

Mental Health and this thing called RECOVERY

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If you've spent any time in the mental health space, you've probably heard the word "recovery" thrown around a lot. But what does it actually mean?

Recovery means something different for everyone because no two people's experiences are the same. Everyone's recovery looks different and there's no right or wrong. For me, recovery isn't a strict timeline or one where you move forwards and backwards with the goal of being "fixed". It's more of a journey. A spiral of growth outwards (keep reading for my tree analogy), and a continuous process of figuring out what helps me feel better and how to cope when things get tough.

Plot twist: **recovery isn't linear**

You've probably heard that before. But I mention it because it's true. Recovery (unfortunately) isn't this beautiful upward trajectory where every day is better than the last. It's full of ups and downs, tricky patches and good patches, and that's completely natural.



I once saw an analogy that depicted the journey of recovery as being like the growth rings on a tree and the difficult patches or trauma like a gnarly section or scar in the tree. These parts don't go away, but the rings keep growing around it. At first the new rings are noticeably impacted by this spot and must grow very differently to grow around the spot, but over time, the rings around the tricky patches even out and eventually the new rings aren't as impacted because each time you pass that spot you do so with a new level of awareness and perspective.



Despite recovery being non-linear, and the fact that life will throw you a curveball when you're least expecting it, there are some things that you can do to help minimise the impacts of the ups and downs.

One thing I've found useful is **tracking** (also called outcome monitoring). It sounds fancy, but it's essentially just a way of noticing patterns. What things help me feel better? What things drag me down? Having that info means I can actually do something about it, rather than feeling blindsided by a rough day.

Tracking doesn't have to be complicated. You can track **whatever you want, however you want**. This can include sleep, mood, physical activity, concentration or medication side effects (positive or negative).

There's no right or wrong way to track!



fitness watch

journalling

smiley face or sad face every few days



art

apps

recording sleep on Apple watch

note on your phone



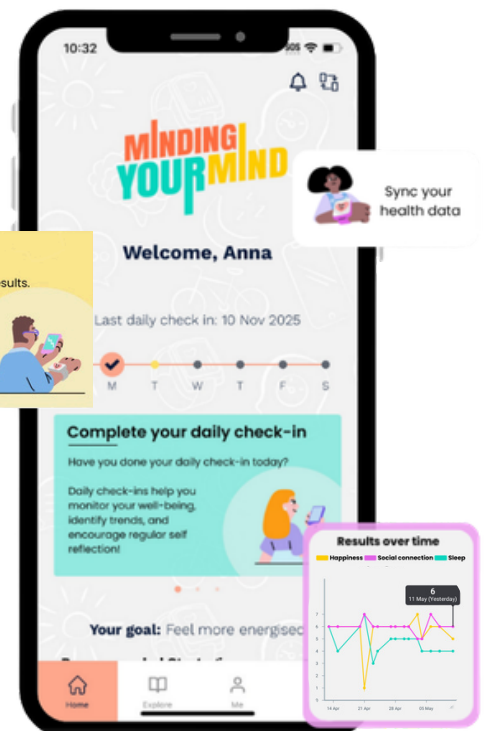
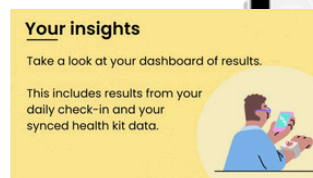
Apps, like the Minding Your Mind app can offer a more structured form of tracking. The Minding Your Mind app, which has been built with people like Tara and me who have lived experience, lets you **easily track information** using daily check-ins, **see your data** and **learn mental health strategies**.

It offers **daily check-ins**, a series of short multiple-choice questions relating to sleep, mood, and social connectedness

lets you **link your physical health data**

then it **turns it into graphs and summaries**

then it **offers recommended content** from the app based on your answers



It does the pattern-spotting for you!

[Download HERE](#)

Just remember, what works for your friend might not work for you, and that's ok! It's often a process of trial and error to figure out what things you want to track and how you want to track them.

I also want to acknowledge that tracking requires a certain level of capacity, and sometimes tracking might be too hard. That's ok! Not tracking can be a type of tracking if it's an indicator that things are tricky.

Any tracking is better than no tracking!

At the end of the day, recovery is **your journey**. It's messy and unpredictable. But sometimes tracking the little things can help you feel a bit more in control.

Wishing you the best of luck on whatever your recovery journey looks like!

Zoe

P.S Go hug a tree