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Run with It! My story of running with my voices to foster reconnection and fight stigma.

Peggy Hickman¹, Tomas Fogl², Nicola Wright¹, Lisa Murata¹

Canada

²Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre; University of Ottawa, OTTAWA, Canada

Learning Goal:

Learn how persons with lived experience of psychosis can use fitness and their passions to cope and move towards a fuller life, as well as reconnect to the wider community. Equally, you will learn how running groups can help alleviate stigma.

Abstract Text:

My name is Peggy. I have been living with psychosis for many years. This is the story of how discovering and following my passions led me on my adventurous journey of recovery. My psychosis continues: my voices and my fears have not gone away completely. In fact, sometimes they can seem worse than ever, but I run with it. I also with others who are sources of support and whom I encourage "to run with it." In this interview-style presentation I will narrate my story, through words and multimedia. I will show the brief documentary "A Mental Marathon" about how running became a passion & a tool, that has allowed me to deal better with voices, frightening ideas, anxiety and depression. Running has also led me to explore & discover other passions. I started a running group; "**RUN WITH IT**" for persons with lived experience of psychosis. I will talk about how sometimes poverty, marginalization and stigma often make it hard to participate in something so simple as running. I continue to work with organizations to promote fitness, running and following one's passions as a way of bridging the gap between persons with lived experience of psychosis and the city at large. I use my story and my races as a way to raise awareness and money toward the cause of de-stigmatization of persons living with psychosis. In Ontario, Canada, where I live, psychosis is often not in the spotlight, when it comes to public awareness of mental illness and fighting stigma. I also wish to help the healthcare system, the media and the general community reconnect with those with psychosis in a more human and de-stigmatizing manner, so we can all "run with it" together.

**ON THE HEALING POWER
OF HUMAN RECONNECTION**