

Recovery Centered Organizations (RCOs)

The Intersection of Surviving and Thriving Beyond Justice Impact

presented by

Faces & Voices of Recovery



**FACES & VOICES
OF RECOVERY**

ADVOCATE. ACT. ADVANCE.

FACES AND VOICES OF RECOVERY: Who We Are!

Mission: Changing the way addiction and recovery are understood and embraced through advocacy, education and leadership.

Vision: We envision a world where the diverse voices of individuals and families affected by addiction are embraced and connected in communities, free from discrimination and injustice.



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SAFETY AGREEMENTS

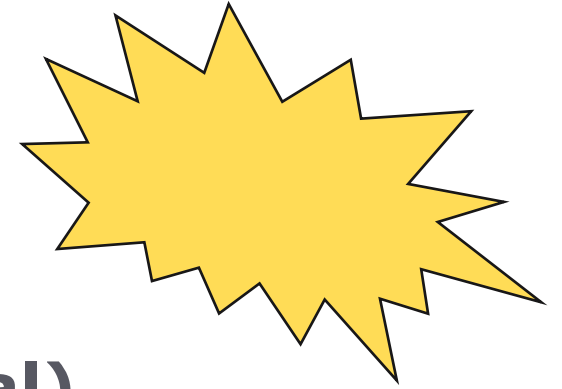
- **Open-mindedness**
- **Respect**
- **Encouragement**
- **“Ouch”**
- **“Stretch”**
- **Confidentiality**

- **What else?**



Brief Introductions

- **Name**
- **Location**
- **Relationship to recovery (optional)**
 - Self
 - Family
 - Friend / Ally
- **Motivation for attending this training**



Catherine Lovvorn

- Catherine Lovvorn is a woman in long-term recovery, a Certified Peer Specialist of Addictive Disease and Mental Health, a Forensic Peer Mentor, and a successful re-entered citizen.
- Catherine spent 5 years working and leading a Recovery Community Organization (RCO).
- Catherine is a consultant, speaker, and trainer for the recovery community and provides tailored technical assistance to RCOs on organizational development, sustainability, and strategic planning across the US.



Lori Mellinger

- Lori Mellinger is a woman in long-term recovery who has direct and indirect criminal legal impact.
- Lori has been employed with Faces & Voices of Recovery since 2022 and has worked at many non-profits with specialties in grassroots organizing, programming and women's reentry and the complex barriers that plague this population.
- Lori is co-founder of a grassroots advocacy organization in Texas that is comprised of and serves currently and formerly incarcerated girls and women in the State of Texas.



Defining Recovery

“Recovery from substance dependence is a voluntarily maintained lifestyle characterized by sobriety, personal health, and citizenship.”

- Betty Ford Center Consensus Panel

How Do You Define Recovery?

Five minute small group discussion

- How would you define recovery?
- What does recovery mean to you?
- Is there anything you would change about the Betty Ford Center Consensus Panel definition?

Changing our Perspective of Recovery

Public Perceptions of Recovery:

- Short term
- Acute treatment
- Institutional
- Standardized care

What Recovery Should Be:

- Long-term treatment for chronic condition
- Individualized services
- Community based
- Based in self-determination and choice

