



Sharing Your Story of Recovery

1. Why share my story?

By sharing your personal story of recovery on the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) website, you can inspire others to envision the hope and recovery that is possible for every person who receives a mental health diagnosis.

2. How can I share my story?

There are a number of different ways that you can document your story of recovery, e.g., through photographs, prose, poems, or other types of expression. Your story will then be shared by posting it on the New York State Office of Mental Health's website, on its Office of Consumer Affairs page.

You can submit your written material or photographs through a Regional Advocate Specialist of the OMH/Office of Consumer Affairs at a regional field office or directly to the Office of Consumer Affairs in Albany, NY. The submission can be made through by electronic transfer (e.g., as an email attachment or fax) or mail carrier ("snail mail"), as well.

3. What important facts should I know and understand before I decide to submit my story?

- Your material will be used to promote public awareness and education, and to support empowerment and recovery for people who have mental health challenges. To fulfill these goals, your material will be widely shared with the public by posting it on OMH's internet website. It will therefore be available to anyone who visits the OMH website. When you give permission to post your story of recovery on the OMH website, it is important that you are comfortable with how widely it may be disclosed once your permission is given.
- While we prefer to post materials in the form that they are submitted to us, sometimes we may need to make modifications to make a particular piece suitable for public display on our website. Therefore, OMH will retain the right to modify, delete or alter submitted media or photographs.
- Some of the information contained in your story may contain your "individually identifying health information," which is protected under both federal regulations (HIPAA) and New York State Law. Information that is protected includes any information that identifies you as a person who receives or who has received mental health services. This would include your name, if it is provided in a context that reveals that you received mental health services. This is why it is YOUR CHOICE whether or not you wish to have your personal recovery story posted on our website. Furthermore, if you choose to submit your story and have it posted, we also must obtain permission from you before we can disclose your name or any other information that might identify you as the individual that created the work.
- If you submit a photograph that depicts more than one individual in a manner that might also reveal their individually identifying health information, they must also submit a completed Permission Form before we can post the photograph on our website.

4. What rights do I have if I submit my personal recovery story to the OMH website for publication?

- You have the right to choose how much information we can use to identify the material you submit as your work. You can tell us that you prefer that your work be anonymous, that only your initials be used, or you can give us permission to disclose your full name. You can also ask that a made-up name be used rather than your real name.
- It is your right to choose whether or not to have your written media, photograph, or other material used for the website.
- If you agree to give permission to have your personal story, photograph, or other submitted media used on the website, you can revoke (take back) your agreement at any time by contacting the Office of Consumer Affairs. However, if you gave permission to post your material and we have already done so, the revocation can only apply to future disclosures once your material is removed from the web page and will have no effect on material that is already in the public domain.
- You do not have to agree to have your personal story, your photograph, or to have any of your information used on the website, and your refusal to do any of these things will not affect your ability to obtain treatment from the New York State Office of Mental Health, nor will it affect your eligibility for benefits.

5. Agreement and Signature:

I have read and understand the information presented in this permission form, and have had a chance to ask any questions I may have about the submission of my personal recovery story. I now agree to the following.

I am submitting materials that tell my personal recovery story to OMH for the purpose of posting it on the NYS OMH internet website.

I authorize the following to be posted on this site (initial all that apply):

- _____ Written personal recovery story created by me.
- _____ Photographs, videos, image or other likeness of me
- _____ Poem
- _____ Other (describe)

When my information is posted (initial one of the following):

_____ I wish to remain anonymous (no name will appear)

_____ I do not wish to remain anonymous. I want my name included and displayed as follows:
(Indicate how you want your name displayed: full name, first name only, initials only, or "made up" name).

Print Name: _____

Address: _____

Sign Name: _____

Date: _____

Contact Information:

[New York State Office of Mental Health](#)

Office of Consumer Affairs-8th floor

44 Holland Avenue

Albany, NY 12229

518 473-6579