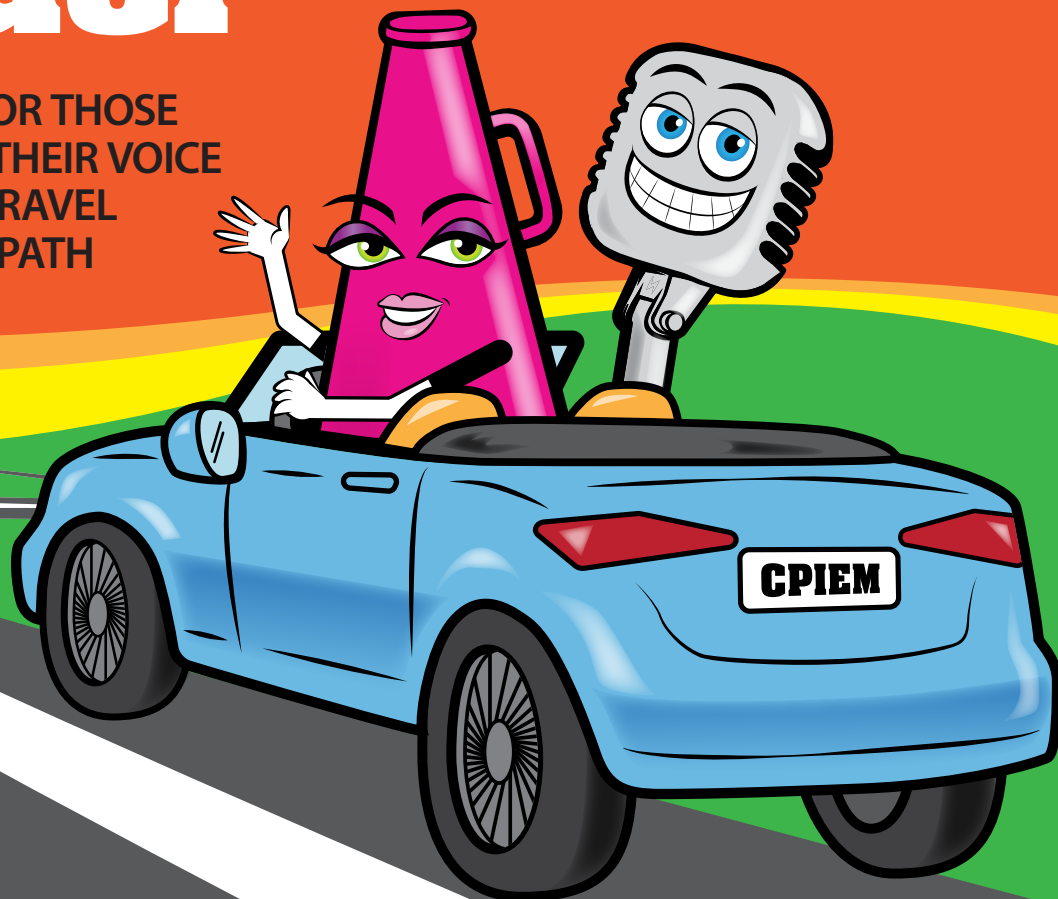


# The Consumer Pathways to Inclusion and Engagement Model

A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR THOSE  
IN RECOVERY TO USE THEIR VOICE  
IN HELPING OTHERS TRAVEL  
THE SAME RECOVERY PATH



# Consumer Pathways to Inclusion and Engagement Model (CPIEM)

Initially Created by the Mississippi *Pathways To Engagement Committee* (PTEC), June 2018

Updated and Revised by the Association of Mississippi Peer Support Specialists (AMPSS)  
in conjunction with The CAFÉ TA Center, December 2022

A grant from the Mississippi Department of Mental Health contributed the initial creation of this document for the benefit of all mental health consumers and peers, to strengthen their Voice.

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*(Listed in alphabetical order)*

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Auvergne Williams, *testimony*

Monica Wolters; PTEC, Recovery Project, *testimonies*

**AND ALL THE TEST READERS WHO WILLINGLY GAVE THEIR FEEDBACK**

# WHAT IS THE CPIEM?

The Consumer Pathways to Inclusion and Engagement Model (CPIEM) was first envisioned by a group of peer supporters and people with lived experience of mental health conditions from the State of Mississippi. In 2017 and 2018, they formed a working committee called the Pathways To Engagement Committee (PTEC) to create a resource guide that would help people in recovery use their voice to help others walking the same recovery path they were on, enable them to better understand themselves and their recovery, and use that understanding to foster systems change and the growth of person-centered, strengths-based, recovery-focused approaches to the mental health system in their state. Essentially, the peers that made up the PTEC recognized that sharing their experiences of recovery had the potential to change hearts and minds and help people truly understand recovery. The purpose of the CPIEM would be to give those peers and advocates the tools and strategies they would need to bring their collective voice to the conversation about mental health in their state and community.

The end result of this process was a manual called The Consumer Pathways to Inclusion and Engagement Model that was published in conjunction with Mississippi's consumer mental health organization, the Association of Mississippi Peer Support Specialists (AMPSS), in 2018. The CAFÉ TA Center, which is one of the national consumer/consumer supporter technical assistance centers for mental health, played a central role in helping the PTEC hone their vision and create a final product, and worked closely with AMPSS to support its use and distribution. In the intervening years, scores of Mississippi mental health consumers have used the CPIEM to intentionally and thoughtfully engage with stakeholders to talk about lived experience, recovery, and the reality of day-to-day life for people living with serious mental health conditions.

In 2022, The CAFÉ TA Center returned to its conversation with AMPSS and the PTEC to ask two questions: Had the CPIEM proven to be a useful tool for advocates in Mississippi? And if so, would it make sense to adapt it for broader use by peers and advocates across the entire country? The answer to both was a resounding "Yes!" From that point forward, CAFÉ TAC worked with a group of Mississippi peers to review, revise, and expand the scope of the CPIEM. The end result of that process is the product you have before you today.

In many ways, this product will speak for itself, and the team that created it sincerely hopes that peers and advocates will find it useful. While it might not require further explanation, one thing to keep in mind is that it is intended to be a living, breathing resource. If you would like to share your feedback, note something you think should be included, or suggest any improvements, please do share your thoughts by contacting The CAFÉ TA Center at [cafetacenter@gmail.com](mailto:cafetacenter@gmail.com). We strongly believe that we are all on the recovery and advocacy journey together, and we encourage you to think of yourself as part of the community for whom this product exists.

# WHAT IS AMPSS?

In the summer of 2014, a group of Peer Support Specialists in Mississippi volunteered to form a planning committee and create a statewide peer support network.

Our vision is to be a source of inspiration, empowerment, and encouragement to peer supporters (of all mental health conditions) throughout the state.

Like the practice of peer support itself, there are real benefits to being a member of AMPSS. We provide mutual support to each other by sharing strengths, resources, and information that empower us to better serve others. Benefits of membership include access to information relevant to peer support, networking opportunities, the ability to join a variety of committees to affect system change and personal empowerment, and opportunities for individuals who offer peer support to have a statewide voice in the mental health community, as well as in government and education.

Peer Support is both an offering and a role that is effective at empowering those in recovery to positively continue their recovery journey. AMPSS' broader purpose is to strengthen the leadership, skills, effectiveness, and efficiency of those who provide Peer Support (whether certified, or not), including, but not limited to: Peer Specialists, Recovery Coaches, Family Support, Mentors/Liaisons, Youth-to-Youth Mentors and other Facilitators/ Educators/ Individuals of mental health/disability populations in Mississippi who provide Peer Support.

AMPSS aims to positively evolve the Mississippi mental health system of care to be more responsive to and inclusive of Peer Support, to be accomplished through research, education, training, public policy education, workforce development and opportunity creation, and special projects.

Learn more about AMPSS at [goampss.org](http://goampss.org).

