



# RECOVERY COACH ETHICS

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# Learning Objectives

- Define Ethics
- Recognize the ICAADA CAPRC Code of Ethics
- Complete a Self-Care Assessment
- Identify Sociological Imprints
- Recognize the Cultural Dimensions of Recovery Coaching
- Understand Recovery Coaching Core Values
- Identify a Process for Ethical Decision-Making
- Design Strategies for Addressing Ethical Dilemmas
- Develop an Ethics-Based Professional Development Plan

# CCAR Recovery Coach Definition

- A Recovery Coach is anyone interested in promoting recovery by removing barriers and obstacles to recovery by serving as a personal guide and mentor for people seeking or in recovery

# Recovery Coach Definition

## (from William White)

- A Recovery Coach is a person who helps remove personal and environmental obstacles to recovery, links the newly recovering person to the recovering community, and serves as a personal guide and mentor in the management of personal and family recovery. Such supports are generated by mobilizing volunteer resources within the recovery community, or provided by the recovery coach where such natural support networks are lacking.

# What Are Ethics?

A system of moral principles or values

The rules or standards governing the conduct of the members of a profession

# Recovery Coach Ethics

## Primary Ethics Goal

To prevent harm or injury to those whom we have pledged our loyalty, support or services

## Ethical Dimensions

Iatrogenic

Fiduciary

Boundary Management

Multi-Party Vulnerability.

# Iatrogenic

Actions taken, even with the best of intentions, that result in harm or injury to the recoveree

- Given that recovery coaching is a new frontier, it is important that we quickly identify and discontinue those actions that cause harm to others
- Important to receive feedback from other peers and peer supervisor regarding recovery coaching actions
- Michigan Institute for Prevention and Treatment Education

# Fiduciary

- Fiduciary is a term describing relationships in which one party has assumed a special duty and obligation to the other
  - While recovery coaching and peer support is a partnership, it is not an equally supportive friendship.
- Fiduciary implies that one party enters with increased vulnerability requiring the objectivity, support, and protection of the other.
  - The relationship between a coach and the recoveree is held to a higher standard of obligation and duty than a friendship.
- Michigan Institute for Prevention and Treatment Education



# Boundary Management

- Boundary management involves those decisions that determine the level of intimacy and parameters in a relationship
- While professionals practice detachment, peer-based services try to minimize the social distance between helper and person receiving services.
- When thinking about proper boundaries, future problems must be considered as well as immediate concerns.

# Multi-Party Vulnerability

- Multi-Party vulnerability refers to how multiple parties can be affected by unethical behavior
- Includes the recoveree, their family and support network, the coach, the organization, the field of treatment, and the recovery community as a whole.

# Flawed Assumptions

1. Long term sobriety ensures that persons will act ethically.
2. Ethics is common sense
3. Breaches of ethical conduct are made by bad people intentionally
4. Adhering to existing laws and regulations ensures ethical conduct
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# Flawed Assumptions

5. Ethical standards held by professionals can be indiscriminately applied to recovery coaches and supports
6. Ethics don't apply to volunteers, only paid positions
7. If a recovery coach or support person gets into a ethical dilemma they will always notify the proper authority

# Countering Assumptions

- **Long term sobriety**
  - Recovery no matter how strong, is not perfection. We are all prone to errors in judgment, especially in situations not previously faced
- **Common Sense**
  - because we work within a diverse population common experiences are not the reality
- **Breaches are made by “bad” people**
  - most breaches are made by good intentions gone awry. Making ethical decisions requires a sense of heightened awareness.
- **Adhering to existing laws and regulations will prevent a breach**
  - what is legal is not always ethical. Ethics is often situational dependent.

# Countering Assumptions

- **Professional ethics do not apply unilaterally to recovery coaching**
  - While there is significant overlap, the uniqueness of the peer positions demand a different set of ethical standards
- **Ethics do not apply to volunteers**
  - Volunteering within a peer structure implies that the volunteers hold many positions of trust and therefore are accountable to the same ethical standards as the paid positions. There are higher standards for the staff, but that falls into the differences between peer-based and professional services
- **Recovery coaches will always report potential ethics breaches**
  - Often times many peers struggle with the idea of what needs to be reported and what constitutes a breach of trust. Regular self evaluation and consulting with peer leaders and the supervisor are necessary to maintain good ethical practices.

# Recovery Coach Self-Care

- Own Recovery
- Physical
- Mental
- Spiritual
- Emotional
- Occupational
- Social
- Environmental

# Sociological Imprints

- Messages we receive from family, friends and community as we grow up that shape our beliefs, values, behavior and lives



# Cultural Competency

- Examining cultural implications in the delivery of recovery coaching
- Developing skills to be culturally effective

# CULTURAL COMPETENCY

- Culture generally refers to “shared values, norms, traditions, customs, art history, folklore and institutions of a group of people.” (Orlandi, Weston, & Epstein, 1992)
- Cultural *Competency* is defined as an ongoing process by which individuals and systems respond that affirms worth and preserves dignity of the recoveree.
- It is the responsibility of Peer Supports and Recovery Coaches to develop an awareness of cultural considerations with respect to the recovery of the participants.

