



Your Personal
Recovery Journey

PARTICIPANT MANUAL

Meaning and Purpose



Welcome back.

Review of today's topic:



Meaning and Purpose

- What is meaning and purpose?
- How do I find, define, build, or rebuild meaning and purpose in my life?

Review: What should I do if something triggers me during this module?

We encourage everyone to honor their own needs as they participate in this program. If at any point you feel triggered, overwhelmed, or just in need of a moment to care for yourself, please feel free to step out, take a breath, or use any self-care methods that work for you. Returning to the group is always welcome and there is no pressure to explain. Our priority is creating a safe and supportive space for each of us. Please also let the facilitator know if you need any additional support.

So, let's get started!

EXERCISE

Exploring meaning.

Let's reflect on this art work and write down some of our thoughts on the next page.



Artwork Title: **Hummingbird**
Artist: **Greg Hodge**

EXERCISE

Exploring meaning.

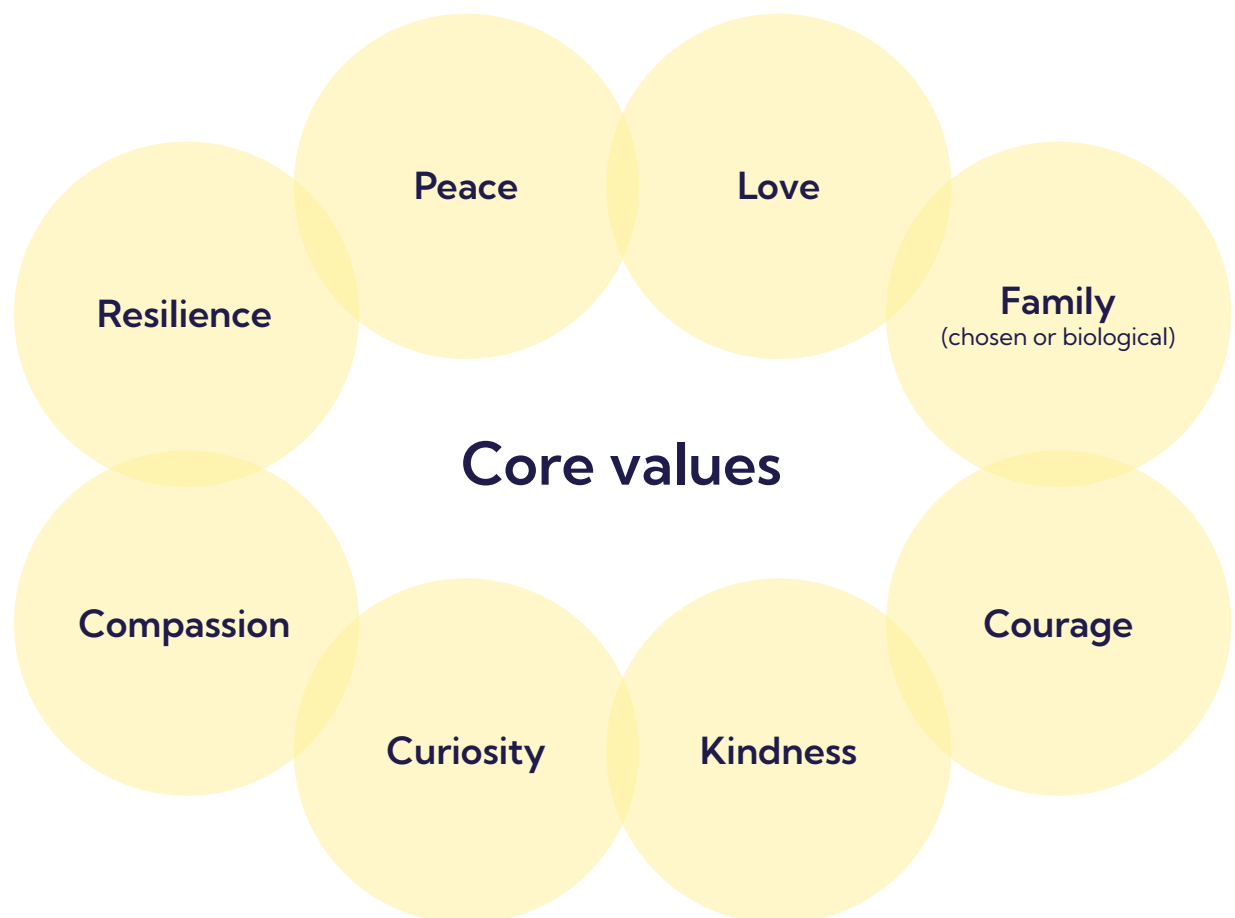
Let's talk about this piece of art...what in this art piece connects with feelings of meaning and purpose? If nothing in this art piece connects you with feelings of meaning and purpose, what kinds of things inspire you to reflect on meaning and purpose?

What is meaning and purpose?



At some points in our lives, we have all asked ourselves "what is the meaning of life?" And more importantly, what is MY meaning in life? Why am I here? What is my purpose? These are big and complex questions to think about.