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Wendy D. Bailey - Executive Director  
January 19, 2023

Dear Association of Mississippi Peer Support Specialists,

It is my pleasure to review the Consumer Pathways to Inclusion and Engagement Model (CPIEM) created by the Mississippi Pathways To Engagement Committee (PTEC). This model reflects a decade of work in Mississippi to launch, highlight, expand, and refine peer support by incredible advocates, state leaders, and most importantly, peers who were dedicated to creating this model to help others.

In Mississippi, peer support is a Core Service through the Mississippi Department of Mental Health Operational Standards. Over the last several years, peer support has been incorporated as a required component of Mobile Crisis Response Teams, Programs of Assertive Community Treatment Teams, Intensive Community Outreach and Recovery Teams, Crisis Stabilization Units, and other areas throughout the state's mental health system. Our incredible CPSSs in this state use their lived experiences in combination with skills training to support their fellow peers and/or family members who are experiencing a mental illness of substance use disorder.

In order to have a person-centered, recovery-oriented system of care that incorporates peer support throughout, you must have a strong training and support program. The Mississippi Association of Peer Support Specialists (AMPSS) is that and more, as you can obviously see by the development of CPIEM. The well-developed and executed CPIEM can bring an even stronger voice to peer support in Mississippi and across the nation.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration National Guidelines for Behavioral Health Crisis Care recommends having peer support integrated into crisis programs such as mobile crisis and crisis stabilization. Peer support workers often take the lead on engagement and may also assist with continuity of care by providing support that continues beyond the resolution of the immediate crisis. To benefit from the full integration of peer support into crisis programs, models such as CPIEM can help peers in their own "Pathway to Engagement, Inclusion, Personal Growth, and Recovery." The five models of Who Am I?, My Tiers of Competency, My Engagement Opportunities, Preparing Myself and Participating, and Reviewing My Growth, are both enlightening and powerful. Having Mike and Meg walk you through these modules and share personal stories along the way, keep you engaged and make the model relatable no matter what stage of recovery you are in.

The structure and flow of the modules is excellent. First understanding Who I Am is key to helping yourself, before you can help others. The personal growth and self-discovery achieved in this module is powerful. I always say the personal testimonies are the most influential part of peer support and that is clear in this module. The specialized tools laid forth in the module can benefit peers in the present and for years to come. Incorporating a range of both personal and interactive tools is impressive. As you move to the second module and learn about competencies, the peer develops strong leadership, communication, organizational, and collaborative skills to help not only in the provision of peer support services, but in their own recovery journey. Each module is concise and informative ending with Reviewing My Growth which we all need to do on a regular basis.

One quote highlighted in CPIEM is, "If you try to understand the whole universe, you will understand nothing. If you try to understand yourself, you will know the whole universe." CPIEM helps bring the universe of peer support into a concise and easy to digest way that is not overwhelming or intimidating, which is not an easy task to accomplish. At the end, the participant not only has a strong understanding of the universe of peer support, they have a stronger understanding of their strengths, abilities, and the greatness they bring into this world!

I am excited to see the growth of Peer Support over the last decade, and particularly over the last two years, as peer bridgers and now peer respite are beginning in our state. One thing we can all do, no matter what role we serve in, is to encourage people to get treatment when it is needed and to shine a much-needed light on hope. Thank you AMPSS for the role you play in shining that light each and every day. And thank you to the Mississippi Pathways To Engagement Committee for creating a comprehensive model with CPIEM that can take peer support to even greater heights! BRAVO!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Wendy D. Bailey".

Wendy D. Bailey  
Executive Director

# WHAT IS THE CAFÉ TA CENTER?

The CAFÉ TA Center is a program of The Family Café, a cross-disability organization that has been connecting individuals with information, training and resources since 1998. The Center is supported by SAMHSA to operate one of its five national technical assistance centers; providing technical assistance, training, and resources that facilitate the restructuring of the mental health system through effective consumer directed approaches for adults with serious mental illnesses across the country.

CAFE TAC is here to provide mental health consumers, families, professionals, and other stakeholders in the mental health system with information, training, networking opportunities and support as they seek to advocate for themselves and transform the mental health system of care to allow for and encourage genuine consumer involvement and peer leadership. We believe that better outcomes among Americans with serious mental illness will result from putting consumers with real world experience at the center of the mental health system of care, and we are here to provide the tools and expertise to make that happen.

Our approach is embodied in the acronym that gives our TA Center its name: Collaboration, Advocacy, Friendship and Empowerment.

As a technical assistance center serving people with lived experience of mental health conditions, we have witnessed the transformative power of recovery advocates with lived experience of mental health conditions. We believe that recognition of the value and capability of people with lived experience, including certified peer specialists, is critical to radically improving the lives of people with mental health conditions, the systems that serve them, and the public's understanding of mental health.

To create the positive change we envision, CAFÉ TAC shares information on the evidence base for the effectiveness of people with lived experience in the system of care, and the many roles in which they can excel. The project also supports people with lived experience to grow and thrive in their recovery through access to educational opportunity, connection with family and other natural community supports, and linkages to resources on employment and economic self-sufficiency. Finally, CAFÉ TAC is a point of access for a wealth of nationally relevant resources, connecting individuals with news and information from a host of partners.

Learn more about CAFÉ TAC at [cafetacenter.net](http://cafetacenter.net).

# GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

1. **AMPSS:** Association of Mississippi Peer Support Specialists
2. **APP:** an Application, for example a Phone App
3. **CAFÉ TAC:** The Collaboration, Advocacy, Friendship and Empowerment Technical Assistance Center in Tallahassee, FL
4. **CPIEM:** Consumer Pathways to Inclusion and Engagement Model
5. **HHS:** Federal Health and Human Services
6. **IOOV:** In Our Own Voice (NAMI program)
7. **Meg:** Character who is a megaphone
8. **MHA:** Mental Health America
9. **MHASM:** Mental Health Association of South Mississippi
10. **Mike:** Character who is a microphone
11. **MS DMH:** Mississippi Department of Mental Health
12. **NAMI:** National Alliance on Mental Illness
13. **NASMHPD:** National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
14. **NCMHR:** National Coalition for Mental Health Recovery
15. **P2P:** Peer to Peer (NAMI program)
16. **PTEC:** Pathways to Engagement Committee
17. **SAMHSA:** Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
18. **SMART Goals:** Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely Goals
19. **WHAM:** Whole Health Action Management
20. **WRAP:** Wellness Recovery Action Plan



## Introducing “Mike”

I KNOW... I'M CLEVER. I'M NAMED 'MIKE', AND I'M ALSO A MICROPHONE. I MEAN, WHY DIDN'T THEY NAME ME 'PHONE'? THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN DUMB—WHO'S NAMED 'PHONE' THESE DAYS? I COME FROM AMPSS. WE'RE SORT OF RELATED. YOU KNOW? THEY PLUG ME IN AND TURN UP THE AMPS, AND TOGETHER WE AMP-IT-UP!

SO WHAT AM I DOING HERE? I'M A LOT LIKE YOU. IN OTHER WORDS, WE'VE GOT A LOT IN COMMON. I'VE GOT SOME DIFFERENT TYPES OF CHALLENGES THAT I'VE BEEN UNDERSTANDING ABOUT MYSELF AND MANAGING MY WHOLE LIFE—I MEAN, DOESN'T EVERYBODY? —AND I'M PROUD TO SAY THAT MY RECOVERY PATH HAS BEEN FULFILLING.

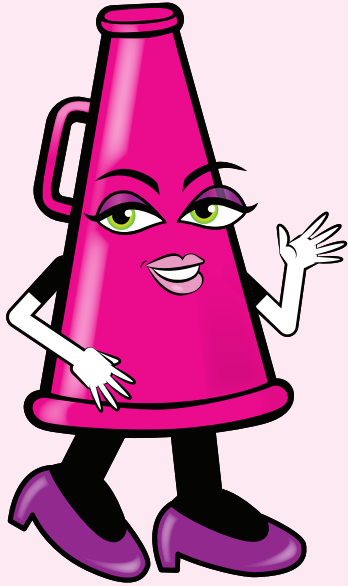


THAT DOESN'T MEAN IT'S BEEN ALL ROSES, OR THAT I HAVEN'T HAD MY MOMENTS! BUT THE THING ABOUT RECOVERY—FOR ME, ANYWAY—IS THAT I KNOW THAT I CAN EXPLORE NEW TOOLS AND RESOURCES ALL THE TIME THAT WILL HELP ME BE IN TUNE WITH MY VOICE. AND THE MORE I GET TO KNOW MY VOICE AND BECOME COMFORTABLE SHARING IT, THE STRONGER I BECOME AS I CONTINUE MY RECOVERY JOURNEY.

