



COMMUNITY CHAMPION RECOVERY MANUAL

Recovery is based on empowering individuals to take ownership of their own recovery and where they are supported to help build activities and support networks in the communities they live in. This applies to people who are currently engaged in treatment and to those currently outside of the treatment system. However, as the current UK Drug Strategy specifies (HM Government, 2010), there is a vital and additional role for those who emerge as recovery leaders or, in the language of the strategy, 'recovery champions'. They will be the individuals who will provide the role models (social learning) for those earlier in their recovery journeys and who will motivate and inspire change in others. They will create the belief that recovery is possible.

While many agencies and DAATs have gone about identifying and recruiting recovery champions, they have not always done as well in developing the support systems and resources that they will need in working with a range of people including alcohol and drug professionals and a wide range of individuals in the community. There are too many experiences of people keen to 'give something back' who have been overwhelmed by the responsibilities and the demands and who have ended up relapsing themselves.

So how will a recovery manual help?

The manual itself contributes to the protection and support of both the champion and the person in early recovery by providing a framework that is evidence-based to map and plan recovery activities and supports and to record progress and blockages in the recovery journey. However, it is also important for the process of developing a team of champions who can work together and both support each other and work with professionals in dealing with difficult and complex issues. The model for developing the manual is about a group of recovery champions supporting each other and creating a safety net of mutual support from which risks are more effectively managed and relationships with professionals more easily addressed.

What is the Community Champion Recovery Manual?

The manual has been developed by ACT Recovery from the Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) first developed in mental health to support self-directed recovery changes and was first piloted as an adjunct to recovery oriented treatment in specialist alcohol and drug services in Lanarkshire, Scotland. Following this initial work, the manual was then extended to be used as a peer recovery intervention in two settings – North Wales and Liverpool.

In North Wales, the project was with individuals who were not in contact with treatment services and was for use with people in early recovery in the community. In Liverpool, the manual was developed with recovery champions still engaged with treatment services in MerseyCare and was used to support people in treatment to explore their recovery options. In both cases, the manual was developed for that community and was based on evidence-based methods to:

- Improve personal recovery capital
- Social connectedness and links to meaningful activities

The Community Champion Recovery Manual actively engages individuals in a peer-support approach to enabling and supporting their recovery journey. Techniques of node link mapping (an effective technique for communication and for delivering therapeutic activities) are trained to a core group of community champions who will work with the ACT team to develop a peer package that is relevant to the local context of your community and the local services.

During this process the group work through issues around governance, boundaries and support needed for to enable the group to work effectively. During this process the community champions develop key communication skills and experience in peer led support and engagement. It is this latter process that is critical in achieving two recovery objectives for the core group of recovery champions:

- To create bonding capital within the group so that they can develop the rules and resources to support each other
- To create bridging capital to allow them to establish meaningful working relationships with a range of professionals that they will work with on the interventions

Deliverables:

- Development of community champion skills
- Creating a self-sustaining network initially developed by ACT Recovery and the Therapeutic Champion Co-ordinator
- Personalised Community Recovery manuals for both peers in recovery and Community Champions
- Developing the underlying processes and methods that will allow them to work together effectively alongside peers and professionals in their local communities
- Developing the cohesion between strategic, therapeutic and community champions and providing strong community links

The key outcome of this work is to create peer-delivered evidence-based practice that empowers recovery champions to deliver ongoing recovery support outside of treatment and to build their skills in working in a peer recovery context. It will provide a key group of recovery champions with skills and resources that will assist in their champion role and will provide supports and structures that will ensure they are protected as much as possible through both effective bonds within the group and through strong links to the necessary professional supports and community resources.

Key stages:

- Development of the peer group and introductory sessions on recovery champions and on mapping techniques
- Formalising the Champion Working Group - Establishing the governance, support and boundaries of the group
- Review of manual and adaptation to your local system
- Building bonds and links within the recovery champion group
- Identification of community resources to link into
- Delivery of training sessions in using the mapping resources .
- Production of draft manual for review.
- Implementation training
- Option of ongoing support and evaluation

Depending on your needs we would develop an evaluation of effectiveness of the Peer Recovery Manual programme of work and an ongoing package of support for the peer champions.