

Expedite Resolutions and Improve Outcomes

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT 2: Transition and Aftercare Plans

POLICY

Transitions from programs, treatment levels of care, and between systems are often the point when relapse or setbacks in recovery occur. When an individual with behavioral health needs is making progress and having success, courts should take every effort to ensure continuity of treatment such that progress can continue. To ensure successful transitions, transition and aftercare plans which promote recovery need to be developed which are based on the individual's strengths and needs. Necessary services and supports must be in place and individuals should be actively involved in developing the plan. In addition, the transition planning process should start as early as possible and at least several months in advance to ensure a smooth transition. Discussions should occur with the individual to ensure that they are ready to leave a program or system and, if not, what will it take for them to be ready. The court should review the plan prior to any transition to make sure it is complete and includes the services and support necessary for continued success and recovery.

EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES

The recovery model is an approach to mental health and substance use disorders that emphasizes and supports a person's potential for recovery. Recovery is generally seen in this model as a personal journey

rather than a set outcome, and one that may involve developing hope, a secure base and sense of self, supportive relationships, empowerment, social inclusion, coping skills, and meaning.

A mental health recovery plan is a way for an individual to be active and take control of their own mental health so they can work toward achieving treatment and recovery goals. It also allows an individual to make sure that any plan reflects their experiences and what matters to them.¹

GETTING STARTED

- Start planning months prior to any transition
- Include the individual in the planning
- Discuss the impending transition to make sure the individual is ready
- Each plan should be individualized to the person's strengths and needs
- Develop the plan with a team approach
- Ensure enrollment or reenrollment in insurance for a smooth transition
- Include robust supports and services are in place including housing, treatment, social supports, healthcare, medication, case management, peer supports, meaningful daily activities, transportation, financial support, etc.

- Introduce the individual to those caseworkers and providers who will support them during their recovery and after any crisis should the need arise
- Offer a lifeline back to an individual's program or system, if necessary
- Provide court oversight to make sure the transition or aftercare plan is completed

NEXT GENERATION

Innovation, Technology, New Practice

- Develop a checklist or form with possible services and supports that might be needed and providers that should be involved.
- Ensure assessments designed for this population are used to assess clinical and social needs, and public safety risks.
- Build effective partnerships and relationships and develop processes and memorandums of understanding for sharing of information.

Institutionalization, Sustainability, Funding

- Ensure assessments designed for this population are used to assess clinical and social needs, and public safety risks. Transition planning must be institutionalized across systems to ensure long-term success.
- Transition planning can only work if justice, mental health, and substance use systems have a capacity and a commitment to work together.²
- Funding sources and structures should encourage collaborative efforts through different agencies and branches of government.

RESOURCES

The New Freedom Commission on Mental Health has proposed to transform the mental health system in the US by shifting the paradigm of care from traditional medical psychiatric treatment toward the concept of recovery, and the American Psychiatric Association has endorsed a recovery model from a psychiatric services perspective.^{3,4}

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reports developing national and state initiatives to empower consumers and support recovery, with specific committees planning to launch nationwide pro-recovery, anti-stigma education campaigns; develop and synthesize recovery policies; train consumers in carrying out evaluations of mental health systems; and help further the development of peer-run services.⁵ Mental Health service directors and planners are providing guidance to help state services implement recovery approaches.⁶

[Addressing Criminogenic Risk and Behavioral Health Needs](#) (National Reentry Resource Center)

[Planning to Prevent Relapse? A New Tool Can Help](#) (Council of State Governments Justice Center - CSG Justice Center)

[Resource Page](#) (Recovery Research Institute)

[Many Pathways to Recovery: Peer to Peer Recovery](#) (Rocky Mountain Tribal Leaders Council)

[Reentry After a Period of Incarceration](#) (NAMI)

[Jail Reentry Checklist](#) (SAMHSA GAINS Center)
[Preparing People for Reentry: Checklist for Correctional Facilities](#) (CSG Justice Center)

[Guidelines for the Successful Transition of Individuals with Behavioral Health Disorders from Jail and Prison](#) (Policy Research Associates)

[Community Reintegration of Prisoners with Mental Illness: A Social Investment Perspective](#) (International Journal of Law and Psychiatry)

ENDNOTES

¹ Elm, Jessica H. L.; Lewis, Jordan P.; Walters, Karina L.; Self, Jen M. (1 October 2016). "[I'm in this world for a reason](#)": Resilience and recovery among American Indian and Alaska Native two-spirit women." *Journal of Lesbian Studies*. 20 (3-4): 352-371. doi:10.1080/10894160.2016.1152813. PMC 6424359. PMID 27254761.

² Osher, F., Steadman, H. B., & Barr, H. (2002). [A best practice approach to community re-entry from jails for inmates with co-occurring disorders: The APIC model](#). Delmar, NY: The National GAINS Center.

³ President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health (2003) [Achieving the Promise: Transforming Mental Health Care in America](#) Archived 2008-07-05 at the [Wayback Machine](#).

⁴ Sharfstein, S. (2005). "[Recovery Model Will Strengthen Psychiatrist-Patient Relationship](#)". *Psychiatric News*. 40 (20): 3. Archived from the original on 2008-03-25.

⁵ US Dept of Health and Human Sciences [Consumer-Directed Transformation to a Recovery-Based Mental Health System](#) Archived 2006-11-30 at the [Wayback Machine](#).

⁶ NASMHPD/NTAC (2004) [Implementing Recovery-based Care: Tangible Guidance for SMHAs](#) Archived 2007-09-29 at the [Wayback Machine](#).

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