AND THAT'S WHY I'M HERE. I'M HERE TO HELP YOU THINK ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR RECOVERY JOURNEY. WHEN YOU SEE ME ON THE SIDE OF THE PAGE, THINK OF ME AS A CHAMPION IN YOUR CORNER. I WANT YOU TO SUCCEED TO THE LEVEL THAT YOU DESIRE. SUCCEED IN WHAT? WELL, THAT'S JUST IT... WHO YOU ARE TODAY AND WHO YOU ARE TOMORROW ARE TWO DIFFERENT PEOPLE—MAYBE ONLY BY JUST A LITTLE BIT—BUT YOU'RE DEFINITELY DIFFERENT. AND THE MORE YOU CAN EMBRACE AND STRENGTHEN YOUR OWN VOICE, THE MORE YOU CAN DECIDE WHAT DIRECTION YOU WANT YOUR 'DIFFERENT' TO GO, AND BY DOING SO YOU CAN DEFINE SUCCESS FOR YOURSELF. DOES THAT MAKE SENSE?

LET ME EXPLAIN IT ANOTHER WAY: AS WE HAVE EXPERIENCES, WE'RE EITHER CHOOSING OUR PATH OR THE PATH IS CHOSEN FOR US. SOMETIMES THINGS JUST HAPPEN. I GET IT. TRUST ME. I GET IT. BUT MOST OF THE TIME WE DO HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO CHOOSE WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO, OR WHERE WE WANT TO GO, AND THINGS LIKE THAT. AND THE KEY TO BEING ABLE TO MAKE ANY KIND OF CHOICE IS TO FIRST KNOW ALL ABOUT YOURSELF, WHICH IS WHAT I CALL YOUR VOICE. AND THE MORE YOU KNOW ABOUT YOURSELF, THE MORE YOU'RE ABLE TO BUILD YOUR SKILLS AND DO EVEN MORE THINGS. IN THE END, YOUR VOICE GROWS STRONGER, AND YOUR RECOVERY JOURNEY AND THE DECISIONS YOU MAKE BECOME CLEARER AND HOPEFULLY MORE FULFILLING—YOU EXPERIENCE INCLUSION AND ENGAGEMENT IN WAYS THAT MAY HAVE SEEMED SO FAR AWAY AND UNREACHABLE.

THAT'S NOT A GUARANTEE, UNFORTUNATELY. BUT IT SURE MAKES A LOT OF SENSE! AND IF I CAN HELP YOU STRENGTHEN YOUR VOICE AND EXPERIENCE INCLUSION AND ENGAGEMENT, THEN THAT'S WHAT I HOPE TO DO. SO I'LL CHECK IN WITH YOU HERE AND THERE AS YOU GO THROUGH THIS RESOURCE. DON'T HESITATE TO SPEAK OR EVEN SING TO ME ABOUT ANYTHING YOU'D LIKE... PEOPLE DO IT ALL THE TIME.



## Introducing “Meg”

IF MIKE’S CLEVER, WELL, I GUESS THAT MAKES ME BRILLIANT! LOL!

DON’T GET ME WRONG—I TOTALLY AGREE WITH EVERYTHING HE SAID. BUT I WANT TO EMPHASIZE THE POINT THAT OUR VOICE—YOU, ME, MIKE—EACH OF US IS UNIQUE. FOR EXAMPLE, LOOK AT MIKE... HE DOESN’T HAVE MUCH STYLE OR FLAIR, UNLIKE MOI. I MEAN, I LIKE MIKE, BUT HE’S A MICROPHONE FOR PETE’S SAKE SO HE’S, YOU KNOW, METAL AND A BIT RIGID.

NOW TAKE ME, FOR EXAMPLE. I LIKE TO MAKE A STATEMENT. CAN YOU TELL? DON’T YOU JUST LOVE PINK?

THE THING IS I KNOW THAT I LIKE TO MAKE A STATEMENT, AND IT MIGHT BE DIFFERENT FOR YOU. MAYBE YOU DON’T WANT TO GET ALL DRESSED UP AND HAVE THE SPOTLIGHT ON YOU, AND THAT’S OKAY. REALLY. YOU DON’T HAVE TO DRAW ATTENTION IN ORDER TO HAVE YOUR VOICE BE POWERFUL AND TO COUNT. YOU DON’T HAVE TO BE LOUD. OUR VOICES ARE HEARD IN DIFFERENT WAYS.

I GUESS WHAT I’M SAYING IS THAT EACH OF US HAS OUR OWN STYLE OF EXPRESSION, AND THE MORE WE KNOW AND UNDERSTAND OUR STYLE, THE MORE GENUINELY WE CAN SHARE OUR VOICE—THAT IS, IF WE EVEN CHOOSE TO SHARE IT. SOMETIMES WE MIGHT NOT WANT TO SHARE OUR VOICE, AND THAT’S OKAY, TOO. THE ONLY THING I HOPE YOU KNOW IS THAT YOUR VOICE COUNTS FIRST AND FOREMOST WITH YOU.

SO, LIKE MIKE I’LL BE WITH YOU AS YOU EXPLORE THIS CPIEM TOOL. I CAN’T EVEN REMEMBER WHAT THAT STANDS FOR... WAS IT... CONSUMER PATHWAYS TO INCLUSION AND ENGAGEMENT MEGAPHONE? THERE I GO AGAIN... ME, ME, ME. THE ‘M’ IS FOR MODEL, NOT MEGAPHONE.

