

# Inspired Recovery

*Inspired Recovery* is a compilation of true stories of those diagnosed with mental illness who have overcome the odds and achieved happiness and success in their lives. In short, *Inspired Recovery* is about the triumph of the human spirit. It is intended to be a powerful source of inspiration and a genuine message of hope to sufferers the world over, that wellness and recovery are possible.



## Why this book?

Julie Edwards, has suffered from mental illness since childhood. Diagnosed with bipolar disorder as a teenager, she later developed schizoaffective disorder, borderline personality disorder and generalised anxiety disorder.

The eldest of four children born into a destitute family in outback Australia in 1948, Julie's experiences include acute depression; mania and delusions; every known treatment including electroconvulsive (shock) therapy; violent physical and emotional abuse through numerous dysfunctional relationships; attempted suicide; bereavement and loss, including the tragic death of two husbands; complete breakdown and the development of additional mental illnesses.

Though a 'cure' for her condition is not yet known, Julie has developed a successful strategy to achieve recovery and live a rich, full life. Medical treatment and pharmacology play a significant role in the recovery process—but so does the resilience of the human spirit. Now aged sixty-one, Julie describes her life as 'filled with joy'!

It is Julie's life story that has inspired her daughter, Sonya Melbourne, to gather and share these beautiful true accounts in *Inspired Recovery* as a message of hope for those who suffer from mental illness and all those who care about them.

## Backing from Australia's leading charities

Supporting *Inspired Recovery* are:

Australian Bipolar and Schizoaffective Network  
<http://www.abssn.org/>

SANE Australia [www.sane.org](http://www.sane.org)

Mental Illness Fellowship of SA Inc <http://www.mifsa.org/>

Mental Health Association NSW <http://www.mentalhealth.asn.au/>

Mental Health Council of Australia <http://www.mhca.org.au/>

Our deepest thanks to these amazing organisations for the compassion, support and assistance they provide Australians in need, every day.

## A not-for-profit exercise

All profits received by the author will be donated to charitable institutions including the Bipolar Schizoaffective Support Network, Mental Health Association (NSW), SANE Australia and the Mental Health Council of Australia.

“It is a sad fact that many of the estimated 222 million individuals with bipolar disorder, and 51 million living with either schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder worldwide, suffer in silence. *Inspired Recovery* details the stories of survivors who have overcome the limitations of their illnesses to live their best lives and achieve their dreams. *Inspired Recovery* is a deeply moving collection that bears testimony to the human spirit. No matter how hard or high the mountain is to climb, it can be done! This is one of the truly important books of our time with the potential to bring hope, peace and inspiration to millions.”

**Rebecca Fidele, Founder, Australian Bipolar Schizoaffective Network**

“Each chapter provides a glimpse into a remarkable and courageous journey. It is a great privilege to read these narratives - sincere and full of wisdom. They describe how people cope in the face of psychological stress and serious mental illness. Alas, they also bring into sharp relief how much more work needs to be done in order to help people stay on their individual pathway to recovery.”

Historians tell us that the compassion and strength of a society can be judged on how that society treats their minority groups. The true stories told in this book suggest that our society still has a long way to go in helping people recover from mental illness.

Ignorance breeds stigma. This book will help reduce some of this ignorance.

The book also provides template for those struggling to cope with mental illness – here are tried and true suggestions, based on the ‘lived experience’. Not all of these suggestions will work for all individuals – we need much more research into the causes and optimal treatments for mental illness – but this book is ‘tonic’ for the spirit and will inspire many more along the road to recovery.”

**Professor John McGrath, MD, PhD, FRANZCP. Prof McGrath is a Director, Epidemiology and Developmental Neurobiology at the Queensland Centre for Mental Health Research, University of Queensland.**

“People with mental illness have enough to put up with, without the additional distress caused by stigma and discrimination. Nothing dispels this misunderstanding more effectively than hearing the personal stories of those who know what it’s like first-hand to live with these illnesses.”

**SANE Australia**

## The facts about Mental Illness in Australia<sup>1</sup>:

- Around 20% of adults are affected by mental illness every year.
- Many people with mental illness recover and lead fulfilling lives when they receive appropriate ongoing treatment and support. However, only half of those affected by mental illness seek treatment.
- People with a mental illness require the same level of treatment, understanding and support provided to those with a physical illness. It is rarely possible for someone with a mental illness to make the symptoms go away just by ‘strength of will’.
- One of the biggest hurdles for people trying to get well is confronting the attitudes that their family, friends, employers and neighbours hold towards them because of their illness. Sadly, this often leads to isolation and discrimination.

## How can you help<sup>2</sup>?

- Pro-actively learn ways to effectively deal with trauma in relationships, situations and events.
- Support friends, relatives and colleagues with a mental illness to obtain care and treatment.
- Address discrimination in every area of life, including employment, education and the provision of goods, services and facilities.
- Talk about mental illnesses openly. It is surprising how many people are affected by mental illness, but have been too afraid of rejection to discuss it openly.
- Support organizations that provide high-quality support and treatment services that enable people with a mental illness to participate fully in all aspects of community life.

<sup>1</sup> SANE Australia [http://www.sane.org/information/factsheets/facts\\_and\\_figures.html](http://www.sane.org/information/factsheets/facts_and_figures.html) and Victoria Mental Health Services <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealth/illnesses/facts.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Source: Victoria Mental Health Services <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealth/illnesses/facts.htm>

Order your copy of *Inspired Recovery* today at [www.inspiredrecovery.com](http://www.inspiredrecovery.com)