# CREATING CULTURALLY COMPETENT SYSTEMS

## A Peer Support should also...

- Function with an awareness that the dignity of the person is not guaranteed unless the dignity of his or her people is preserved.
- Acknowledge that minority populations are served in varying degrees by the natural system.
- Recognize that “family,” “community,” and the like are different for various cultures and even for subgroups within cultures.
- Believe that diversity within cultures is as important as diversity between cultures.

# CREATING CULTURALLY COMPETENT SYSTEMS

- Understand that participants are best served by someone that is in tune with or part of their culture.
- Acknowledge that cultural differences exist and have an impact on service delivery.
- Treat client in the context of their minority status, which impacts self esteem, identity formation, isolation, and role assumption.
- Respect the family as indispensable to understanding the individual because the family provides the context within which the person functions and is the primary support network.

# Personal Bias

- Bias implies partiality or distortion of individual judgments based on a consistent mental leaning in favor of or against persons or things of certain kinds of classes. – Webster's Dictionary-
- Everyone has certain biases, it is important to raise your awareness of these and take measures to overcome them

# Overcoming Bias

- Overcoming bias is a process. There are actions involved in overcoming certain biases
  - Self-Awareness- be aware of your own culture and cultural blind spots
  - Awareness and acceptance of cultural differences
  - Understanding and working with the dynamics of cultural difference
  - Gaining knowledge of participants' culture
  - Adapting skills to cultural contexts.

# Ethnocentrism

- Ethnocentrism is how different cultures and behavior associated with those cultures are assessed according to one's own cultural standards
  - Behaviors and ideas are “good” or “bad” according to how similar they are to our own cultures

# ETHNORELATIVISM

- Ethnorelativism is understanding a culture in the relationship between it and your own.
  - This changes thinking away from judgment and instead recognizes behaviors and ideas not as “good” or “bad”, just different



# FELLOWSHIPCENTRISM

- Fellowshipcentrism is the belief that one's own recovery program is the only one that is effective.
  - There are many pathways to recovery and we need to respect the individuals right to recover the way that works best for them
  - This does not invalidate your own experience strength and hope
  - For the purpose of peer recovery supports, AA and NA, as well as any other recovery program that is working for the recovering person, are respected by the Peer support.

# CULTURES TO BE CONSIDERED

- What do we think of when we hear culture?
  - Race and Ethnicity
  - Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
  - Disability
  - Age
  - Socio Economic Status
  - Drug(s) of choice

# CULTURES TO BE CONSIDERED

- Some other cultural considerations that may effect someone's recovery
  - Incarceration in jail or prison, especially for extended periods of time
  - Adoption or foster care situations
  - Homeless for extended periods of time
  - Co-occurring disorders
  - Religious or Spiritual identity
  - Family- siblings or only child
  - Parents- single, mixed race or same gender

# WORKING WITH DIVERSE POPULATIONS

- Peer based services are effective because of the shared (like to like) perspectives of addiction providing common ground between participant and peer.
- When working with culturally diverse populations focus first on the commonalities (similarities vs. differences).
- Learn about how the participant thinks and relates to the world around them. Practice empathy.
- R-E-S-P-E-C-T is the key

# Summary

- Cultural competency is a process of overcoming bias and learning about how others view the world
- Empathy is the cornerstone of cultural competency
- Respecting diversity as different instead of “good” or “bad”
- Cultures include more than race, gender, ethnicity, age, and sexual orientation

# Core Values That Guide Ethical Practices

- **Gratitude and Service**
  - carry hope to individuals, families, and communities
- **Recovery**
  - all service hinges on personal recovery
- **Use of self**
  - Know thyself, know how and when to use your story
- **Capability**
  - Improve yourself. Give your best always
- **Honesty**
  - Tell the truth, separate fact from opinion, admit when you are wrong

# Core Values That Guide Ethical Practices

- **Authenticity**
  - Accurately relate your recovery
- **Credibility**
  - follow your own advice
- **Fidelity**
  - if you make a promise, keep it.
- **Humility**
  - Know your limitations and understand your role, work within your boundaries

# Core Values That Guide Ethical Practices

- **Loyalty**
  - Don't give up. Give recovery a chance
- **Hope**
  - Offer yourself and others as proof that recovery works
- **Dignity and Respect**
  - Express compassion. Accept imperfection
- **Tolerance**
  - Learn about and respect diverse pathways and styles of recovery



# Core Values That Guide Ethical Practices

- **Autonomy and Choice**
  - Recovery is voluntary: it must be chosen. Enhance choices and encourage choice making
- **Discretion**
  - respect privacy, don't gossip
- **Protection**
  - Do no harm, Do not exploit. Protect yourself and others. Avoid conflicts of interest
- **Advocacy**
  - Challenge injustice. Be the voice for the voiceless. Empower others to speak.
- **Stewardship**
  - use resources wisely.

