetings in India with Deepak.

In that program I met so many good people. They are family to me. We shared a lot of stuff between us which is really helping me so much, because these guys are really caring. They comforted me. They told me, "What you are going through, you aren't alone." It made me feel like I am at home because, at first, I thought I was the only one who is going through this. So it is really so nice for me and I am really improving. But ever since I came to Recovery International my life has changed. I now think positively. I know that one day I'll be fine.

I look at attending more meetings so that I meet more people so that I can also lead a meeting one day. So I thank Recovery International for really helping me change my attitude towards my thinking of life, the way I think of myself and the way I think of the past.

Members Corner: From the Archives

Setbacks I've Known, by Treasure Rice

Dr. Low said setbacks are inevitable. So when Recovery members tell me they are in a setback, I think, "well, that's average — no danger." But when I have one, the picture changes. I feel wrong for getting into the setback and don't think it's average at all. Mine are divided into two kinds. The first kind is a pesky reminder that I must be sabotaging. I stop and spot it, and the setback leaves quickly. The second kind I call SETBACK (big capital letters). A lot of my old symptoms return for some unknown reason. Instead of accepting them calmly, I get scared and the vicious cycle gets going. I've had dozens of the first category during my years of Recovery training, but just a few from the second category, with years of good mental health in between.

In every one of my SETBACKS I knew that this time Recovery wouldn't work for me. I felt helpless and thought that I really had a permanent handicap. Days, weeks, and sometimes months went by with little or no relief. But I craved relief... NOW! What had happened to my Recovery insight? Surely others didn't become this helpless again! The symptoms I had were: tremors, disturbed sleep, loss of appetite, not interest in anything, fatigue, feelings of unreality, restlessness, and FEAR. I felt ashamed, too, and of course, that was the STIGMA!

I believed that my nervous illness was a disgrace. One of the Recovery techniques I did remember to use was to keep moving my muscles. I knew I could eat, that I did get rest if I stayed in bed at night. But I couldn't get away from my suffering. I was under the tyranny of my symptoms. My doctor told me to keep on with my Recovery training.

I know now that these SETBACKS served a purpose. I had to scramble for answers. I studied the Recovery literature, attended more meetings (when I could), I lowered my standards for myself, and I learned how to WAIT the Recovery way...with hope and lots of will to bear discomfort. This strengthened my nervous constitution. I sought out mutual aid with Recovery members and acquired insight into my self- diagnosing, and also how much unspotted angry and fearful temper I still had. Once again, I regained respect for my emotional health. It has come first because everything else depends on it.

So, I am grateful for those SETBACKS. The mental health I enjoy now I've had for many years. It didn't just happen. I had to learn the hard way by applying the Recovery Method, motivated by my suffering. I no longer consider my nervous illness a disgrace. I am grateful to Recovery International for the knowledge that if I do get into another SETBACK I am equipped with training that will see me through it.

Treasure Rice (a patient of Dr. Low and a pioneer in the Recovery organization)



Throwing it Back! Good times at the May 1977 Annual Meeting

Photos from L to R:

Treasure Rice and Celinda Jungheim, Los Angeles Area Leader;
Betty Keniston, RI Board President;
Phil and Maxine Crane. (Photos by Ralph Jungheim.)

Archives of Pioneering Neuropsychiatrist Now Available

By Carlos Sadovi, UIC

In 2019, Recovery International donated early organizational records and the personal papers of its founder, Dr. Abraham Low, to the University of Illinois Chicago's Special Collections and University Archives at the Library of the Health Sciences-Chicago.

The material was split into two archival collections: the Abraham Low papers and the Recovery International records. Processing is complete and both collections are now available to the public.

The Abraham Low papers focus on the life of Dr. Low, from his experience being a soldier in World War I to a professor at the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC), and the creation and expansion of Recovery International. The collection materials, including his personal diary, provide a deep look into Dr. Low's life, priorities and his motivation behind creating Recovery International. He had appointments at the University of Illinois Chicago campus between 1927 and 1954.

