The Importance of Professionals and Community Members as Recovery Allies

Presented by:
Alison Jones Webb, MA, MPH

Webinar Facilitator:
Jessie O’Brien, LCSW, CASAC

Director of Training & Professional Development

- NAADAC, the Association of Addiction Professionals
- www.naadac.org
- jobrien@naadac.org
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The importance of professionals and community members as recovery allies

2024 NADAAC Webinar Series
January 24, 2024

ALISON JONES WEBB, MA, MPH

Agenda

- Recovery Allies
  - Who is a recovery ally? Can addiction professionals and other helping professionals be allies?

- Recovery Ecosystem
  - Why are allies important?

- Recovery Capital
  - How can recovery allies help build recovery capital?

- Engaging Recovery Allies
  - What can allies do?
Learning Objectives

1. You will be able to describe concepts of personal, social, and community recovery capital.
2. You will be able to identify at least three strategies to engage allies and increase recovery capital at each stage of recovery.
3. You will be able to apply three strategies for building recovery capital within the recovery ecosystem such as social support networks, education and employment opportunities, and access to healthcare.

Recovery Allies

“Being an ally is about being continually willing to grow and to learn about people’s experiences. Allyship is really personalized and individualized.”

– Tom Bannard, Program Coordinator, Rams in Recovery, Virginia Commonwealth University
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Recovery Allies

A recovery ally is someone who uses their resources and connections to support people in recovery and the recovery community.

Virginia Department of Social Services. Ally Training.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3WJpq0pX6I
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Yes! And.....there are hurdles.

- Access
- Philosophy and approach
- Importance of peers
- Perception
- Other

Can addiction professionals be allies?

Recovery Ecosystem

https://www.fletchergroup.org/2022/10/27/county-resources/
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Recovery Ecosystem

https://recoverycenterofexcellence.org/current-vs-future

Recovery Ecosystem

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We amplify the impact of allies when we create opportunities for them to engage with people from other parts of the ecosystem.

Acting within the Recovery Ecosystem

Recovery Ecosystems
As allies, we need to know where we are in the ecosystem, and then we need to know what to do to support people in recovery.

As allies, we are at our best when we help build recovery capital.

Recovery Capital Definition

“The sum total of one’s resources that can be brought to bear on the initiation and maintenance of substance misuse cessation.”

### Personal Recovery Capital

- Basic needs – clothing, food, safe housing, transportation
- Physical and mental health; healthcare
- Employment
- Education
- Problem-solving skills, financial management skills, interpersonal skills
- Self-esteem
- Belief system, cultural identity

### Social Recovery Capital

- Relationships with family and friends
- Peers in recovery
- Support from partner or spouse
- Recovery-related social events
- Sense of community
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Community Recovery Capital

- Range of treatment services
- Recovery support services including recovery housing, peer recovery centers
- Harm reduction services
- Diversion programs
- Organizations that serve the community and improve life, including faith-based organizations
- Attitudes that support recovery
- Trust, common purposes
- Advocacy

High risk times for recovery capital depreciation

- Leaving incarceration
- Leaving treatment
- Stressful situations
- Relationship problems/lack of social support

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How do people get better?

“They change their social networks, and they engage in meaningful activities.”

– Dr. David Best

Actions for Allies

1. They understand their place in the recovery ecosystem and their sphere of influence.
2. They learn about addiction and recovery.
3. They fight discrimination, prejudice, and stigma.
4. They know about resources in their area and online.
How do we engage allies?

1. **We understand their sphere of influence** in the recovery ecosystem and ask them how we can use their skills and talents.

2. **We educate them** about addiction and recovery.

3. **We walk side by side** with them to fight discrimination, prejudice, and stigma.

4. **We educate them** about community and online resources.

Understand your sphere of influence in the recovery ecosystem.
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Understand your sphere of influence in the recovery ecosystem

**Home**

Safe recovery housing
- Local: zoning, landlords, NIMBY, access to naloxone
- Regional: housing coalitions, resources for unhoused people
- Provincial/national: housing policies, funding

**Health**

Healthcare services
- Stigma: office trainings and discussions, lead by example (peers)
- Recovery check-ups
- Champion in community
- Connect people in recovery with people in power from another place in the ecosystem when key decisions are being made – local, provincial, federal.

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**Understanding Your Sphere of Influence in the Recovery Ecosystem**

**Purpose**

- **Address Substance Use and Recovery in the Workplace**
  - Don’t wait for that “recovery-friendly employer” designation - educate your employee/staff about recovery and how they can create a safe space for their colleagues and then another employer from another place in the ecosystem to do the same.
  - Recovery Resource Groups
  - Lunch ‘n Learns
  - Supervisor trainings
  - Resource fairs

**Recovery Advocacy**

- Become a recovery advocate by connecting people in recovery with people in power from another place in the ecosystem when key decisions are being made - local, provincial, federal.
  - Naloxone laws
  - Local zoning, code enforcement
  - Changing drug sentencing laws
  - Funding decisions
Understand your sphere of influence in the recovery ecosystem

**Purpose**

**Faith leaders**
- Create a welcoming environment in your church or faith-based organization, which includes people from several places in the ecosystem.
- Go beyond making space for "meetings"
- Educate your faith community about what addiction is and how allies are important in addressing shame, discrimination, and prejudice.
- Create your own "recovery-friendly church" designation

**Recovery support services**
- Use your skills and volunteer for a recovery community center or recovery residence or another recovery-related non-profit – and then ask someone from another place in the ecosystem to join you.
  - Nonprofit management
  - Personnel/HR management
  - Fundraising
  - Communications
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Understanding your sphere of influence in the recovery ecosystem

Recovery community

- Become a recovery champion by showing up at recovery events and writing LTEs to the local newspaper – and then ask someone from another place in the ecosystem to join you.
  - Athletic coaches
  - Restaurant owners
  - Law enforcement
  - Pastors and faith leaders

Don’t stop learning!

- Appreciate the different definitions of recovery
- Appreciate the different pathways to recovery
- Understand the different pathways in recovery

Learn about addiction and recovery

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Learn about addiction and recovery

Stay up to date!

The Recovery Research Institute

www.recoveryanswers.org

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Think beyond treatment services, mutual aid groups, and recovery community support – think in terms of recovery capital:

- Personal recovery capital resources
- Social recovery capital resources
- Community recovery capital resources

Consider online resources, too!

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“Simply a wonderful book, a gem. One of the best books of its kind I’ve ever read.”
—John Stember, president of The Atlantic Foundation and person in long-term recovery.

RECOVERY ALLIES

How to Support Addiction Recovery and Build Recovery-Friendly Communities

Alison Jones Webb, MA, MPH

Email: alison.jones.webb@gmail.com

Website: www.alisonjoneswebb.com
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UPCOMING WEBINARS

February 14th, 2024
Know Your Neuro
By: Crystal Collier, PhD, LPC-S

March 6th, 2024
Polysubstance Use During the Opioid Crisis
By: Debbie Gray, LICSW, LADC, LSCSW, LCAC

February 28th, 2024
The Power of The Brain-First Approach in Recovery Coaching
By: Dave Kenney, PhD (cand.) and Susan Kenney, CHWC

March 13th, 2024
Emotional Attachment Behavioral Therapy: An Innovative Approach to Behavioral Health Treatment
By: Doug Smith, BS, CADC II

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