# Personal Conduct

- **Self-care: Remember that the primary function of a peer coach is to provide an example**
  - your private behavior is just that; until it begins to effect your ability to serve as an example to those you support (e.g. you are generally unhealthy and your mentees pick up negative behaviors from you)
- **Personal Impairment**
  - Your life is being negatively impacted and as a result your recovery is suffering (e.g. a difficult divorce or loss of someone close- this applies only when you exhibit signs of distress)
- **Relapse**
  - You have a one day or short period of using behavior. Ethically you are responsible for disclosing this to your supervisor. The consequences of such actions will be determined by the discretion of the supervisor of the program

# Personal Conduct

- **Personal Bias**

- We all have biases. It is important to identify and disclose these as soon as we are aware of them. The supervisor will work to overcome these with the coach and determine if they are for the purpose of continuing within the role of support.

- **Pre-Existing Relationships**

- It may be the case that someone from your addiction may become a participant. There are many risks involved in this situation

- **Use of Information across Roles**

- because of the roles we play in the greater recovery community sometimes we may get information from our role as coaches that has an impact on someone else we are involved with in a different context. Discretion is the rule of thumb here.

- **Advocacy**

- It is important to remember that when advocating, you often represent recovery

# Integrity

- Integrity is a key component of being a successful peer support and recovery coach
- Integrity means simply that you conduct yourself ethically when no one is watching you.

# Confidentiality

- All recoveree information is confidential to your program. Any information shared outside of your program needs the consent of the recoveree. This includes any family or friends, outside agencies, or other service providers.
- A signed release of information is required to share information.
- Exceptions are limited to homicidal or suicidal ideations or intent, certain medical information in an emergency, and cases involving abuse and neglect of a child or vulnerable adult

# Finance

- Some of the ethical dilemmas are concerned with all matters financial
- It is the best policy to never directly lend, borrow, or exchange money, gifts, or anything of value with the persons you work with.
- It is important to remember that you should never do anything for any participant that you wouldn't do for another. (e.g. if you take someone out for coffee and pay vs. buying someone clothing)

# Relationships

- It is unethical to ever engage in any type of sexual relationship with a person that you are working with.
- This includes any behavior that could be construed as sexual harassment, sexual intimidation, or overly friendly overtures that could be misconstrued as sexual in nature.
- If in the course of duty, sexual feelings are arising for or from a participant, contact the supervisor for appropriate measures to be taken.
- **DO NOT ASSUME THAT INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS ARE INNOCENT!**

# Relationships

- In the case that a recoveree enters the program that you have had an intimate relationship with, let the supervisor know immediately.
- Peer to Peer mentoring is gender specific. The recoverees you work with should generally be the same gender as yourself. In the event that this is not possible, consult with the supervisor for proper handling of the situation.
- The rules apply to all recoverees that have been engaged with program. Exceptions may apply to those who have been discharged for over two years.



# Abuse and Neglect

- Indiana requires that in the case of suspected physical or sexual abuse or neglect of a minor child or disabled adult, social workers are among those **REQUIRED** to report their suspicions to the proper authorities.
- For the purposes of the peer network, it is your responsibility to report **ANY** suspicion to the supervisor of the program. The supervisor will conduct an investigation and report to the authorities.
- **DO NOT** report allegations directly to the authorities unless there is a direct threat of harm

# Self Care

- Ethics also apply to how you care for yourself. Because recovery coaches are models for right behavior, it is important that your own recovery comes first.
- Be aware of when your limits are being reached, no is an answer.
- Police yourself through contact with other peers and with your supervisor.
- Your supervisor should be available to discuss issues with you. Feel free to bring any concerns, both personal and in your capacity as a peer to the attention of anyone you think can help.

# Summary

- Ethical behavior is the most important part of being a peer support.
- Ethics can be difficult. No question is a wrong one. When in doubt **ASK!**
- Before you can help someone you must first be ok yourself
- **NO MONEY, NO SEX!!!!!!!!!!!!**
- We are a team, how we conduct ourselves effects other team members. Therefore it is our duty to help each other as well as the recoveree.

# Case Studies

- Review each case study individually
- Complete Ethics Decision-making Worksheet on each case study individually
- Discuss the case study and worksheet with small group
- Make a list of ethics learnings after finishing case studies to report to large group