WRAP works! It was developed by Mary Ellen Copeland and a group of people who experience mental health difficulties. These people learned that they can identify what makes them well and then use their own wellness tools to relieve difficult feelings and maintain wellness. The result has been recovery and long-term stability. The WRAP program is designed to be in practical, day-to-day terms and holds the key to getting and staying well. It does not necessarily replace traditional treatments and can be used as a compliment to any other treatment options you have chosen. WRAP gives people the power, strength, and means to overcome their illness and lead fulfilling lives with healthy relationships, job readiness, and an overall feeling of wellness and health.

As Barbara says WRAP was a turning point in my life. It helped to soften my rough edges and stay on track. Before WRAP I was living a life often teetering on crisis.

WRAP has a broad applicability. While it was developed by people who have experienced mental health difficulties, it is easily adapted for other uses and has been found to work well for people who have other medical conditions and life issues and as a framework to guide interpersonal relationships, peer support, groups, agencies, and organizations.

People who are using WRAP say:
- I feel prepared for life’s challenges
- I feel better more often AND I’ve improved the overall quality of my life
- WRAP has fast-forwarded my recovery
- WRAP gets me in touch with my inner manager.
- I have HOPE for a better life!

Key elements of WRAP:
- Wellness Toolbox
- Daily Maintenance Plan
- Identifying Triggers and an Action Plan
- Identifying Early Warning Signs and an Action Plan
- Crisis Planning
- Post Crisis Planning
Hope

Without HOPE, what do you have???

Personal Responsibility

Regain control of your life!

Education

Know yourself, your diagnosis, and your symptoms.

Because knowing is half the battle!

Self Advocacy

Take charge!

You are the one who decides your future!

Support

Develop a strong support system to keep you on track and focused on life change.
**Goals**

To help participants’ recovery and self-management skills and strategies for dealing with psychiatric symptoms so as to:

- Promote higher levels of wellness, stability and quality of life.
- Decrease the need for costly therapies.
- Decrease the incidence of severe symptoms.
- Decrease traumatic life events caused by severe symptoms.
- Increase understanding of these illnesses and decrease stigma.
- Raise participants’ level of hope and encourage their actively working toward wellness, as outlined in the model developed by Mary Ellen Copeland.
- Increase participants’ sense of personal responsibility and empowerment.

**Objectives**

The following topics will be covered using a workshop style, including presentations, demonstrations, interactive discussion and related activities:

- **Hope, Personal Responsibility, Education, Self Advocacy, Support**
- **Understanding the need for good health care and managing medications.**
- **Self-monitoring /Symptom Awareness using WRAP (an individualized system for monitoring and responding to symptoms to achieve the highest possible levels of wellness)**
- **Symptom responses: finding and keeping a strong support system, peer counseling, focusing, relaxation exercises, diet, light, exercise, sleep, journaling, music, etc.**
- **Ongoing work:**
  - ☼ **Building Self-Esteem**
  - ☼ **Changing Negative Thought Patterns To Positive**
  - ☼ **Building A Lifestyle That Promotes Wellness**

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**Key Recovery Concepts**

There are five key recovery concepts that provide the foundation of effective recovery work. They are:

- **Hope.**
  With HOPE you can achieve anything and everything.
- **Personal Responsibility.**
  It’s up to you to take charge of your life.
- **Education.**
  Learning all you can about your diagnosis allows you to make good decisions about all aspects of your treatment and life.
- **Self Advocacy.**
  Become an effective advocate for yourself so you can get the services and treatment you need to make your life the way you want it to be.
- **Support.**
  While working toward your wellness this is better done by giving and receiving agreed upon support with others. It is essential to maintaining your stability and enhancing the quality of your life.
Expected Long Term Outcomes from a Recovery/Self-Management Focus

- A shift of focus in mental health care from symptom control to prevention and recovery.
- Significantly reduce the need for costly mental health, emergency services, and incarcerations as people who experience psychiatric symptoms effectively take responsibility for their own wellness.
- Reduce their symptoms using a variety of self-help techniques, and effectively reach out for and use the support of a network of family members, friends and health care professionals.
- Increase ability to meet life and vocational goals. Significant gains in self-esteem and self-confidence as people become contributing members of the community. With these newly found skills and confidence, WRAP can help individuals secure, maintain, and achieve success in a career, relationships and many areas in life.

1. Get good medical care.

At least once a year, and whenever your symptoms change or worsen, have a complete physical examination to determine if there is a medical problem which is causing or increasing your symptoms.

When you go to see your doctor take a complete listing of:
   a) All medications and health care preparations you are using
   b) Any new, unusual, uncomfortable or painful symptoms.