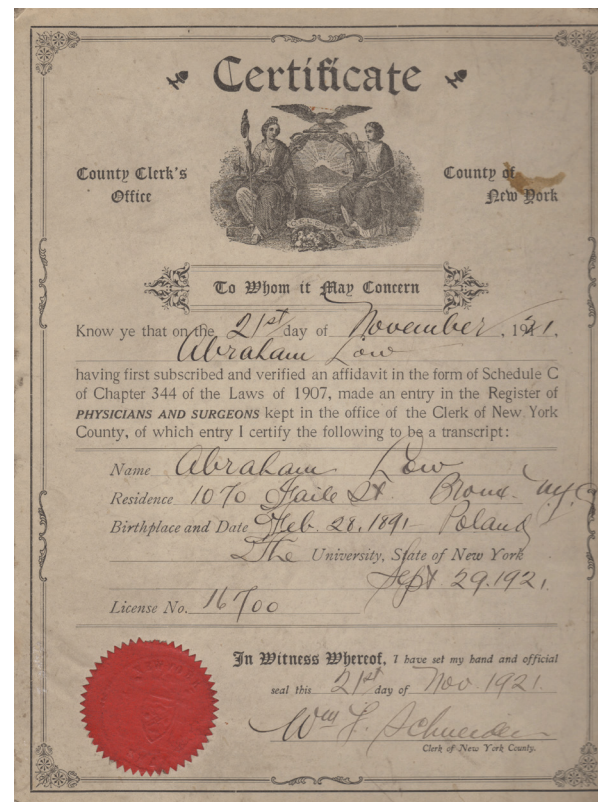
The Recovery International records are about the creation of Recovery International, the different locations in the country where people started small recovery groups that later expanded, and the growing number of members joining the organization. The records also include publications by Abraham Low, information about the organization and correspondence.

Processing was completed by Maria A. Vargas, then a UIUC School of Information Sciences graduate student. "Processing this collection was a unique experience for me because it was interesting to read transcripts of the group therapy sessions that Abraham Low conducted.

The advice that he would give his patients was attention-grabbing because he would help them process and understand what they were experiencing during past situations and helped them find a healthy outlet," Vargas said.

Researchers interested in mental health, and especially cognitive behavioral therapy, will find these collections of use. The collections contain correspondence with Dr. Beatrice Wade and Dr. Francis Gerty, both important figures in Chicago and national medical history. The Recovery International records in particular show the Low family's efforts to preserve Dr. Low's legacy and continue the organization's work after his death in 1954.

Both collections can usually be accessed in the Special Collections and University Archives Reading Room at the Library of the Health Sciences-Chicago. However, due to COVID-19, the Special Collections and University Archives Reading Room is currently closed to the public. UIC students, faculty, and staff may make a reservation. Remote reference is available. Please contact lib-spec@uic.libanswers.com or call 312-996-8977.





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See even more stories in
our online edition!

Book Study

October 10, 2:00 p.m.
Pacific time

The series topic is HABITS. If you received an email for the previous book study, you are on the list. Otherwise, sign up with davesdecafe@gmail.com. More details will be sent via email.



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Call for Submissions!

Have you or someone you know dedicated 25 or more years to practicing the RI Method? Help us honor longtime members as we feature our long-serving heroes in each issue of the Reporter. Send us:

- A photo
- What challenge/problem did RI solve for you?
- What are your favorite spots?
- Why would you recommend RI?
- Highlight the meeting you attend
- Include city, day and time of your meeting

Send to:
editor@recoveryinternational.org

Mailed items should be sent to:
Recovery International
1415 W. 22nd St., Tower Floor
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ALL Members! Please submit area news, group photos, poems, and musings celebrating how RI has made a difference in your everyday life.

Summer Gathering

On June 19 and July 5, 2021, members of the Friday, 10AM Deptford Library, New Jersey Zoom meeting got together face-to-face for a time of mutual understanding. "I insist that my patients associate with fellow sufferers in Recovery." (MHTWT p. 382). Following Dr. Low's example, Ann S. and Pat M. invited us to their respective homes. The fellowship of the Deptford meeting is essential to the recovery of its members.