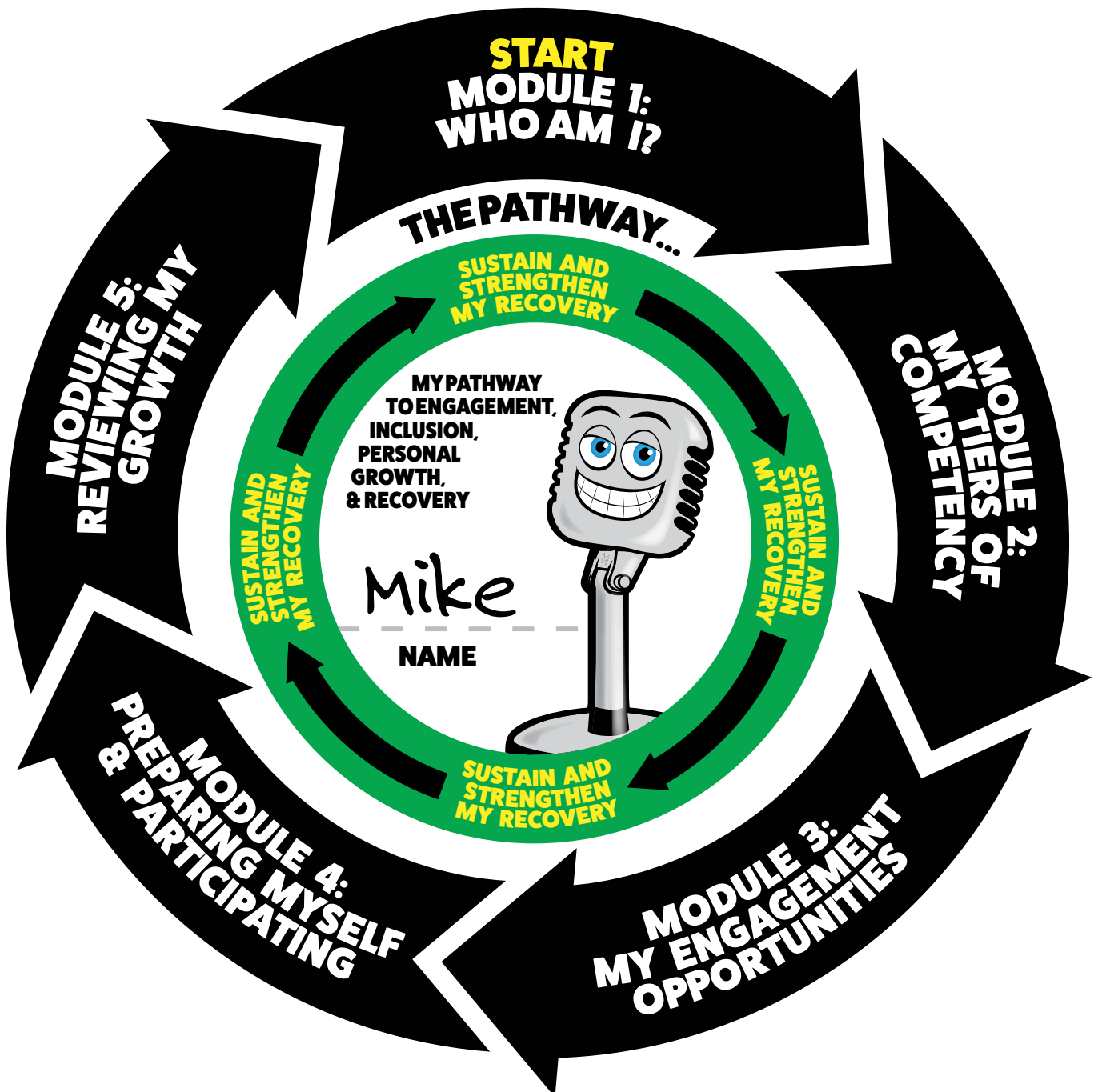
AS I WAS SAYING, I CAN’T WAIT TO BE FRIENDS WITH YOU AS WE DO THIS TOGETHER. I AM HERE TO ASK QUESTIONS TO HELP YOU THINK ABOUT YOURSELF. I WANT TO BE YOUR INTERNAL MEGAPHONE SO YOU DON’T MISS THE IMPORTANT OPPORTUNITIES TO UNDERSTAND AND STRENGTHEN YOUR IDENTITY AND VOICE. WE’LL HAVE A LOT OF FUN, I PROMISE.

I’LL SEE YOU AROUND IN THE PAGES. AND REMEMBER: OUR VOICES ARE HEARD IN DIFFERENT WAYS. AND I’M HERE TO HELP YOU FIGURE OUT YOUR WAY AND TO SUPPORT YOUR RECOVERY JOURNEY, WHATEVER THAT MAY LOOK LIKE.



## Overview of the Model

The following Model represents the Consumer Pathway to Inclusion and Engagement Model (CPIEM). At the center of the CPIEM is a gray circle with the phrase “My Pathway to Engagement, Inclusion, Personal Growth, and Recovery.” There is a white space for the person’s name. Ideally, a person can print a copy of the CPIEM and place a picture of him or herself in the gray circle (see the example below). And someday you will be able to insert a picture of yourself digitally if you’d like.



The CPIEM is person-centered. Placement of the person's picture and name in the center helps to create ownership and accountability by that person to pursue the pathway of the CPIEM. The next ring in the center is green, to symbolize growth and nourishment of the person. The phrase "Sustain and Strengthen My Recovery" is repeated around the green circle to indicate the ever-present focus on Recovery for and of the person in the center. The thin white circle on the outside of the green circle is a bridge between the Recovery green circle and the black circle of arrows that represent the Pathway.

The 5 arrows around the outside start at the top (START) and proceed with the following Modules:

**Module 1: Who Am I?** In this module, the person will find tools to assist him or her to understand their strengths, talents, passions, characteristics, etc. When the person has completed Module 1, he or she will have a better understanding of him or herself, and will also be able to articulate the *Why* and the *What* of their desire to represent the Consumer Voice. In other words, a person will have a Mission, and a clear sense of purpose that is unique to them because of their individual lived experience combined with all the things that make that person who he or she is. Possible tools that might be included in Module 1 include *StrengthsFinder*, or *Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator*, or other skill assessments.

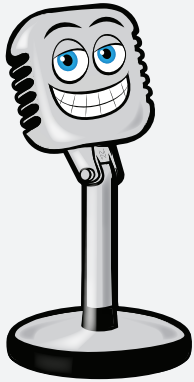
**Module 2: My Tiers of Competency.** In this module, the individual will be able to see how his or her skills match up against the types of skills and competencies that are necessary for successful engagement and participation in various venues. Once the person uses the Tiers of Competency to map his or her skills, he or she will be able to identify and pursue the necessary training to increase various competencies that, when improved, will help the person to more effectively represent his or her Voice. This module, then, is the heart of personal development. If Module 1 assists a person to know his or her purpose and direction, Module 2 provides that person the training to be able to pursue that purpose and direction.

**Module 3: My Engagement Opportunities.** In this module, a person learns of the many different possibilities and venues for sharing his or her Voice, and how to identify the engagement opportunities that would be a good fit for their purpose and skills. A person might also be able to learn what competencies might be needed for a specific type of engagement and go back to Module 2 to accomplish additional training.

**Module 4: Preparing Myself and Participating.** In this module, the individual learns how to prepare for a specific engagement, and conducts preparatory exercises. The module also provides guidance for actual participation and engagement. This is the module that assists a person to take all that has been discovered, learned, and planned in the first three modules and put those insights and skills into action.

**Module 5: Reviewing My Growth.** After each experience, the individual will have grown—regardless of whether the experience was successful or not, the person will be able to use the tools in this module to assess and reflect on the experience, and be prepared to enter Module 1 again with additional insights about his or her *Why* and *What*. He or she will be able to assess their state of Recovery as well, and determine if this path is a healthy path at this time. At this point the cycle continues, and with each iteration the person develops his or her whole self, ultimately resulting in a stronger representation of their Consumer Voice.

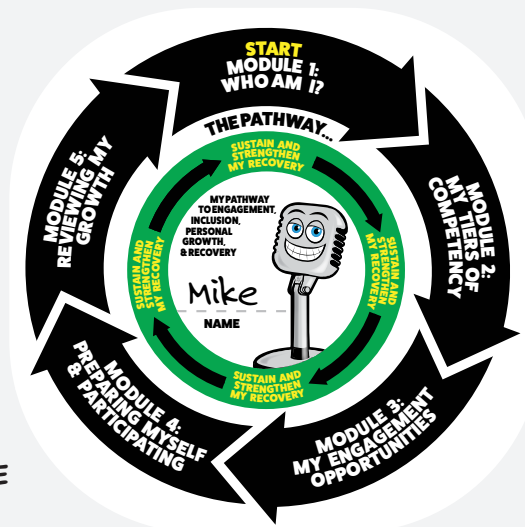
## Sustain and Strengthen My Recovery Story



YEAH, SO... THAT WAS A LOT TO TAKE IN. I MEAN, LOOK AT THAT MODEL OVER THERE... ARROWS, AND CIRCLES, AND IT'S NOT TOO PRETTY.

NOW I'VE GOT SOMETHING SPECIAL TO SHARE WITH YOU. THERE WAS A LOT OF TALK AT OUR LAST PEER SUMMIT ABOUT HOW TO INTERPRET THE GREEN CIRCLE AND ARROWS THAT KEEP REPEATING 'SUSTAIN AND STRENGTHEN MY RECOVERY.' 'WELL, WHAT DOES THAT MEAN, AND HOW DO YOU DO THAT?'

THE FIRST THING TO UNDERSTAND IS THAT WHILE YOU'RE GOING THROUGH THE MODULES YOU HAVE TO SUSTAIN AND STRENGTHEN MY RECOVERY DURING EACH ONE. TO HELP EXPLAIN THAT, SANDRA CARON—WHO HELPED CREATE THE CPIEM—HAS WRITTEN A PERSONAL TESTIMONY OF HER RECOVERY EXPERIENCE AS AN EXAMPLE THAT SHOWS HOW SHE SUSTAINED AND STRENGTHENED HER RECOVERY DURING EACH OF THE MODULES. AS YOU READ HER EXPLANATION/EXAMPLE, I ENCOURAGE YOU TO THINK OF YOURSELF GOING THROUGH THESE STEPS. CATCH YOU LATER...