Recovery Community Centers



THE ABC's of this Presentation



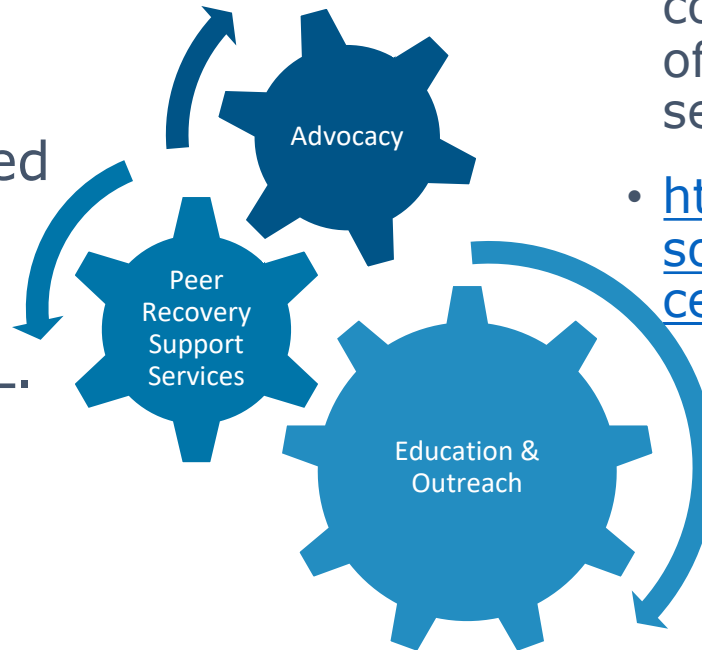
- ARCO: Associations of Recovery Community Organizations
- CAPRSS: Council on Accreditation of Peer Recovery Support Services
- RCO: Recovery Community Organizations
- RCC: Recovery Community Centers
- PRSS: Peer Recovery Support Services
- D.E.I.: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- SAMHSA: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
- RDP: Recovery Data Platform
- BCOR: Building Communities of Recovery

Definitions

Justice Impacted RCO's and RCC's

Justice Impacted Recovery Community Organization (RCO)

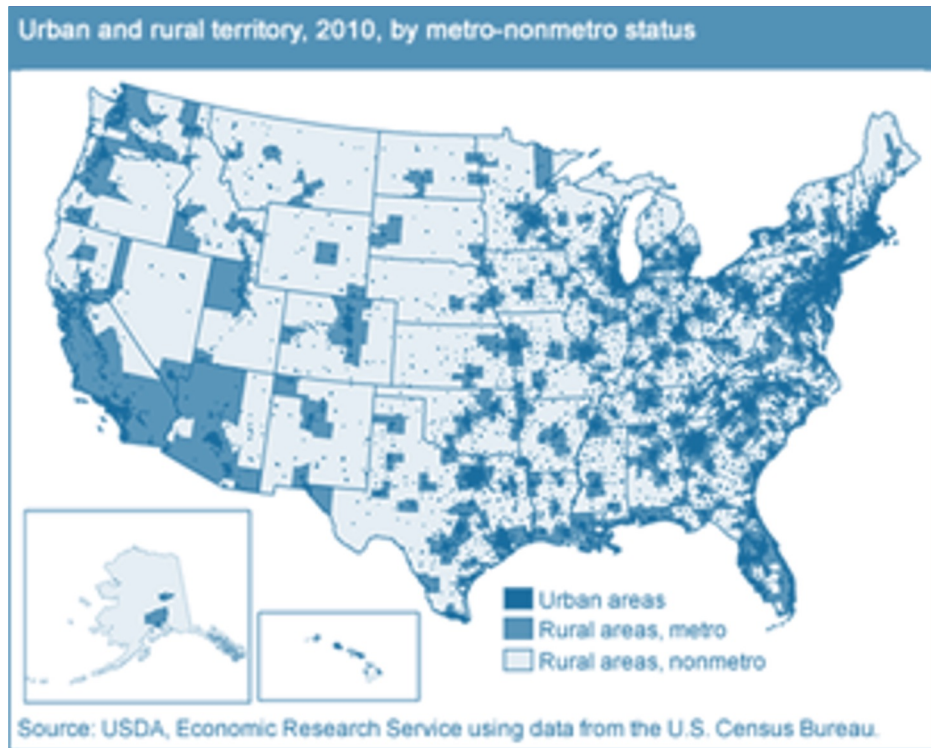
- A recovery community organization (RCO) is an independent, non-profit organization led and governed by representatives of local communities of recovery.
- Phillip A. Valentine, William L. White and Pat Taylor, 2007



Justice Impacted Recovery Community Center (RCC)

- Non-profit centers for the recovery community that offer local networks of non-medical, recovery support services.
- <https://www.recoveryanswers.org/resource/recovery-community-centers/>

