



## Recovery to Practice—Project Overview

Since being identified as the single most important aim of mental health services by both the 1999 Surgeon General's *Report on Mental Health* and the 2003 President's New Freedom Commission, the notion of recovery has rapidly and broadly permeated the American mental health system. With roots extending back to the birth of psychiatry in the 18th century, recovery should not be considered a passing fad. As its re-introduction is intended to bring about a fundamental transformation of mental health care—in the words of the 2005 *Federal Action Agenda*, a “revolution” in care.

But what, then, is “recovery” in relation to mental illness? And what implications does this concept have for transforming mental health practice to become “recovery-oriented”? To begin answering these questions, and to promote the transformation of mental health care to a recovery-orientation, on October 1, 2009, the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), Office of the Associate Director for Consumer Affairs, within the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), contracted with Development Services Group, Inc. (DSG) to launch a 5-year *Recovery to Practice (RTP)* initiative. Within SAMHSA's workforce development priority area, this initiative seeks to advance a recovery-oriented approach to mental health care by developing, promoting, and disseminating training curricula on how to translate the concept of mental health recovery into practice; and by providing a *Recovery to Practice* Recovery Resource Center for mental health professionals engaged in this work.

The *Recovery to Practice* initiative is the most recent of the Federal Government's efforts to promote recovery for all Americans affected by mental illness. As noted above, recovery was acknowledged as a key concept in the 1999 *U.S. Surgeon General's Report on Mental Health* and in the 2003 *Final Report of the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health (Achieving the Promise: Transforming Mental Health Care in America)*. These two documents, and the resulting SAMHSA *Federal Action Agenda*, agree that recovery should be the goal for all mental health services and that to achieve this vision of recovery, a fundamental transformation of mental health care is needed. As a result of this transformation, recovery will become the expectation for anyone with a mental illness, mental health services and supports will actively facilitate recovery, and mental health care will be consumer- and family-driven.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration has been a consistent supporter and facilitator of the growth of the mental health recovery movement. To help bring

clarity to evolving concepts of recovery, SAMHSA and the Interagency Committee on Disability Research, in partnership with six other Federal agencies, convened the National Consensus Conference on Mental Health Recovery and Mental Health Systems Transformation on December 16-17, 2004. The conference participants developed the National Consensus Statement on Mental Health Recovery, which describes 10 fundamental components and principles of recovery. The National Consensus Statement can be viewed at <http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/publications/allpubs/sma05-4129/>. Despite these efforts, there is still limited training and education for mental health providers on the translation of recovery concepts and principles into practice. As a result, many mental health professionals have not been exposed to recovery-oriented practices, and/or been trained in how to implement them. The *Recovery to Practice* project aims to address this need.

The *Recovery to Practice* initiative includes two complementary components: 1) Creating a Recovery Resource Center for mental health professionals complete with Web-based and print materials, training, and technical assistance for professionals engaged in the transformation process; and 2) creating and disseminating recovery-oriented training materials for each of the major mental health professions. Through these two major components, the RTP initiative aims to foster a better understanding of recovery, recovery-oriented practices, and the roles of the various professions in promoting recovery.

### **The Recovery to Practice Resource Center**

Many visions of recovery-oriented care are now converging into a rich tapestry of practices that are solidly based on people's lived experiences of recovery. However, the information currently available on these practices is scattered and hard for people to find. The Recovery Resource Center is designed to bring together all of the existing information and relevant materials on translating recovery into practice in one, centralized place.

This Web-based center will serve as the national hub for an evolving, well-organized, and readily accessible repository of materials on recovery and recovery-oriented practices, quarterly Webinar trainings, and an e-bulletin board. Each year, the Center also will publish several booklets, brochures, and articles on these topics, and each quarter it will publish an e-newsletter. In addition, the Recovery Resource Center will provide training and technical assistance staff who can respond to telephone and email requests for assistance, and arrange for lengthier consultations.

While mental health practitioners are the Recovery Resource Center's primary audience, the Center is also open to anyone interested in learning more about recovery-oriented practices —

mental health consumers, people in recovery, and their families; programs and their leaders; service systems and their administrators; other stakeholders; and the community at large. Because the Center is a public resource, all Center materials and information are available at no cost.

### **Professional Recovery-Oriented Practice Training Materials**

As part of the RTP project, SAMHSA approved awards to five national behavioral healthcare provider associations to hasten awareness, acceptance, and adoption of recovery-based practices in the delivery of mental health services. The following national mental health professional organizations will receive funding for the next 5 years to develop recovery-oriented educational materials and train thousands of psychiatrists, psychologists, psychiatric nurses, social workers, and mental health peer specialists:

- American Psychiatric Association
- American Psychological Association
- American Psychiatric Nurses Association
- Council on Social Work Education
- National Association of Peer Specialists

With recovery-oriented training materials, mental health professionals will be able to embrace and practice recovery-oriented approaches while enhancing their core personal and professional values. In addition, they will learn new ways of working collaboratively across professions to more effectively support individuals with mental illnesses in entering into and pursuing recovery. This collaboration will be based on the expectation that each profession has a unique role to play; coming from different traditions and facing different challenges, but joining in a collective effort to learn about and adopt new and innovative practices that build on their respective histories and strengths.

The recovery-based training materials will be based on the 10 components of the National Consensus Statement on Mental Health Recovery (referenced above). For instance, they will be built on the lived experiences of mental illness, they will be welcoming, and they will include and respect the strong and very personal voices of those living with mental illnesses. The materials will be *relationship-based*, emphasizing the healing context in which specific services should be delivered. They will be *person-centered*, embracing the whole person (not just the illness or pathology) and centered on achieving life goals. And, most of all, they will be *hopeful* and *strengths-based*.

To offer the best products possible—products that express the richness of recovery—DSG has assembled an impressive team, including consumers with lived experience, the Annapolis Coalition, Mental Health America (MHA), the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI),

National Development and Research Institutes, Inc. (NDRI), and the New York Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services (NYAPRS). DSG also has assembled more than 40 consultants and a highly diverse steering committee to guide the project.

To stay informed of all the RTP Resource Center's many activities and events, join the ListServ. New resources are being added to the Resource Center on an ongoing basis. Contributors are invited to submit suggestions for useful articles, videos, curricula, and personal stories—as well as announcements about upcoming relevant conferences and meetings—to keep the center robust and current. In addition, the Resource Center will disseminate a quarterly E-newsletter and other announcements. Please click [Join ListServ](#) to receive all Resource Center communications.

If you have questions or would like more information, please email <mailto:recoverytopractice@dsonline.com>, or call the RTP Technical Assistance Center at (877) 584-8535.