

A tool to help people better manage their mental health and wellbeing and support recovery from mental health problems.

**WRAP**

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**“My WRAP is something that is a special reminder when life feels as if it is getting on top of me. I look into my toolbox and take out what keeps me well. Knowing that it’s there and that it works for me is of great reassurance.”**

\_\_\_\_\_ Lorraine

## Foreword by the Scottish Recovery Network

This leaflet has been developed by the Scottish Recovery Network (SRN). It is intended for people who are interested in learning more about developing their own Wellness Recovery Action Plan, and also for the family members, friends, professionals (and others) supporting them. Information for supporters is found at the end of this leaflet (Page 8).

The Scottish Recovery Network is working to raise awareness of recovery from mental health problems, share different ideas and approaches to promote recovery, and learn more about the many things that help people to recover and stay well. **We believe everyone who experiences mental health problems can recover to lead a fulfilling and satisfying life.**

One way SRN is working to increase wellbeing and recovery is by sharing and developing tools like WRAP.

If you have any questions after reading this leaflet, please contact us on **0141 240 7790**. We would be happy to help or, at the very least, direct you to the person who can.

## What is WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Planning)?

WRAP is a 'self-management' tool used in many countries around the world to help individuals take more control over their own wellbeing and recovery; recognising that people are the experts on themselves. It was initially developed in the US by Mary Ellen Copeland, together with a group of people who had lived experience of mental health problems.

Our WRAP is something that we can refer to daily as a reminder, as a guide, and as a reference to turn to – especially in times of difficulty. It's a tool for learning more about ourselves and the things that help us to recover and stay well.

By developing our own WRAP we can better manage and reduce even the most difficult periods of illness as and when they might arise. It helps us to do this by:

Encouraging us to think about our daily routine and the **things we need to do keep ourselves well**. This might include eating regularly or exercising, for example.

Helping us to consider those **events that make us feel worse** ('triggers'). For example, arguing with a relative or receiving an unexpected bill.

Helping us to think about the '**early warning signs**' that may signal things are starting to go wrong – such as when we feel scared, stay away from other people, or act strangely.

Considering what we currently do to help deal with our 'triggers' and our 'early warning signs', and then helping us **identify new approaches** and responses we may find useful in a range of situations in our lives ('Wellness Tools').

WRAP includes **Crisis Planning**, which explains to others how we would like them to act when we cannot make decisions for ourselves, take proper care of ourselves, or keep ourselves safe for any other reason.

There is also **Post Crisis Planning** to guide us through the difficulties associated with recovering from a crisis and also to help us learn from the experience.

**Note:** WRAP does not necessarily replace any other treatments or supports already in place, but it can certainly be used to complement them.

## Who is WRAP suitable for?

WRAP was originally developed for people who have experience of significant mental health issues.

However, it can be helpful to anyone with an interest in better planning and managing their mental health and wellbeing – even if they have never experienced significant mental illness. That said, our main priority is to ensure as many people as possible who have experience of serious mental health problems now have the opportunity to develop their own WRAP.

For information on how you can access WRAP training in Scotland, please continue to read this leaflet.

**“My WRAP is for life not just a crisis.”**

———— Mandy

## Core principles of WRAP

**“Every part of WRAP is totally voluntary. You, the person who is developing the WRAP, decide if you want to do it, when you want to do it, how long you will take, what it will include and who assists and supports you.”**

———— Mary Ellen, Copeland

1. **You are the only person who can choose to create your WRAP.** If you feel forced into the process it will not be nearly as effective. However, it is extremely important for people you trust to help as you work on your plan.
2. **Developing your WRAP takes a lot of time** and the plan will need to be reviewed and adapted as your goals change. It's a tool for learning about yourself and the things which help your recovery.
3. **Creating your WRAP can be a challenging process.** This could be the first time that you have taken such a planned approach to managing your wellbeing. The process can bring up all sorts of emotions as you examine your life.
4. **Learning about and developing your WRAP is best done in a group setting with a trained facilitator.** Because trained facilitators know how to create a safe and comfortable learning environment. A group approach allows for discussion between participants as people share experiences.

## Helpful things to consider if you are supporting someone who is creating (or has created) a WRAP

The goal of WRAP is to enable people to develop self awareness and have more control over their own lives. The most important thing to remember is that people must want to create their WRAP, because if someone does not engage with the idea of developing their own plan the process is likely to be far less powerful.

When supporting someone who is developing their own WRAP plan, you should try to do the following:

- Listen and do not assume anything.
- Have the awareness that part of the process of WRAP can involve people changing the way they manage difficult feelings and emotions. People need support to change and try new methods of managing their recovery.
- Be involved, but in a way that is flexible and works for the person who has developed their own WRAP.
- Be aware that, initially, it could be that more support is required to manage the emotions experienced as people examine their lives. It is not unusual for there to be a sense of anger, isolation and a questioning of identity.

- Realise that relationships might have to be changed to enable the person to take more control of their life. This might involve leaving a lot of the 'baggage' behind from the past.
- Understand that people need to be allowed to learn from their mistakes and need help to build on their strengths.

**“Since discovering WRAP, I feel as though I am living again instead of just existing. I get out of bed now because I want to not because I have to!”**

———— Catherine

## How to access WRAP training in Scotland

In June 2008, 18 people in Scotland were trained as WRAP facilitators. The training can now be accessed in a variety of different ways depending on circumstances.

Developing your WRAP as part of a group with a trained facilitator takes approximately 12–14 hours (this time is split over a number of sessions).

For further information please contact:

**Scottish Recovery Network**

Phone: **0141 240 7790**

Mail: **info@scottishrecovery.net**

## Sources of Further Information

### Scottish Recovery Network

The Scottish Recovery Network works to promote and support recovery and the use of Wellness Recovery Action Planning in Scotland.

Web: **www.scottishrecovery.net**

### The Copeland Center

The Copeland Center monitors and promotes the use of WRAP internationally.

Web: **www.copelandcenter.com**

### Mary Ellen Copeland

Mary Ellen Copeland is the founder of WRAP, an author, and educator and a mental health recovery advocate.

Web: **www.mentalhealthrecovery.com**



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