Types of RCOs



Metropolitan/Urban >50,000
1,000 persons/Sq. mile
Urban Clusters 2,500 – 49,999
1,000 persons/Sq. mile
Rural & Small Town <2,500
> 500 persons/Sq. mile

The intersection of Surviving Beyond Justice Impact

Recovery Organizations

- Examples: Recovery-Centered Organizations, Recovery Community Organizations, Recovery Centers, Recovery Cafes

Justice Programs

- Examples: Police, Recovery Courts, Diversion Programs, TC Programs, Probation, Parole





Statistics

- Activity

What do Justice Impacted RCOs Do?

Peer Recovery Support Services

Peer Recovery Support Services

- Provide peer recovery support services (PRSS)
- Warm Hand-Off Overdose or Crisis Response teams,
- Peer Supports,
- Peer Programs in Jails and Prisons,
- Re-Entry Planning,
- H&I from Local Recovery Support Groups (AA, Celebrate Recovery, NA, Smart Recovery, Others),



Foundational Concepts

1. Peer services are nonclinical, strength-based and highly individualized.
2. They extend support into our communities.
3. Embrace multiple pathways of recovery as a foundational principle.
4. Focus on support and connection.



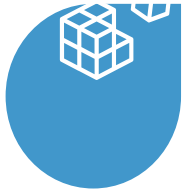
Types of Recovery Support Services



Emotional - demonstrations of empathy, love, caring, and concern in such activities as peer mentoring and recovery support groups.



Affiliational - getting people connected in drug-free environments. Important in early recovery, when little about abstaining from drugs is reinforcing.



Informational - provision of health/wellness information, educational assistance, help in employment readiness and citizenship restoration.



Instrumental - concrete assistance in task accomplishment, especially with stressful or unpleasant tasks.

Every interaction and area of focus involves ethics & boundaries

What do Justice Impacted RCOs Do?

Advocacy



Advocacy

- conduct ongoing local recovery support needs assessment surveys or focus groups,
- organize recovery-focused policy and advocacy activities,
- support the development of recovery support institutions (e.g., education-based recovery support programs, recovery community centers, recovery cafes, recovery ministries, recovery-focused employment programs, recovery-focused prison reentry programs, etc.),

Learning from People with Live Experience (PWLE)

- Identify trends and needs
- Advocate for widespread concerns, not for people
- But... people are impacted, communities are impacted, and you are impacted
- Advocacy in recovery spaces helps to equip you with the tools you need to do your job

What do Justice Impacted RCOs Do?

Education

Education

- Increase recovery workforce capacity and expertise through training and education
- Conduct recovery-focused public and professional education events
- Inform best practices, internal policies, and program development
- Support person-centered approaches

Examples

- Speakers Training and Bureau
- Mentorship and Leadership development programs
- Advisory Groups
- Steering Committees



Education Based Recovery Services

Collegiate Recovery Programs

- Access to recovery services on campus
- Social and educational support
- Supports include sober housing, mutual aid meetings, counseling, social events

Recovery High Schools

- Instructional focus with normal high school curriculum
- Additional recovery support
- 38 high schools in the US

What do Justice Impacted RCOs Do?

Outreach and Inreach

Outreach

- Carry out recovery-focused outreach programs to engage people seeking recovery, in recovery, or in need of recovery-focused support services or events to educate and raise public awareness
- Host local; regional; or national recovery celebration events,
- Collaborate on the integration of recovery-focused activities within local prevention; harm reduction; early intervention; and treatment initiatives



Inreach

- Reaching into the system to lift up success stories
- Reaching into the system and working within the system to
 - Tap into resources (i.e. – YOUR programs)
 - Identify leaders and message carriers
 - Create in-ways and out-ways

Multiple Pathways to Recovery.

“Individuals who are ‘in recovery’ know what it means to them and how important it is in their life ... However, recovery is not clear to the public ... Indeed, there is reason to believe that there is no complete consensus on the definition even among those in recovery.”