"Meaning is the sense we make of our lives."¹ Meaning has a lot to do with core values – what we stand for and what our beliefs are. Core values might include things like kindness, courage, loyalty, or responsibility. Every core value guides our meaning and our actions.



1. The Recovery College (Greenwich)/Bridge 86 Ltd 2020. CHIME Workbooks, Meaning Workbook
www.therecoveryplace.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/4.-Meaning-Workbook.pdf

Purpose on the other hand is the specific way that our actions express what is meaningful in our lives. For example, if I define my meaning in life is to be compassionate, the action(s) I take to be compassionate is my purpose. So, my purpose may be helping people like me, visiting elderly people in a nursing home, or volunteering at a food bank.

It's important to know that you can have more than one purpose in life and that your purpose may change at different points in your life! You have the power to grow and adapt and to change as your life needs.



EXERCISE

Identifying core values.

Let's take some time here today to think about at least one core value that you think you could work with/build a goal. What would the goal be? How would you accomplish that goal? What part of accomplishing this goal would be meaningful? Share this if you wish.

Consider filling in your own core values in the circles below and reflect on this as a way to begin exploring purpose and meaning in your life.



My core values

Why is meaning and purpose Important to my recovery?



The questions around meaning and purpose may feel even bigger and more complex to a person recovering from a mental illness. "Recovery (from mental illness) can feel like starting over when it comes to basic things like why we wake up in the morning."²

A large part of recovery from mental illness is making sense of what changes and impacts we have experienced or are experiencing. ...and helping ourselves find a way forward – including describing, finding, building or rebuilding meaning and purpose in our lives.

According to The Recovery College Greenwich:

*"Having a purpose is good for you, your community, and the world. It drives you to make positive contributions in line with your own interests and strengths. This pursuit gives your life direction and forward momentum. It motivates and guides your goals and daily activities."*³

2 Kimberly Nelson & Emma Lovejoy, with Becky Shipkosky, How to Cultivate Purpose in Mental Health Recovery, Psychology Today February 5, 2024

3. The Recovery College (Greenwich)/Bridge 86 Ltd 2020. CHIME Workbooks, Meaning Workbook, www.therecoveryplace.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/4.-Meaning-Workbook.pdf

Whether we have a mental illness or not, we all share the need to have purpose and meaning in our lives. Having a reason to get up in the morning – being involved in meaningful activities, volunteering or working, spirituality, or taking on other social roles successfully are some ways that people begin to define, find, build, and rebuild a meaningful life.

It is also helpful to recognize that “being committed to something greater than ourselves means having a purpose, mission, a commitment” that goes beyond our own personal selves.⁴

To explore these big questions about our life’s meaning and purpose, we can first explore who we are. To do this, we can think about what is important to us, what our strengths and our limitations are, our core values, our desires, our passions. This kind of self-knowledge can help us create a purpose that means something to us.

4. Adam Quiney, ep 103: Being Committed to Something Greater than Yourself.
www.adamquiney.com/ep-103-being-committed-to-something-greater-than-yourself/#:~:text=What%20does%20that%20mean%3F,some%20of%20these%20following%20things

EXERCISE

Reflecting on what is important to you.

You can start to reflect on the following questions to help you think about meaning and purpose in your life:⁵

What's most important to you in your life?

Why do you care about those things?

What are some things that you really enjoy doing or have really enjoyed doing in the past?

Why do you think you enjoy(ed) doing them?

5. Some exercise questions are quoted and/or adapted from The Recovery College (Greenwich)/Bridge 86 Ltd 2020. CHIME Workbooks, Meaning Workbook, www.therecoveryplace.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/4.-Meaning-Workbook.pdf

EXERCISE

Reflecting on what is important to you.

You can start to reflect on the following questions to help you think about meaning and purpose in your life:⁵

What do you care about in your community?

What are some of the things you think you are meant to do (be) in your life?

5. Some exercise questions are quoted and/or adapted from The Recovery College (Greenwich)/Bridge 86 Ltd 2020. CHIME Workbooks, Meaning Workbook, www.therecoveryplace.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/4.-Meaning-Workbook.pdf

Let's watch a video about finding meaning.



Video to be played by your facilitator during the module.



This one mindset
shift can change
your life forever!

**Let's Talk About
Mental Health**

VIDEO

Created by: Let's Talk About Mental Health

Video link: www.youtube.com/watch?v=3OPw57KIF1U

How can I define, find, build and rebuild meaning and purpose in my life?



Each of us defines/finds/builds/rebuilds meaning and purpose in very different ways. You may want to consider some of the following ideas to help you define, find, build, and rebuild meaning and purpose in your life:⁶

Continue to reflect on what is important to you and what you care about most

Creating or rebuilding our sense of meaning and purpose can take time and requires reflections that we started in our exercises today. Continue to explore your core values and what is most important to you. If you are not sure what your core values are, you can download a list of values from the Internet and circle the ones that resonate with you.

Acknowledge your strengths

All of us have strengths and skills, but sometimes we are not sure what we are good at and what we have to offer. But once you identify your strengths and acknowledge them, it can help you to think about how to use them for something that you really care about. If you are having trouble with this, a support person may be able to help you.

