



## **RECOVERY-ORIENTED COMMUNITY INITIATIVE TOOLKIT**

*The Peer Support Coalition of Florida's "**Recovery-Oriented Community Initiative**" is a state-wide program that aims to spread the hope of recovery for Floridians one community at a time.*

*This toolkit is designed for use by grassroots advocates and aims to introduce tools for everyday citizens to become involved in transforming Florida's communities into "**Recovery-Oriented Communities**".*

### **Additional Information**

For additional information or to download an electronic version of this tool kit, go to:  
[Resources - Peer Support Coalition of Florida \(peersupportfl.org\)](http://peersupportfl.org)

# RECOVERY-ORIENTED COMMUNITY INITIATIVE TOOLKIT

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## Introduction

The Peer Support Coalition of Florida's "**Recovery-Oriented Community Initiative**" is a state-wide program that aims to spread the hope of recovery for Floridians, one community at a time.

Recovery-Oriented System of Care (ROSC) is a system transformation initiative being led by Florida's Department of Children and Families (DCF) to establish an integrated, values-based, recovery-oriented system of care where recovery is expected and achieved through meaningful partnerships and shared decision-making with individuals, communities and systems. The transformation to a ROSC in Florida is grounded in the peer specialist movement.

## What is Recovery?

*Recovery from Mental Disorders and/or Substance Use Disorders is a process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential.*

*(SAMHSA's working Definition, 2012)*

## What is the community's role in recovery?

Through the Recovery Support Strategic Initiative, the federal Department of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has delineated community as one of the four major dimensions that support a life in recovery. **Community**: relationships and social networks that provide support, friendship, love, and hope (SAMHSA's definition).

**Recovery is supported through relationships and social networks**: An important factor in the recovery process is the presence and involvement of people who believe in the person's ability to recover; who offer hope, support, and encouragement; and who also suggest strategies and resources for change. Family members, peers, providers, faith groups, community members, and other allies form vital support networks. Through these relationships, people leave unhealthy and/or unfulfilling life roles behind and engage in new roles (e.g., partner, caregiver, friend, student, employee) that lead to a greater sense of belonging, personhood, empowerment, autonomy, social inclusion, and community participation. (SAMHSA)

**Recovery is based on respect**: Community, systems, and societal acceptance and appreciation for people affected by mental health and substance use problems – including protecting their rights and eliminating discrimination – are crucial in achieving recovery. There is a need to acknowledge that taking steps toward recovery may require great courage. Self-acceptance, developing a positive and meaningful sense of identity, and regaining belief in oneself are all particularly important. (SAMHSA)

## **Recovery-Oriented Community Initiative**

A Recovery-Oriented Community aims to inspire public interest in whole health and open dialogues about how communities play an integral role in the recovery of its residents. The concept of Recovery-Oriented Communities is not new. There are working examples of communities that have taken on the challenge.

### **Understanding the need for a community approach:**

Recovery is not simply about personal health but the health and well-being of the entire community.

### **What can family and friends do?**

- Remember that there is hope for recovery, and recovery is real.
- Provide support and hope for/with other families going through a tough time.
- Share your story!
- Get involved with advocacy.
- Volunteer at peer-run organizations and treatment facilities to provide support to family members.
- Help to identify local community resources that can help others initiate and sustain their recovery and help to build a network of allies.
- Address Not in My Back Yard (NIMBY) barriers to community integration.

### **What can individuals in Recovery do?**

- Tell your Story!!! Use it to fight stigma and discrimination.
- To stay informed, join an advocacy organization, e.g., Peer Support Coalition of Florida.
- Engage in training to become a recovery coach or peer specialist.
- Reach out to the media.
- Support other people in early recovery.
- Join or start a recovery rally.
- Seek ways to give back to your community.
- Start or support a recovery community organization in your area.

### **Who is involved in a Recovery-Oriented Community?**

Absolutely everyone is involved!

### **How to Start a Recovery-Oriented Community?**

The following pages represent a Recovery-Oriented Community toolkit that can be used by anyone interested in improving the recovery capital in their community.