- Betty Ford Consensus Panel

Three Pathways

Clinical

Non-Clinical

Self-Management

Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT)- Opioids

- Only **20%** of people with opioid use disorder (OUD) receive any treatment.
- Only **33%** of people in treatment receive MAT.
- MAT is the standard of care for OUD.

(Blanco & Volkow, 2019)

10 Minute Wellness Break



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Know your why





What's your story?



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Build an Environment of Trust and Safety

- **Understand and appreciate the importance of relationships in building trust.**
- **When people intentionally build social ties at work, trust increases and improved performance follows.**
- **Create an environment that fosters this type of relationship building.**
- **Schedule time for social interaction and team building inside and outside of the normal workday. Make it okay to have fun and be individual.**

Small Group Experience

- **You will be assigned to a “Group” with 2-3 others.**
- **Identify one group member to report out to the larger group.**
- **Your group will be assigned the Task for Success we are discussing.**
 - Build an environment of trust & safety
- **In your group, identify 2 experiences one of you has had where the task you’re working on went well and 2 where it was not done well.**

Why would people not feel safe?

- The number one reason individuals do not feel safe is **TRAUMA...**
- What is trauma? The lasting emotional response that often results from living through a distressing event.
- Who determines what trauma is?

Why would people not feel safe?

- A while ago we did a statistic exercise.
- What words did I use?
- Language plays a **huge** part in how we feel.

Language Matters



Don't Say

- ✧ ~~Substance Abuse~~
- ✧ ~~Former Addict~~
- ✧ ~~Alcoholics & Addicts~~
- ✧ ~~Clean or Dirty urine Drug Screen~~
- ✧ ~~Lapse or Relapse~~
- ✧ ~~Replacement Therapy/Replacing one drug for another~~

Do Say

- ✧ **Substance use or misuse**
- ✧ **Person in recovery**
- ✧ **People with alcohol or other drug problems**
- ✧ **Positive or Negative screen**
- ✧ **Return to use or recurrence**
- ✧ **Medication-assisted recovery; medications to treat addiction**



Language Audit

- Perform a “language audit” of
 - existing materials and online content
- Examples:
 - addict/person with a substance use disorder
 - abuse/use or misuse
- Make sure to review both internal & external documents
 - mission statements, policies
 - brochures, consumer/peer forms



Best Practices for Building Safe Communities

10 Best Practices Recovery Centered Organizations

1. Non-profit Organization
2. Led and Governed by the Recovery Community
3. Primary Focus is Recovery from Substance Use Disorders
4. Grassroots
5. Participatory Process
6. Peer Recovery Support Services
7. All Pathways Towards Recovery
8. Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive Policies, Practices, and Services
9. Recovery-Friendly Language
10. Code of Ethics and Grievance Policies



Best Practices Governance

1. Non-profit Organization *

2. Led and Governed by PWLE

- Boards/Advisory Committees/Councils/Steering Committees comprised of 51% or of PWLE with SUD, MH, and Justice Impact
- *This leadership provides an authenticity of the recovery voice.*
- Along with key staff, these PWLE voices lead conversations and participate in decision-making on programmatic development, recovery services provided, and advocacy efforts to reflect the needs of the recovering community.



Best Practices Programs and Activities



3. Primary Focus is Recovery from Substance Use Disorders - *And for Justice Impacted RCOs to promote re-entry and diminish justice impact*

- Evident in the organization's mission and vision statements, through the services provided, and when applicable, in their advocacy efforts.
- *The organization has a Recovery Vision.*



4. Grassroots & 5. Participatory Process

- Connected to their communities, and people and organizations concerned about recovery – *and justice impact*
- They learn from this network through things like surveys and workgroups to learn what they need and then they take steps to meet those needs.
- *The grassroots involvement and participatory processes provide accountability to the recovery community and PWLE.*



6. Peer Recovery Support Services

- RCOs provide primarily non-clinical, peer recovery support services.

Best Practices

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (D.E.I.)

7. All Pathways Towards Recovery



- The organization supports, allows for, and may provide opportunities for all pathways towards recovery and does not exclude anyone based on their chosen pathway.

8. Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive Policies, Practices, and Services



- RCO's develop and enact culturally informed plans to diminish inequity in the implementation of their outreach and services.
 - [Annie E. Casey Race – Matters: Racial Equity Impact Analysis](#)
 - Consider required meeting attendance and accessibility needs:
 - Wheelchair Ramps
 - Drivability

Best Practices

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (D.E.I.) Continued



9. Recovery-Friendly Language

- RCO websites, materials, and other online platforms use language that is supportive of and promotes recovery across diverse geographical and cultural contexts.
 - [Words Matter: How Language Choice Can Reduce Stigma](#)
 - Non-Stigmatizing and person- centered Language



10. Code of Ethics and Grievance Policies

- The organization has an employee and volunteer code of ethics in place, and easily accessible grievance procedures, to protect service recipients and stakeholders engaged with the organization.



Resource and needs assessment list

Resource and Needs Assessment

- **Identify the Recovery Assets in your community**
- **Identify the needs of your organization in light of existing assets.**

Community Asset Mapping

- **Positive approach**
- **Substitute for traditional deficits focus on needs or problems**
- **Process to understand community resources, and individual capacities**
- **Promotes connections or relationships between individual and organizations**
- **Promotes community to use assets around a vision and plan to solve the community problem**

Examples of Community Assets

- **Individuals**
- **Non-profits-community based centers and civic groups**
- **Faith-based institutions and groups**
- **Publicly-funded colleges, libraries, hospitals, parks, agencies**
- **Private organizations**

Questions to Assess Needs

- What programs or services will you offer?
- What do you have already in place?
- What other resources are required?
 - Funding
 - Human – people power
 - **volunteers, staff, etc.**
 - In-kind services or products
 - **non-monetary contributions**



Build Your Agenda

- **Your recovery community organization's success will depend on your ability to develop and nurture relationships of all kinds.**
- **The most important relationship is with the recovery community – people in recovery, family members, friends and allies.**
- **How do we build nurturing relationships in our communities?**



OFFER SOLUTIONS



EXPECT A YES!



CREATE MUTUALLY
BENEFICIAL
RELATIONSHIPS



BE A COMMUNITY
LEADER!



SPEAK TO THE
INDIVIDUAL NOT THE
ORGANIZATION.



OFFER
COMMUNITY EVENTS

Tips to Creating Meaningful Community Relationships



Breakout

- We are going to place you into groups. In your breakout groups, I want you to use this time to formulate action steps for your organization.

- Answer these Questions....

How will you incorporate the things we learned today into our organizations?

What is currently working well?

What could be better?

Identify three next steps for application.

Participatory Processes

- **What you just experienced is an experience of Participatory Process which can be used with a Board, Advisory Council or members of your workforce – employees and/or volunteers, or members of your local recovery community.**
- **Participatory Processes might include surveys, focus groups, listening sessions, and even the way you conduct your staff meetings, meetings with program participants in your RCO/ RCC programming, or your decision making.**

Characteristics of a Participatory Process

- **Peers are respected as experts in their own lives and learn from others who share similar experiences**
- **Participatory work requires self-reflection. You might ask, “Am I doing this out of self-interest?” or “Do I truly believe the community will benefit from this decision?”**
- **It is messy. There are no recipes for success.**
- **It requires trust in oneself and others. This type of trust takes both safety and time to develop.**
- **We continue to engage in the questions. When we live in the questions and re-evaluate our systems, practices, and processes on a regular basis, the Peer Participatory Process stays fresh and continues to grow.**
- **As the process unfolds, individuals become empowered and move toward ownership**



Questions?

Resources

- Recovery Community Centers
 - <https://www.recoveryanswers.org/resource/recovery-community-centers/>
- Recovery Community Organization Toolkit
 - <https://facesandvoicesofrecovery.org/arco/rco-toolkit/>
- Rural Prevention and Treatment of Substance Use Disorders Toolkit
 - <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/toolkits/substance-abuse>



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References

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