This workshop is designed to help couples navigate the path From active addiction to recovery.
CDC: Leading Causes of Death from Substances in USA

Smoking remains the leading cause
Alcohol – Rates of alcohol induced deaths

37% since 2002
OD deaths have quadrupled since 1999.

Drugs—½ million deaths 2000-2014.
The Opioid Addiction Epidemic

We are now in third wave of the opioid epidemic (NIDA)
1. Prescription pills
2. Street opioids
3. Fentanyl

Opioids 61% of all overdose deaths
manyfaces1voice.org

THE ANONYMOUS PEOPLE

RECOVERY IS OUT - TO CHANGE THE ADDICTION CONVERSATION FROM PROBLEMS TO SOLUTIONS
Recovery as a Movement

23.5 million Americans live in long-term recovery

10% of Americans report being in recovery
I’m right there in the room, and no one even acknowledges me.”
Impact of Addiction

Substance/compulsive behavior is central organizing principle in the couple and family system

Rotunda, Scherer, & Imm (1995) report alcoholic families as more troubled than nonalcoholic families: boundaries, adaptability, cohesiveness, interactional patterns, distribution of power, conflict
Couples with SUD are four times more likely to divorce
Even after recovery

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Couple Recovery: It's Time

OH WOW! PARADIGM SHIFT!
Couples Addiction Recovery Empowerment CARE

CARE Goals

- **Advocate** couples recovery
- **Validate** individual & couple recovery
- **Normalize** relationship struggles in recovery, especially early recovery
- **Provide Tools** to support a relational approach to recovery
Couples Need a Roadmap

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Healing Takes Time and Effort

✓ It’s normal to struggle after recovery
✓ The first year of recovery is crucial
✓ The couple is entering new territory
Long-Term Recovery Study
Humphreys, Moos, & Cohen, 1997

- Sort-term interventions have little long-term impact
- At the 8-year follow-up family relationship quality appears most predictive of remission
- Outpatient sessions sought in the first 3 years increased likelihood of remission at the 8 year mark
- AA participation in first 3 years increased likelihood of remission at 8 years
Recovery Capital: A Primer for Addictions Professionals

White & Cloud (2008) define “recovery capital” as the internal & external resources that increase the likelihood of beginning & sustaining recovery.

Counselors Can Influence

- Personal Recovery Capital
- Family and Social Recovery Capital
- Community Recovery Capital
Trauma of Recovery

What Happens Next is Normal

• Destabilization of the system
• Relief is often followed by fear, uncertainty and upheaval
• Recovery replaces alcohol as organizer in relationship-continued destabilization
• Current treatment approaches neglect couples when they need help the most
Family Recovery Project (FRP)  
Brown & Lewis (1999)

• Sponsored by Mental Research Institute
• Sought to determine normal long-term recovery processes in family/couple relationships
• Three research components:
  – Family Research Project
  – Curriculum Development, Maintaining Abstinence Program (MAPS)
  – Couples Focus Group
Couple Recovery Development Approach

Time together and in recovery

Unique Characteristics

Life Cycle

Shifting

Intergenerational Reworking

Attending

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Couple Recovery Development Approach

**Shifting**: A shift in identity from an individual recovery focus towards an identity as a couple in recovery:
- Identity-Roles-Boundaries

**Intergenerational Reworking**: Increased awareness of the impact of family of origin on individual and relationship development:
- Filtering and Shedding

**Attending**: Ability to care for self and other in co-existing recoveries:
- Attend to Self and Attend to Other
Create Shared Meaning

Make Life Dreams Come True

Manage Conflict
- Accept Your Partner’s Influence
- Dialogue About Problems
- Practice Self-Soothing

The Positive Perspective
- Turn Towards Instead of Away
- Share Fondness and Admiration

Build Love Maps
- Know One Another’s World

TRUST

COMMITMENT
Couple Recovery Typology (Lewis)

• **Type 1**: Both partners are in recovery, but they are separate recovery programs

• **Type 2**: Only one of the partners is in recovery

• **Type 3**: Neither is in recovery. ("dry drunk", "white knuckle sobriety")
A Relational Approach to Addiction Recovery

Three levels of recovery are addressed concurrently:

1. The person(s) with substance use disorder
2. The partner’s recovery
3. The couple recovery: interdependency
Couple Typology

New Category Proposal

Type 1+: Both partners are in recovery and they are working on couple recovery
Secondhand Addiction: Collateral Damage

Living with active addiction is a balancing act affecting every part of the partner’s life.
Secondhand Addiction: Collateral Damage

The harmful effects of this disease are not automatically a sign of codependency or pathology.
Addiction Treatment Needs to be Trauma Informed

Direct impact and consequences of the trauma of addiction change the partner’s neural pathways.
Secondhand Addiction

• Refers to the harmful impact of addiction on society, family and significant others
• Addiction treatment for significant others may overlook secondhand addiction and focus only on “codependency”
• We need to change language to destigmatize SUD’s for families and to provide hope
Interventions
HEART – Healing Emotions From Addiction and Recovery Trauma
HEART – Healing Emotions From Addiction and Recovery Trauma

It is important for both the person with SUD and the partner to talk about the impact of addiction on self and family. This can be done without blame, it is about healing from the impact of a disorder.
Speaker’s Role

1. “Describe a specific situation where you were impacted by addiction.”

2. “Express your feelings about this situation.”

3. “Avoid labeling self or other.”

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Listener’s Role
(Sample list of questions)
• How did this event impact you…the family…our relationship?
• What can you tell me about your feelings?
• What did you understand about addiction then…now?
• How might this reminded you of anything in your family history?
Codependency vs Interdependency

There are three different ways to manage and communicate reactions to partner’s behaviors and emotions.
Three Responses

- Taking Control → Codependent
- Expressing Feelings → Interdependent
- Offering Support → Interdependent

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Recovery Maps
Communication Guidelines

**Speaker** Share only what you are comfortable sharing

**Listener: Empathy & Validation**

*Empathy*: to understand and share the speaker’s feelings

*Validation*: accepting and respecting the speaker’s emotions
Build Recovery Maps Asking Questions About Recovery

“Respect if your partner is not comfortable with the question and pick another question.”

“The goal is to understand your partner’s perspective.”
Therapist instructs each partner to share with the other something about their recovery that is important for the partner to know
My Recovery/Wellness

Partner listens, avoids problem-solving, or expressing own opinion – Sticks with empathy and validation
Your Recovery/Wellness

Therapist instructs each partner to ask a question they have about the other’s recovery. Remind them to respect boundaries and reinforce permission to pass on the question or to say “I’ll stop there”
Couple Recovery

Therapist asks couple to agree to talk about some aspect of how recovery has impacted them as a couple or as a family sharing thoughts and feelings.

Avoid problem-solving at first
Rituals of Connection

Therapist defines and highlights the importance of rituals:

1. Rituals are predictable
2. Rituals are meaningful
3. Formal and informal rituals
Thank You for Participating

“Success is a journey, not a destination.”

Ben Sweetland