### Introduction

*Many years ago I had a dream that has remained with me. In this dream, myself and friends (whom I could not place as friends upon waking) were all going to a 'Dude Ranch' in Texas. We arrived at our destination; a large ranch style log cabin, long horns mounted above the stone fireplace, leather couches and chairs. Wanting a picture to remember our gathering, my friends and myself gathered around. I smiled my best smile, I was so happy to be here with friends. A week later I anxiously opened the large envelope that arrived in the mail. My friends looked so bright and cheerful in the picture. However, my image was disappointing. I was not smiling as I had thought I was, instead I was standing away from my friends, looking away from them, with a painful frown upon my face. It appeared that someone had used scissors to cut out the figure of me in the picture. I appeared yellowed, faded, and wrinkled. My image was smoothed back out and scotch taped back in. I remember my thoughts in the dream, I was not like others, I was flawed, not as good, not as perfect as others, not a part of my friends. The camera had captured my imperfections, those that others could easily see. The reminder of the dream has remained with me for years.*



GIRLFRIEND, I WISH I COULD GIVE YOU A HUG AND MAKE THAT MEMORY OF THE DREAM GO AWAY. BUT YOU KNOW WHAT? THEN YOU WOULDN'T BE YOU. YOU WOULDN'T BE THE PERSON YOU ARE TODAY WHO IS CAPABLE OF SUCH AMAZING EMPATHY BECAUSE YOU HAD THIS DREAM AND EXPERIENCE WITH IT.

I KNOW THOSE ARE JUST WORDS, AND I CAN'T FIX ANYTHING—BUT THAT'S THE POINT. YOU DON'T NEED TO BE FIXED! YOUR WILLINGNESS TO ADDRESS THIS WITH YOURSELF IS AMAZING, AND YOUR FURTHER WILLINGNESS TO SHARE IT WITH OTHERS IS INSPIRING. THANK YOU.

**(Module 1)** *I consider my journey to discovering ‘Who I Am’, the first and perhaps the most repeated tier in ‘My Personal Pathway to Inclusion and Engagement’ (Consumer Pathway to Inclusion and Engagement, CPIEM), the most personally profound. Understanding Who I Am has been a journey of awakening, of self-discovery. It has been one of realizing I have the strengths to develop the necessary skills to reach my goals of becoming an advocate. First, I wrote out my description of Who Am I?*

- *I am mentally ill*
- *I am an embarrassment to my family and friends*
- *I will always be sick, in and out of the hospital*
- *I will never be able to work again*
- *I will never accomplish the dreams I once had*
- *I am a second-class citizen*
- *I am incompetent*

*The impact of my illness had taken a toll on me. I was shattered and broken, the illness was the dominant experience in my life. I fit the description of the first stage of the “Five Stages in the Recovery Process” (Appalachian Consulting Group, 2011).*

In Module One, what tools may assist you in your self-discovery of who you are? What skills do you have? What are your basic characteristics? Consider using the StrengthsFinders tool listed in this document.

“When educational physiologist Donald O. Clifton first designed the interviews that became the basis for the Clifton StrengthsFinder, he began by asking ‘What would happen if we studied what is right with people? Thus emerged a philosophy of using talents as a basis for consistent achievement of excellence (strength). Specifically, the strengths philosophy is the assertion that individuals are able to gain far more when they expend effort to build on their greatest talents than when they spend a comparable amount of effort to remediate their weaknesses. (Clifton & Harper, 2003). “

Taking the StrengthsFinder, I discovered I was an INFJ: (Introverted iNtutive Feeling Judging).

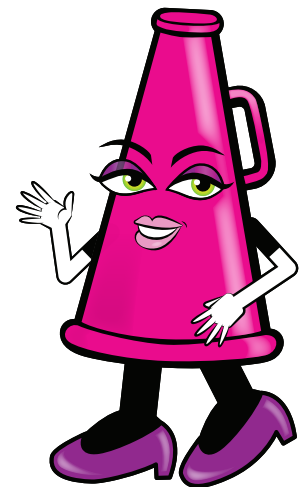
*The StrengthsFinder helped me to see the skills I did have, skills that I never considered, or realized about myself. I began to realize that I was overlooking any skills I may have, instead I was focused on my perceived weaknesses. It was time to revisit my list of Who I Am.*

- ~~*I am mentally ill*~~ (*I have a disorder, I am not a disorder*)
- ~~*I am an embarrassment to my family and friends*~~ (*there is no evidence to back that up*)
- ~~*I will always be sick, in and out of the hospital*~~ (*not factual, I have not been in the hospital in years*)
- ~~*I will never be able to work again*~~ (*not a fact*)
- ~~*I will never accomplish the dreams I once had*~~ (*I have made gains towards my dreams*)
- ~~*I am a second-class citizen*~~ (*not a fact*)
- ~~*I am incompetent*~~ (*not a fact*)

**(Module 2)** *I had a desire to help others who also lived with serious mental illness like myself. I volunteered for a national organization and went to a training. I loved it, and began volunteering to utilize the training I had received. I realized that to build on this new opportunity, I needed to learn to tell my story, to speak more effectively regarding mental health. However, the dream remained in the back of my mind. I continued to be broken. It became self-evident that I was choosing to remain flawed and broken, when I took the NAMI IOOV (In Our Own Voice) course. IOOV teaches peers to tell our story. As the presentation begins, the presenter first tells of the other aspects of their lives that are important. 'I am a mother, a child, a sibling, a gardener, many other aspects of myself that do not relate to the disorder I have. **It began to sink in, I am more than an illness or disorder, I am a person. My desire to help others was in fact helping to cultivate my own recovery.***

In using the CPIEM, consider making a list of the positive aspects of yourself. Any and all that come to mind are useful. Keep this list, you will be building on it as you move through the CPIEM.

YOU REALLY NAILED IT! YOU ARE A PERSON ON A RECOVERY JOURNEY. TO THE READER, I HOPE YOU'RE ABLE TO ASK YOURSELF THIS ONE QUESTION: IF I TAKE A MOMENT TO IMAGINE WHO I AM WHEN MY THOUGHTS ARE NOT OCCUPIED WITH MY MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGE, WHO OR WHAT DO I IMAGINE? WRITE THAT DOWN! THAT IS YOU, AND THAT IS WHERE YOUR VOICE ORIGINATES.

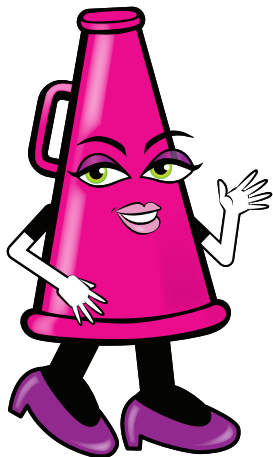


**(Module 3)** *As newer engagement opportunities appeared, I began taking on every possible opportunity. I soon realized that not every opportunity was a good fit for my skills. I once again reviewed my StrengthsFinder results and realized that INFJ's can often take on a disproportionate amount of responsibility. As an INFJ, I tend to share my deepest thoughts and feelings with very trusted confidants. With that trust in mind, my peer trusted friend helped me to understand what worked best for me, to choose carefully what I was most passionate about. In the past, I would have seen this as a failure on my part. Now, with the skills I had built, I saw this as a course correction. What I was most passionate about was trainings, teaching. That suited my INFJ profile to a "T"! **Most importantly, I recognized that my tendency to try to do everything was controlling my behavior, and I became empowered to make conscious decisions about what I was actively choosing to do.***

*I recognized the need to review Module Two again, My Tiers of Competency. Module Two points out I may need additional training to accomplish my goals. Networking is a skill determined to be critical by the MPC. To reach my goal, I began to network with my peers, who they knew, and ask questions on how to get into a training to become a trainer.*



**(Module 4)** An opportunity came for me to be a trainer for other Certified Peer Support Specialists. I was excited and took the training. I was successful in becoming a trainer, now on to my first experience as a trainer. I studied, practiced and discussed the training with the two other trainers. I was ready, or so I thought! The training went well, however I wanted out of the room immediately as soon as the training was over! What was wrong with me I wondered? I initially felt like I had once again failed. Once I had time to review my feelings, I remembered my StrengthsFinder results. As an INFJ, I am an Introvert. I need that time to withdraw into myself and rebuild my depleted resources. What I was perceiving as a failure, was once again simply my own makeup, it's how I function. Now having trained several times, I am accustomed to and prepare for my need to step aside. In the end, I learned that knowing yourself helps you to prepare, and to know how to understand your reaction to the experience of participating.



