

## **WHAT MENTAL HEALTH RECOVERY MEANS TO ME** **(Thanks to WRAP)**

Not to sound like a cliché, but recovery means everything to me. It is the foundation, the building blocks of my life. Without recovery, my life cannot be a full life.

Before WRAP, I was in and out of mental institutions on a regular and frequent basis. With recovery, I have not been institutionalized and I have plans in place to help me stay well and to be proactive with my health issues.

Before WRAP, I was my diagnosis. I was a depressant. I was an anxiety disorder. With recovery, I am Lisa, not my diagnosis.

Before WRAP, I could barely function in my day to day life. I gave up on my goals, aspirations and dreams. With recovery, I live my life to the fullest every day. I have goals, aspirations and dreams. I am working toward them and achieving them.

Before WRAP, I felt I was a broken human being, worthless and lost. With recovery, I see that I am a whole person. I have tremendous worth. My self-esteem is the highest it has ever been and I am no longer lost, but rather on a path with many avenues, detours and destinations.

Before WRAP, perfection was the goal and if I didn't think I could do something perfectly, do it better than everyone else, then I just didn't do it at all. I missed out on a lot in life because of my perfectionism. With recovery, I see the goal as progress, not perfection. I try new things. I learn from my mistakes and don't beat myself up over them. I actually welcome rather than fear new challenges and do the best I can. I am satisfied, more than satisfied, with any outcome, as long as I've done my best. Perfectionism no longer holds me back from living my life to the fullest.

Before WRAP, if I wasn't at the point I thought I should be, I became more depressed, was ruthless on myself and didn't recognize my progress, but only saw what I didn't achieve. With recovery, I now see recovery and life as a journey, not a destination. I have changed my definition of achievement. I recognize and celebrate every step forward and accept those steps backward that come my way as just part of my journey.

Before WRAP, I was highly anxious, stressed and tried to control everything and everyone around me. With recovery, I have let go of the need to control. I can only control myself: what I think, what I do. I take responsibility for my own actions, I don't judge others. I have learned to try to recognize the things I can change and work to do that. I have learned to recognize the things I cannot change and work to accept them in my life. This, in my recovery, has brought me great patience and serenity.

Before WRAP, I was a very negative person. I saw the world in a negative way. I felt hopeless. Much of what I did was negative. My negativity, in what I saw and what I did, brought negativity back to me and the cycle of negativity continued endlessly. With recovery, I have made the conscious decision to change my worldview. I see the positives in the world which leads me to do positive things and thus brings positive things my way. My cycle now is one of positive thinking, much hope, and great gratitude.

Before WRAP, I disliked myself, even hated myself. Now, I am who I am and I really love myself, inside and out. That's been my greatest gift of recovery and the true foundation for everything else in my life: the unconditional high regard I now hold myself in.

Sound too good to be true? I can assure you it is not. These are the wonderful things I have gained in my life thanks to WRAP. Honesty and personal responsibility are paramount to me in recovery and everything I have said is my absolute truth. And the fantastic part? Recovery is available to and obtainable by everyone, each and every one of us. We just have to learn about it, work at it and, most importantly in my mind, apply it in our lives. It won't happen overnight, but recovery does happen -- we only need to want it.

'It's a WRAP!'

Lisa Duncan