Towards the end of the 19th century, Kraepelin described a disease he called dementia praecox which he characterized as having a downward and deteriorating course. However, in the latter half of the 20th century a combination of scientific and conceptual developments contributed to a more optimistic view of people with SMI and their prospects for improving their lives. The lecture will focus on the growing emphasis on “recovery” within the context of serious mental illness, definitions, research, empirically supported interventions that promote it and discuss implications on practice, training and policy.