I LOVE THIS WOMAN!  
SANDRA, I COULDN'T HAVE  
SAID IT BETTER MYSELF.

TOTALLY AGREE, MEG. AND I WANT TO POINT OUT  
THAT SOME OF THIS DEEP 'INSIDE' THINKING MIGHT BE  
DIFFICULT FOR SOME PEOPLE. YOU KNOW THAT BOOK...  
'MIKE IS FROM MARS, MEG IS FROM VENUS'? IT'S THAT  
BOOK THAT TALKS ABOUT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEN  
AND WOMEN... ANYWAY, I JUST WANT TO SAY THAT AS A  
MAN SOMETIMES MY DEEP INSIDE THINKING GETS STUCK.  
IT'S OKAY, THOUGH. I TALK WITH TRUSTED FAMILY OR  
FRIENDS AND THEY HELP ME ASK NEW QUESTIONS.



**(Module 5)** Having reviewed my journey, at each step, I find that I have grown. I was tempted to focus on the things I did wrong, and the ways in which I could have done a better job. However, as Physiologist Donald O. Clifton pointed out, we tend to remediate on our weaknesses. By using the knowledge I gained from the CPIEM, I was able to change my perspective, and focus on my strengths. Refocusing — looking at my strengths—has helped to pave the way for me to have a clearer view of Who I Am. I have discovered what I am most passionate about, and how to recognize the skills I need to focus on in order to achieve my goals. My recovery is stronger for that. The dream of long ago, now is simply a dream, a misguided view I had of myself. I no longer see myself from that lens. All roads in my journey ultimately lead back to the discovery of Who I Am.

## Module 1: Who Am I?



HERE'S  
THE OFFICIAL  
DEFINITION  
FOR MODULE 1  
SO YOU DON'T  
HAVE TO FLIP  
BACK TO IT.

**Module 1: Who Am I?** In this module, the person will find tools to assist him or her to understand their strengths, talents, passions, characteristics, etc. When the person has completed Module 1, he or she will have a better understanding of him or herself, and will also be able to articulate the Why and the What of their desire to represent the Consumer Voice. In other words, a person will have a Mission, and a clear sense of purpose that is unique to them because of their individual lived experience combined with all the things that make that person who he or she is. Possible tools that might be included in Module 1 include *StrengthsFinder*, or *Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator*, or other skill assessments.

I THINK I SHOULD HAVE INTRODUCED THIS  
MODULE. JUST SAYIN'. I MEAN—HELLO? WASN'T  
I TALKING ABOUT KNOWING THE UNIQUE YOU?



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## A Collection of Tools, Explanations, and Testimonies from Your Colleagues...

The philosopher Socrates expounded on the concept of “*knowing thyself*” and that the “*unexamined life is not worth living*.” Knowing oneself is said to be a product of wisdom, and as peers it’s what is expected of us. With the gift of self-insight and the ability to accept personal responsibility for ourselves, it is up to us to determine and define who we are. Knowledge is power; therefore, deeper knowledge into oneself can only enhance our skills and strengthen our recovery.

**Testimony:** *My name is Abby Wesling and I have been working with the System of Care program with Region 7 Community Counseling since February 2020. I became a Certified Peer Support Specialist in June 2020 as well as becoming a board member with AMPSS this past year. I am just as passionate about what I do now as when I first started.*

*As I was working on Module 1 “Who am I” I learned a lot about the person I am today. I took the 123-personality test, and it was spot on. I scored low in the first column which was Openness to Experience and honestly that did not surprise me. I am a person that must have routine and structure because without it, I feel like I am out of control. The next three columns I scored very high on, these were called Conscientiousness, Extraversion and Agreeableness. Conscientious stated that I am disciplined, well organized, likes precise detail and could be described as a workaholic. Extraversion stated that I am outgoing, assertive, like working with others and enjoy direct leadership roles. Compassionate stated that I am eager to please, good natured and prefer cooperation over competition. The last column was natural reactions, which stated that I am calm and not easily upset in situations that maybe stressful, as well as resilient. After I took this test, I compared it to the person I was 6 years ago and could not believe how much I had changed. It felt good to see that all the work I had been putting into my healing and recovery has been paying off.*

*The CPIEM module has been an awesome tool that has allowed me the opportunity to get to know the healthy, happy, and wholehearted Abby I am today. If you want a better understanding of who you are, what you are capable of and how to access/use that information, I believe that this tool can truly help you not only in your career but also in your personal life.*

**Module 1 and CPIEM Testimony:** *My name is Joyce Sand. I have been Certified Peer Support Specialist since July 2018. I now sit on the AMPSS Board as Vice President, I have had many positions here at LIFECORE Health Group in Tupelo, MS. I would have to say my favorite was working on the MCoRT team doing follow-up calls to see how someone was doing after a crisis. By going through Module 1 “Who am I”, I learned who I was and how I could help others. I learned so much about myself. How I learn, how I study, how and why I work the way I do. When I took the personality test in 2018, I took the Myers Briggs test. I went back in to take it again in 2022, just to see if I had changed much. It was no longer free to take, so I took the 16 Personalities test and compared the results. It was awesome to see where I had grown and where I could use some work.*

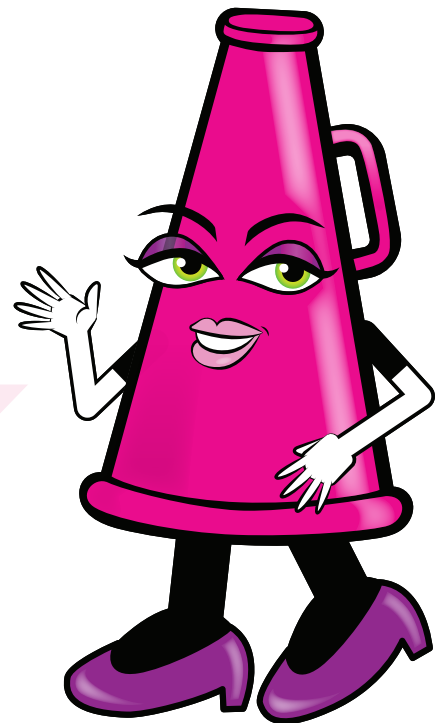
*It said I was, “Judgy” which I had to look hard at. It didn’t mean what I thought it did and by reading the outcomes I found I am a strong defender of those in need and many other things. Now it makes sense. I challenge you to use the CPIEM as a tool to further your career, your mind set and your personal growth. It is when we stop growing and learning that we die. Take this as an “Anywhere” book, you decide where to start and what information to take away, you need not start from the beginning and work your way through, unless that is who you are.*

**Module 1 and CPIEM Testimony:** *My name is An Anonymous Peer. I am a Certified Peer Support Specialist. I am employed by South West Mental Health. I work with the Mobile Crisis Team. I cover the counties of Adams, Claiborne, Franklin, Jefferson and Wilkerson. Module 1 allowed me to really analyze the steps I have taken in my life. This tool made me take a good look at where I have been, how I arrived there, where I am now and the goals that I am going to reach. It helped me to realize that the mistakes I have made is not who I am. This tool also made me take responsibility for my own life and stop blaming everyone around me. Most importantly it made me look at the growth I have made. This is my confession every day. “I am not a victim, I am victorious.” I recommend using the CPIEM because it challenges the person in recovery to examine who they are, where they are, and where they want to go. It is setting goals and this tool is a blue print of becoming who you were created to be. Using this tool causes evaluation, honesty, accountability, for yourself. It encourages you to embrace your past as part of the process of growing and learning until the goal you set is achieved. This tool is again a blue print that if followed success is almost assured.*



I KNOW **MIKESELF**...  
HAHAHA... GET IT?