## **Sample Recovery-Oriented Community Resolution**

***WHEREAS**, the [Named Florida Community] supports the designation of **Recovery-Oriented Community** and;*

***WHEREAS**, at their [date of adoption, meeting], the [Sample Florida Community's Board] has unanimously passed a resolution supporting the designation of [Named Florida Community] as a **Recovery-Oriented Community**, and;*

***WHEREAS**, [Named Florida Community] recognizes that one in four Americans has experienced mental illness, including substance use disorders, in a given year according to the National Institute of Mental Health, and;*

***WHEREAS**, [Named Florida Community] recognizes that [give Florida statistics] residents experienced mental illness, including substance use disorders, and;*

***WHEREAS**, mental health problems are more common than cancer and heart disease combined, affecting children and adults, including a large percentage of veterans, and;*

***WHEREAS**, given the serious nature of Florida's current mental health and substance use problems, we must continue to reach the millions who need help, and;*

***WHEREAS**, the stigma associated with the disease of mental illness and substance use is identified as the primary reason individuals fail to seek the help they need to recover, and;*

***WHEREAS**, **Recovery-Oriented Communities** aim to inspire public interest and open dialogues about recovery, raise awareness of the need for recovery support in our communities, and create a culture wherein all residents feel supported by their community and neighbors and feel free to seek treatment without fear of stigma and;*

***WHEREAS**, promoting awareness that there can be no discourse on "health" without consideration of "whole health" and encouraging residents of all ages to be mindful of their whole health and ask for help when needed, and;*

***WHEREAS**, local resources are available to promote hope and recovery within the community, so no one resident needs to suffer alone or feel hopeless, and;*

***WHEREAS**, establishing **Recovery-Oriented Communities** will raise awareness of resources and encourage residents to engage in care as soon as the need is identified so recovery can begin, hope is inspired, and tragedies are avoided, and;*

***NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that [Named Florida Community] recognizes the community needs and supports the efforts of the [Named Florida Community] as a **Recovery-Community**.*

## **Forming a Recovery-Oriented Task Force**

### **How to Identify Recovery-Oriented Ambassadors**

A Recovery-Oriented Ambassador is a resident who embraces the Recovery-Oriented Community Initiative and will help bring your Recovery-Oriented Communities to life.

Recovery-Oriented ambassadors are community members who are connected to the community and understand the community's specific strengths and opportunities.

Ambassadors do not have to be professional advocates; they can be individuals who are passionate, interested, energetic and committed to Florida's recovery transformation. Any proactive community member can become a Recovery-Oriented Ambassador. For example, an ambassador could be a peer specialist, teacher, board of education member, nonprofit leader, church leader, or simply neighbor next door. Often people become ambassadors because they have been affected by an issue directly or through a loved one.

### **How to Form a Recovery-Oriented task force**

Gather a team of dedicated residents who can help enhance the culture of caring and hope in your community. Including as many sectors as possible would be ideal, such as schools, service providers, community leaders, church leaders, law enforcement, courts, etc.

Host a town-hall information meeting to introduce residents to the Recovery-Oriented Community Initiative, educate and promote awareness, and gather public interest. Invite broadly in support of Recovery-Oriented Communities:

- Local governments and business leaders
  - City Council leaders, Mayors
  - Board of Education and Board of Health leaders
  - Superintendents of Schools, School leaders, Early Learning Coalitions
  - Police, fire, jail, and other law enforcement leaders
  - Providers of Behavioral Services and other local Business Owners
- Local community service groups and nonprofits
  - Local organizations include the Mental Health Association, National Alliance of Mental Health, Federations of Families, Depression & Bipolar Support Alliance, Narcotics Anonymous, Alcohol Anonymous, etc.
  - Faith communities at local houses of worship
  - Local clubs such as Rotary and Lions clubs
- Local youth organizations
  - Engage students in the Recovery-Oriented movement at the appropriate levels
  - Consider giving the youth a voice with a youth task force

## Recovery-Oriented Action Plan

Below are some ideas to bring your local Recovery-Oriented Community to life. Feel free to follow these suggestions and plans and add your own that will benefit your local municipality. Remember, this initiative is a community effort, so play to the strengths and opportunities within your target community.

- ❖ Run a town-hall-styled meeting about your local Recovery-Oriented resolution and efforts.
- ❖ Hold a public Recovery-Oriented forum to discuss your community's goals and gather input for community events.
- ❖ Promote whole health goals within the community.
- ❖ Host a Recovery Walk.
- ❖ Set up a Recovery-Oriented booth at community events and community days.
- ❖ Host a "Looks of Recovery" poster contest with schools.
- ❖ Have educational events for preschool and elementary students.
- ❖ Develop a website, Facebook page, or extension of your current linking to local resources. Update Peer Support Coalition with new resources.
- ❖ Encourage student Recovery-Oriented after-school clubs.
- ❖ Collaborate with local community service groups and your local leaders to host a community-wide Recovery-Oriented celebration.
- ❖ Distribute Recovery-Oriented promotional materials to community members to place on their private lawns and vehicles.
- ❖ Host a Recovery-Oriented awareness community concert.
- ❖ Collaborate with other recovery-focused groups to provide community education, awareness, and recreational events.
- ❖ Develop a media campaign and put out press releases for your Recovery-Oriented efforts.
- ❖ Promote personal stories of wellness and recovery.



