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8.4. Staying well (relapse prevention)

Inpatient units will aim for a timely discharge, avoiding both premature and delayed discharge. Nonetheless, strategies for relapse prevention need to consider the child/young person's progress while on the ward. This will include helping the child/young person (and their parents/carers) recognise that they may not be fully recovered, and identify the strategies best suited to recognising and managing areas of vulnerability.

- An ability to draw on knowledge that the meaning of recovery varies from person to person, and as such:
 - their sense of a positive outcome may not be the same as the medical/ professional perspective
 - practitioners should aim to understand what recovery means for them
- An ability to help the child/young person identify early warning signs that (in the past) have signalled a decline in their mental health, including changes in their mood, behaviour and thoughts
- An ability to work with the child/young person to develop a timeline that helps to identify problematic events (and their meanings) that have led to a deterioration in mental health in the past
- An ability to enhance the child/young person's coping strategies by helping them to identify, overlearn and apply skills that foster a sense of control, and so instil hope (e.g. relaxation training, activity scheduling)
- An ability to help the child/young person evaluate the efficacy of previous interventions for staying well in order to inform (and to improve) strategies they use in the future
- An ability to identify and discuss the child/young person's thoughts and appraisals about the re-emergence of symptoms, aiming:
 - to de-catastrophise their responses to a change in mood, behaviour and thoughts)
 - to support their sense that they have a repertoire of strategies that can be employed to manage
- An ability to recognise that for some children/young people symptoms and difficulties will persist in spite of intervention, and to understand and discuss recovery and maintenance of gains from this standpoint
- An ability to apply relapse prevention strategies with parents/carers, and to engage them (as well as the child/young person) in recognising and responding constructively to indications of difficulties