MIKE, THAT WAS DUMB.  
THAT’S LIKE ME SAYING,  
‘I KNOW **MEGSELF**.’ LOL  
  
ACTUALLY, THAT’S KINDA FUN.  
ADD ‘SELF’ TO YOUR NAME...  
AND SAY IT.





## Tool #1: I am... Worksheet and Videos

On your journey to recovery and self-discovery, it is vital to understand your personal growth. In order to do this, you must also start to come into knowledge of who you are. In a culture that promotes busyness and exhaustion as status symbols, understanding yourself and your worth are a crucial first step. Print this worksheet or view it online and answer the questions honestly. There is no “right or wrong” only you!

<http://brenebrown.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/HFW-Worksheet.pdf>

Also, check out the following videos of talks:

Brené Brown: ‘There Are No Prerequisites For Worthiness’

[https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/10/22/brene-brown-oprah\\_n\\_4138180.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/10/22/brene-brown-oprah_n_4138180.html) (watch each video.)

The power of vulnerability | Brené Brown | TEDxHouston

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X4Qm9cGRub0>

The price of invulnerability: Brené Brown at TEDxKC

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_UoMXF73j0c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_UoMXF73j0c)

The art of being yourself | Caroline McHugh | TEDx Milton Keynes Women

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=veEQQ-N9xWU>

Become who you really are | Andrea Pennington | TEDxIUM

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5pW2b1vwwf4>

This talk was given at a local TEDx event, produced independently of the TED Conferences. Following a near death-like experience this popular physician and medical journalist realized that her past conditioning was causing her to live an inauthentic life that created depression and anxiety.

Turn Your Struggles Into Strengths | Lori Harder | TEDxUCIrvine

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VZE7V-UL5zA>

Feelings: Handle them before they handle you | Mandy Saligari | TEDx Guildford

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JD4O7ama3o8>

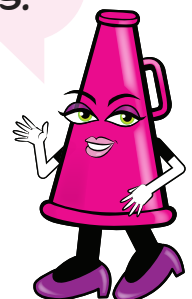
Feelings are what we have the most of and know the least about; handle them or they will handle you Mandy’s first contact with the world of addiction, mental health and recovery was when she came into treatment in 1990. Her passion for therapy and its potential for change ignited here, inspiring her to make therapy her life’s work.

1. Now that you have watched the videos, what themes stood out to you?
2. What similarities from the speakers did you note?
3. How would you answer the questions on the form differently?
4. Take a few minutes and answer the questions again. Do your answers differ?
5. Or were you initially pretty self-aware?
6. What have you learned or revealed about yourself to move forward with?

Remember that this is a marathon, not a sprint.

*“It takes courage to grow up and become who you really are.” – E. E. Cummings*

I LOVE THESE QUESTIONS.



## Tool #2: StrengthsFinder

Strengths-based tests determine your top “talents” or things you do best. Strengths tests can be beneficial for individuals or those working in teams. With peer support being a strengths-based strategy it is important to know our strengths.

The original strengths test <https://www.gallup.com/cliftonstrengths/en/home.aspx> cost \$19.99 to acquire your top 5 talents. There are different types of tests to find out more about yourself including your talents, leadership skills, and strengths. Costs are associated with the tests. Tests and detailed scores range from \$39.99 - \$49.99. If you work with a team of individuals, perhaps your organization might invest in providing employees with a strengths test. Otherwise, there are similar strengths based tests that are free on the Internet:

- <https://www.123test.com/strengths-weaknesses-analysis/> This link has several tests associated with it including Career Aptitude Tests, Competency Test, Disc Personality Test, Jung Personality Test, Work Values Test. These tests can help you find out more about who you are, what your strengths are, what your talents are and when you are at your best.
- <https://www.truity.com/?ppcga=fixed&msclkid=bda6039798431a81378b606fac1a09a4> This site has a multitude of 16 personality tests including career aptitude, tests for the workplace and even 7 love styles. It has been said that taking these tests will help one connect with themselves on a deeper level. The tests can be taken and a view of the overview of results can be seen for free. A deeper, more comprehensive full report can be purchased for a small fee. Also included is a comprehensive profile of each of the Myers-Briggs Personality Tests.
- <https://positivepsychology.com/strength-finding-tests/> Strength Finding Tests and Assessments You Can Do Today

**“Above all, be the heroine in your life, not the victim.” – Nora Ephron**

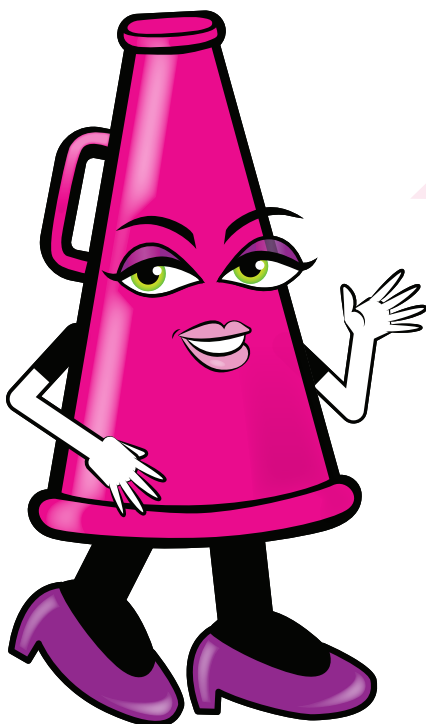
**StrengthsFinder Testimony:** *My name is Stephanie Stout. In doing the StrengthsFinder test found at Richardstrep.com I was able to find a better understanding of myself. I had completed a strength finder quizzes early in recovery and have taken them several times throughout the years. One of the reasons I believe it is important is to get a better grasp on what good qualities, or strengths that I posses and what I need to continue to work on. It is not important to me to try to be the best in all that I do, but rather to use the strengths I do have to better any team that I may be working with. I consider the quizzes as an opportunity to learn more about myself. In doing so I can also look at my weaknesses as an opportunity to grow.*

*For me personally, the test showed that some of my strengths included teamwork, faith, innovation, adaptability and communication. Other high scores were integrity, resourcefulness, determination and optimism. Weaknesses included problem-solving and the need of high levels of detail in order to commit to making decisions. The quiz has helped me in my personal life by suggesting that I stop letting fear of change bring me down.*

One of the greatest assets any team could have is learning the team's individual strengths and weaknesses. In doing so, the team itself can place members in positions where their strengths can be best utilized.

**StrengthsFinder Testimony:** *My name is Monica Wolters. I was asked to take the Strengths Test when I was working for the Corps of Engineers on a team doing threatened and endangered species research work. The idea was that identifying our individual strengths by way of taking the Strengths personality test could enhance our ability to work as a team. I found it very informative to learn what my strengths were, but was not surprised by them. It turned out that all the researchers had pretty much the same strengths. One of my strengths that stood out was that I am strong in "belief" and it's important for me to have a job that I believe in. Knowing my strengths and what I'm good at allows me to better manage my time and my goals. Overall, it helps me to better understand myself and why I have made many of my major decisions in life.*

**StrengthsFinder Testimony:** *My name is Sandra Caron. I live in recovery from serious mental illness. I made the decision to use this tool to further understand who I am as a person, who I have become. Using the StrengthsFinder helped me to realize the strengths I have, and how to utilize them. Discovering where my passion to help others offered me clarity and direction. Taking this test, being honest with my answers provided me with a surprising result that I was in complete agreement with. I was surprised at the insight I gained using this tool. I discovered areas of strengths I was not aware of, and how to use those strengths to further my goals. I now see that what I considered deficits are areas that I can overcome and strengthen by using this tool. I have been able to better hone in on areas I can change in my life using this tool. It was helpful to have a direction, a means of going step by step. I would recommend using this tool if you are looking for ways to improve their skills, it was actually a bit of fun to use.*



YOU'LL FIND TESTIMONIES ALL THROUGHOUT THIS DOCUMENT. IF YOU HAPPEN TO KNOW ONE OF THE PEOPLE WHO WROTE A TESTIMONY, PLEASE DO US A FAVOR AND THANK THEM FOR PUTTING THEIR HEART AND VOICE OUT THERE FOR YOUR BENEFIT.