## **Sample Press Materials**

### **Sample Press Release:**

#### **[Named Florida Community] Declares a Recovery-Oriented Zone**

One in four adults [use current numbers] experiences a diagnosable mental illness every year, and many of these individuals do not seek help because of fear of shame or judgment from friends, family, and coworkers. On [DATE] [TOWN], the first steps towards creating a Recovery-Oriented Community were made. In a Recovery-Oriented Community, residents can receive the necessary resources without judgment.

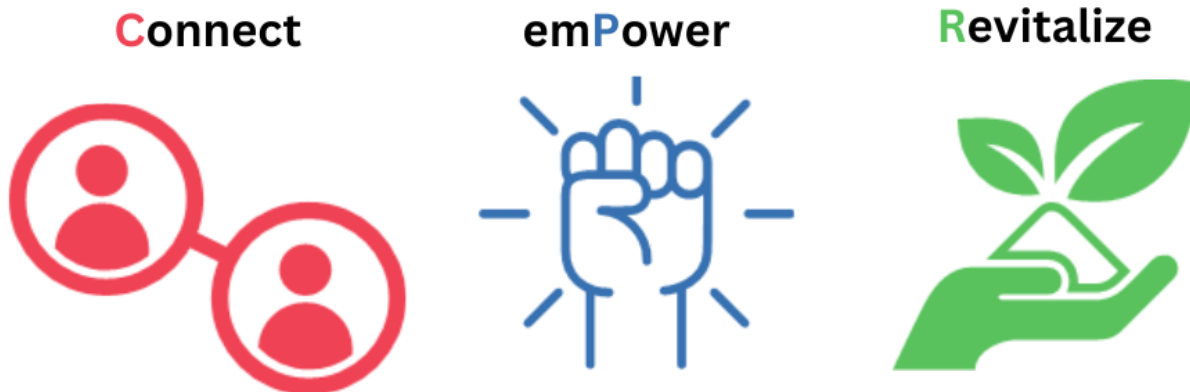
[Named Florida Community] representatives passed a resolution designating the [Named Florida Community] a Recovery-Oriented Community to create an environment where residents will feel free to seek the supports they need to attain and maintain wellness. [Named Florida Community] joins other progressive communities to declare a Recovery-Oriented Zone.

[Named Florida Community] hopes to raise awareness that recovery is attainable and achieved in communities that encourage those affected to seek services and feel supported. Establishing this Recovery-Oriented Community will raise awareness of locally available resources so no one resident needs to feel hopeless or alone. Eliminating stigma will enable residents to ask for help when needed so that recovery can begin, hope is inspired, and tragedies are avoided.

[Named Florida Community] urges anyone wanting more information on the Recovery-Oriented Community Initiative to contact the Peer Support Coalition of Florida to help eliminate stigma and promote wellness amongst all [Named Florida Community] residents.

## Emotional CPR (eCPR)

Emotional CPR (eCPR) is a community education program that teaches people to assist someone experiencing an emotional crisis through three simple phases:



eCPR is a hope-based approach to building strong, resilient, cooperative communities. The training will help prepare you to fully participate in your community and support others – friends, family, or people you haven't met – who may be experiencing emotional crises. eCPR skills can be practiced by people trained in counseling, assessment, or other mental health skills and those without mental health training. It is also valuable for deepening day-to-day communication.

Just as CPR, or cardiopulmonary resuscitation, has helped save many lives of people whose physical heart has stopped beating, eCPR can save lives by lessening emotional despair and preventing self-harm. eCPR is emotional resuscitation. eCPR provides a solid foundation for a recovery-oriented community.

### Levels of eCPR

**eCPR** was first developed for one person assisting another through an emotional crisis.

**"meCPR"** is the process of creating eCPR internally with oneself.

**"weCPR"** is where the intentions of eCPR are applied in a group setting.

**"communityCPR"** is where the intentions of eCPR are applied to community-sized groups.

We have now learned that it is valuable to show how the intentions of eCPR apply from the individual up through whole communities. Our goal is to spread eCPR to every community through its application at all these levels, thereby shifting the culture of whole communities from fear and isolation to compassion and mutual respect.

Peer Support Coalition of Florida aims to promote recovery in our communities.

You and your community can be the help that someone needs.

Training is available in English and Spanish.

**Get trained today!**

**If you are interested in attending a training, hosting a training or would like more information on eCPR:**

**PSCFL provides support in implementing this toolkit.**

**Contact Us**

**[info@peersupportfl.org](mailto:info@peersupportfl.org)**