2. Manage your medications carefully. Learn about your medications, how they work, what to expect, possible side effects, and dietary/lifestyle restrictions.

- Take them only as prescribed.
- Use a daily reminder/pill saver system to ensure regular use.
- Get rid of medications you are no longer using.
- Don’t expect medications to fix a bad diet, lack of exercise, or an abusive or chaotic lifestyle.
Through careful observation you will learn the resources you need to do daily to keep yourself well through symptom awareness. With this knowledge and by using the tools you will be able to develop a symptoms monitoring and response system that will help you keep your moods stabilized. This system would include listings of:

- Those things you need to do every day to keep yourself well, such as eating three healthy meals and getting a half-hour of exercise.
- External events that could trigger symptoms, such as an argument with a friend or getting a big bill, and responses that might keep this event from causing or worsening symptoms.
- Understanding early warning signs such as irritability or anxiety that indicates your symptoms may be worsening and develop a response plan.
- Symptoms that indicate the situation is getting worse, such as reckless behavior or isolation, and an action plan to stabilize the situation.

You may use the following tools as part of your symptoms monitoring and response system to reduce symptoms and maintain wellness, or develop your own Wellness Tools to fit your lifestyle.

1. Talk to a supportive person
2. Attend a support group
3. Talk to your counselor, doctor or other health care professional
4. Peer counsel – communication with one who understands
5. Structured focusing exercises
6. Relaxation and stress reduction exercises
7. Fun, affirming, creative activities
8. Journaling
9. Daily planning
10. Exercise
11. Light exposure
12. Dietary improvement - avoiding caffeine, sugar and heavily salted foods
13. Increasing or decreasing the stimulation in your environment
14. Stop, analyze the situation and make a thoughtful decision on how to proceed
Crisis Planning

Write a personal crisis plan to be used when your symptoms have become so severe and or dangerous that you need others to take over responsibility for your care. Your crisis plan includes:

1. What I’m like when I am feeling well: Description of what that would look like to someone else as a reference point.

2. Symptoms: Description of what you are like that indicates someone needs to take over responsibility.

3. Supporters: make a list of supporters that can take over responsibilities. And supporters you do not want involved.

4. Medication: Provide a list of medication that you use and to avoid.

5. Treatments: List of treatments you would like and or avoid.

6. Home/Community Care/Respite Center: Develop a plan so that you can stay at home or in a community and still get the care you need.

7. Treatment Facilities: List those treatment facilities where you prefer to be hospitalized.

8. Help from Others: List things that you need from others that can help or things that people need to avoid.

9. When my supporters no longer need to use this plan: Develop a list of indicators that your supporters can use to determine when plan is no longer needed.

Give completed copies of your plan to your supporters so they have easy access to it when necessary. Update your plan as necessary.

If you are hospitalized or otherwise unable to take care of yourself or things at home, the Crisis Plan document becomes an Advanced Directive. Signed and notarized, it is a legal document that allows you to maintain some control over things while you are in a crisis.
Addressing Traumatic Issues

If you feel your symptoms are caused or worsened by traumatic events in your past, seek out a treatment program that:

➢ Validating: Others need to validate your experiences by listening.
➢ Empowering: You must be in charge of your healing in every way.
➢ Connecting: Trauma leaves you alone, to heal you need to reconnect.

Suicide Prevention

Up to 15% of people diagnosed with depression or manic depression end their lives by suicide. Make sure that doesn’t happen to you by:

➢ Treating symptoms early
➢ Setting up a system with others so you are never alone when you are deeply depressed or out of control
➢ Having regularly scheduled health care appointments and keeping them
➢ Throwing away all old medications and having firearms locked away where you do not have access to them
➢ Keeping pictures of your favorite people in clear view at all times
➢ Instructing a close supporter to take away your credit cards, check books and car keys when you are suicidal
➢ Always having something planned to look forward to
Develop a lifestyle that supports your wellness by:

- Using self-help books to improve your self-esteem and change negative thoughts into positive ones.
- Enhancing your life with pets, music, and activities that make you feel good
- Having a comfortable living space where you feel safe and happy
- Establishing a career or avocation that you enjoy
- Keeping your life calm and peaceful
- Taking good care of yourself
- Managing your time and energy well
- Spending time with people who are positive, affirming and fun

Because of the discouraging nature of these illnesses, and because it may take a long time before we realize the results of our efforts, many of us find it very difficult to motivate ourselves to work on our recovery. Learning and sharing information in a workshop has the substantial benefit of increasing participants' sense of belonging and hope and gives them the support they need to work on their own recovery and or assist others as they move through the recovery process.