

Developing a Recovery Message

Barriers and Strategies



**Be a
Recovery
Advocate!**

Did You Know

Recovery is more than no longer using a substance. It involves changing your outlook on life, behavior, and sometimes your environment. It is important to understand that recovery is personal, based on someone's individual experiences and goals.



Knowledge Domain _____

A recovery message is a person's account of their experiences with substance use disorder and their journey to recovery. Studies have shown that sharing difficult experiences with others can improve health and well-being by building supportive bonds and discussing lessons learned from the experience. It can also help the individual make more sense of their own story. Writing it down and talking about it can make recovery seem more real – and challenge stigma. You can help by providing support to an individual who has expressed interest in sharing their story.

Recommended Group Activity _____

Practice developing a recovery message. Keep these points in mind:

- Choose your audience. Are you advocating to government officials? Talking to people with SUD? Educating family or friends?
- Make sure the story is personal.
- Keep it simple and in the present tense.
- Focus on recovery, not the disease.
- Use the term “long-term recovery” to indicate that you are no longer using any substances.
- Include some things that you do to remain on your recovery path.

To Learn More _____

SAMHSA Storytelling Guide

<http://bit.ly/2W0lWk0>

Your Recovery Story: How and Why You Should Share It

<http://bit.ly/2pPBN6y>

Trauma and Substance Use Disorder

Implementing Trauma-Informed Care



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Did You Know

Working with patients who have experienced trauma puts health center staff at risk of secondary traumatic stress. It is defined as the emotional duress that results when an individual hears about the firsthand trauma experiences of another person.



Knowledge Domain

Approximately 60 to 90 percent of SUD patients have experienced one or more traumatic event in their life. Trauma can include a wide variety of experiences such as abuse or family dysfunction. In fact, health care settings can be a trigger and can potentially drive patients away from treatment. Trying to find ways to make health centers and clinics more welcoming of trauma patients is a big task but one that could bring in so many more people who need help.

Recommended Group Activity

Implementing a trauma-informed care (TIC) approach in a clinic may help the staff engage their patients more effectively by shifting the focus from “what’s wrong with you?” to “what happened to you?” TIC promotes a culture of safety, empowerment, and healing. It is used for assistance in managing symptoms and reducing the likelihood of re-traumatization of the patient when they come in for care. Examples:

- Trauma training for clinical and non-clinical staff
- Creating a safe physical and social-emotional environment (e.g., making sure secluded areas are well lit or maintaining consistent and open communication between staff and patients)
- Involving patients in the treatment process
- Trauma screening for every new patient

To Learn More

Trauma-Informed Care Walkthrough Project Report
<http://bit.ly/2WQxuUF>

Key Ingredients for Successful Trauma-Informed Care Implementation
<http://bit.ly/2WQbQ2V>

Preventing Mental Health Stigma

Choosing Empowerment Over Shame



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Did You Know

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, 43 percent of people with SUD have a diagnosis or symptoms of other mental health disorders.



Knowledge Domain _____

Many people with SUD also have other mental illnesses, such as depression, anxiety, or bipolar disorder. Unfortunately, stigma can create treatment barriers.

You can prevent stigma around substance use and mental illness. Talk openly about mental illness in your center to normalize the conversation. Use person-first person language when addressing someone with a mental illness (e.g., saying they have bipolar disorder instead of they are bipolar).

Education also plays a large role in reducing stigma, largely by helping to change our attitudes and behaviors around those with a mental illness. Learning how stigma can prevent people from getting treatment can help people realize the importance of reducing stigma. Lastly, being an advocate for those with a mental illness and supporting them through their treatment process is a great way to show that you care about not only that individual but everyone with a mental illness.

Recommended Group Activity _____

Discuss dual-diagnosis. How does substance use affect mental illness and vice versa? Do you think that treating the diagnoses simultaneously is the most effective course of action? Why or why not?

To Learn More _____

9 Ways to Fight Mental Health Stigma

<http://bit.ly/2JWLJqm>

Common Comorbidities with Substance Use Disorders

<http://bit.ly/2PVSM1N>