6. Some points in this section are adapted from Does Purpose Play a Positive Role in Mental Health? Mayo Clinic Health System, March 14, 2023.

Explore ways to live your purpose

Part of finding your purpose involves trying new things and seeing how they feel. Some of these things may be out of your comfort zone. You may want to try an activity related to what you have found feels important to you. Volunteering is often a good experience to try out what you have learned about your purpose and meaning through the reflection you have done. If you try something and it didn't seem like a good fit, then you can try another activity. One example would be someone who has gone through a lived experience and shares their experience with others and gives them support. Some people do this in a volunteer capacity and others become peer support workers.

Acknowledge the power of daily accomplishments

Don't underestimate the power of doing simple daily things that can improve your life. Ideas include: attending this program, make art for at least 30 minutes, have a conversation with one person, watching a funny show and laugh out loud, write 500 words in your journal, do the dishes, or shower. Wherever you are in your journey, these daily things can build a sense of accomplishment and confidence which can nurture your purpose.

Let's watch a personal recovery story video about meaning.



Video to be played by your facilitator during the module.



VIDEO

Created by: Schizophrenia Society of Canada, ColCon Productions

Video link: player.vimeo.com/video/1063648429

Discussion: Share thoughts about the video if you wish. For example, how did hearing Anita's story about meaning and purpose make you feel? What inspired you about Anita's story?

Wrap up and “what did I get from this module?”



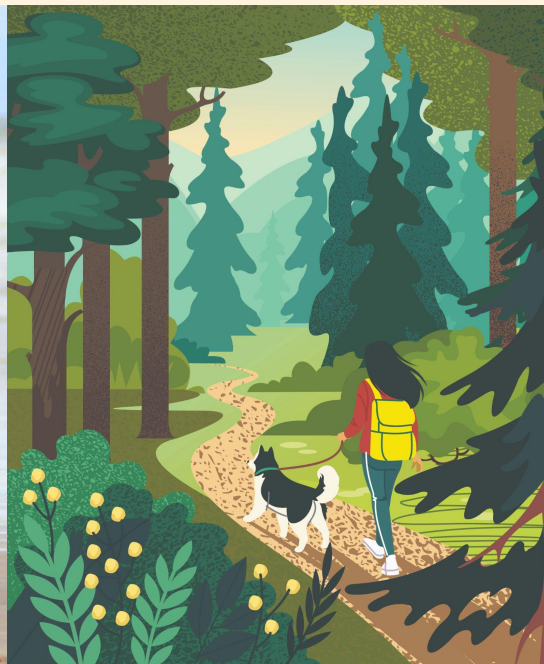
Closing reflections and outstanding questions.

Reminder to take some time to explore the ways that you can create/find/build meaning and purpose in your life, starting with reflecting on your core values and what is important to you.

Additional reflections you can do at home.

Reach out to a supporter to share the goal you created.

If you have access to photos on your phone or elsewhere (e.g. in a magazine, etc.), find a photo that means something to you and think about why it has meaning. Hang it somewhere.



See below for additional resources and support:



How to Cultivate Purpose in Mental Health Recovery

Mental health challenges can throw sense of purpose off; we need to rebuild.

VISIT WEBSITE



7 ways to find more meaning in your life

We've all heard that having a sense of purpose can enrich our lives. But have you ever stopped to ponder why?

VISIT WEBSITE



These resources can be accessed electronically through the online participant workbooks available at your yourpersonalrecoveryjourney.ca

Thank you for participating in this module.

Please **fill in an evaluation** at the end of each module!

Your facilitator will provide you with an evaluation form at the end of each module, or send one to you electronically following each module.

The Schizophrenia Society of Canada would like to acknowledge and thank the Your Personal Recovery Journey Advisory Committee for their meaningful and thoughtful co-creation of the ideas and information contained in these workbooks. An abundance of gratitude to committee members Greg Hodge, Katrina Tinman-Dubois, Allison Dunning, Cam Webster, Maria Alvarez, Joe Veres, Leif Harris, and Ernie Bart for the time, effort, and heart that they put into this important project. Special thanks to Greg and Katrina for their additional direction as a sub-committee as well. And many, many thanks to Fran Schellenberg, who has been a leader of leaders in the mental health movement in Manitoba for over 25 years, for her visionary leadership on this project, under the always capable and caring guidance of Dr. Chris Summerville, CEO of the Schizophrenia Society of Canada and who has been involved in the schizophrenia recovery movement for over 30 years.

The Schizophrenia Society of Canada would also like to acknowledge the important work of the Recovery Research Team in developing the CHIME Framework, on which this program is based. Special thanks to Dr. Mike Slade for his expertise and passion which has guided us all in the vision of recovery in significant and meaningful ways. (<https://www.researchintorecovery.com>), first published in: Leamy M, Bird V, Le Boutillier C, Williams J, Slade M (2011) Conceptual framework for personal recovery in mental health: systematic review and narrative synthesis, British Journal of Psychiatry, 199, 445–452.