WE WOULD THANK THEM OURSELVES, BUT WE'RE JUST CARTOONS AFTER ALL.



## Tool #3: Personality Inventory: Myers Briggs

One of the best known personality tests is the Myers Briggs. The Myers Briggs determines personality type based on theory of C. G. Jung. Perhaps you may have the opportunity to take this test with your mental health provider, or it is \$59.95 online. Here is a lot more information about it:

<http://www.myersbriggs.org/my-mbti-personality-type/mbti-basics/>

There are some similar, free personality tests based on Carl Jung's personality type theory:

- <http://www.humanmetrics.com/cgi-win/jtypes2.asp>
- <http://www.9types.com/rheti/index.php>
- <https://www.16personalities.com/academy>

Other personality tests peers may wish to explore include the Minnesota Multiphase Personality Inventory (MMPI) and Enneagrams.

***“Courage is not having the strength to go on,  
it is going on when you don’t have the strength.”  
– Theodore Roosevelt***

**Personality Inventory Testimony:** *My name is Denika Poole. I completed the 16 personalities survey. I chose this tool because I was interested in knowing my personality type. I completed the survey within ten minutes but the results were amazing. I learned my personality type is: Mediator Personality (INFP, -A/-T). This tool described my personality perfectly. It stated that I am an introvert, I try to see the good in people, and the list goes on. As an INFP, -A/-T type personality I like to communicate using parables and metaphors. Before taking the personality type I believed I was socially awkward because I did not like being in a crowd and if I had to be around a lot of people it causes high anxiety. I tend to take everything very personal.*

*I did not have a lot of experience with this tool. This is the first time I have ever taken this personality test. I learned a lot about myself through this tool. I learned why I am the type of parent I am. I learned why I focus on having the perfect relationships with my fiancé.*

*As a result of using this tool, I have learned that it is perfectly fine to be different from others. I learned my strengths and weaknesses. I have learned my likes and dislikes and why I am the way that I am. I would definitely recommend this tool to others who are seeking who they are.*

**Personality Inventory Testimony:** *My name is Cassandra James-Weathersby. I took the Human Metrics Personality Test. When I completed it, I learned that I was an ENFP (Extravert 19%, Intuitive 50%, Feeling 78%, Perceiving 66%).*

- *This means that I have a slight preference of Extraversion over Seeing.*
- *A moderate preference of intuition over sensing.*
- *A strong preference of feeling over thinking.*
- *A distinct preference of perceiving over judging.*

*19% Extravert: When I read the description for ENFP, it stated that we love people. This is truly so me. I love people, I love helping people, working with them, etc. I enjoy genuine engaging conversations and laughter, and touching moments that melt your heart. All the fields that I have actively chosen to work in helped or assisted people on some level. Even my hobbies entertain people. Yes, if you haven't guessed it by now, I love people!*

*So to my surprise a couple of years ago, whenever I went into the store, ran an errand in a public place, etc. , I started this habit of placing my headphones in my ears. I practiced this even if there was no one I was talking to on my phone and no music or audiobook coming through the headphones. Then, a lot of times when I saw someone that I knew, if they did not see me first, I would duck into another isle, or move behind a display. All in an effort not to have to talk to someone or engage.*

*At first, I felt a tinge of guilt for ducking and posing with my headphones. I would think that I was being rude and should not hide in plain sight like that. Now that I have taken this personality test, I realize that while I am an Extravert, it is just barely!!!! A little bit more and I would be an Introvert!*

*It shows exactly why I have always felt the way that I did with my love affair with people. I would feel like "Ok I really am enjoying spending this time with you (you guys). Now go away. Or I will go away. Either one. Smooches!!!!" Yet sincerely, be ready to see them next time. This made me understand why I needed my space and to duck behind those displays. After working with people all day, taking care of business, talking to my family, etc., that small time in the store was downtime for me. I just needed to be alone with my thoughts, enjoy the moment. Not feel responsible to engage or bashed if I didn't. So now that I understand that this is a part of the time I need to regroup, let the ducking continue!!!!*

*50% Intuitive : So, for this one, I would not have thought of myself initially as intuitive at all. However the more that I read the description and reflected back on those moments in my life that I'd overridden that "sense or feeling" that I should do something or something was about to happen, I realized this is what it was. So now, when I have that feeling to act or not to act, I do it. (No, this is not the Bipolar talking.)*

*It is just like the moment that it is on my heart to call a friend only to call and find out that they are going through a rough time. Or that feeling that I should wait before turning at the light, then a car comes zooming past out of nowhere and would have hit me. Or when I get the feeling that I shouldn't deal or work with someone, only to find out that I was correct in feeling that way.*

*Since reading these results, I work hard not to overlook these feelings when they come, now or discount them as nothing. I remember how many times they have saved my skin.*



**Personality Inventory Testimony:** *My name is Stephanie Stout. We have all heard of different types of Personality Testing including one of the most popular Myers Briggs Personality test. Tests like these determine personality type based on the theory of Carl Jung. I took a free personality test that is listed in the toolkit. I found the test on [www.humanmetrics.com](http://www.humanmetrics.com).*

*It has been so many years since I took a personality test and it was amazing how accurately it pegged my personality type. I am a ISFJ personality type. Some of the characteristics of this personality type include a desire to serve others, a need to be needed, good with small groups and one on one but not so good at delegating. ISFJ's tend to be uncomfortable in supervisory roles but have strong loyalties and have unexplained moodiness due to keeping emotions from others due to not wanting to bother anyone. On this website, after determining my personality type, I can look at other aspects such as career choices which I would thrive in, my learning style and communication style.*

*My career choices included social work, religious education and health care administration. In learning, I tend to ask how "will this help me to help others"? The stronger the answer to that questions is, the more I want to learn it. I thought one of the communication techniques that was listed for ISFJ's which stood out to me was that we tend to try to include everyone in a conversation and make sure that everyone has the same opinion before proceeding. In being AMPSS Board President, I find that I do this a great deal. When a vote or discussion come up, I like to discuss all aspects of the situation and have everyone in agreement before we proceed.*

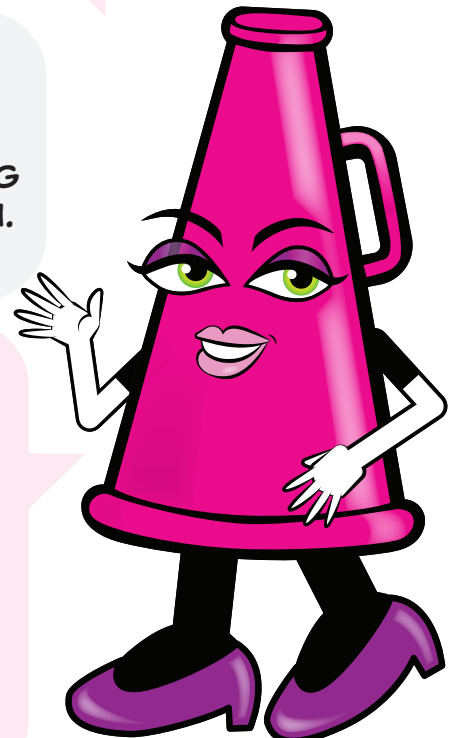
*I learned a great deal about myself in taking this test. It was fascinating to me to understand why I act the way I do at times.*

**IS THERE SUCH A THING AS AN  
EEEE FOR THOSE OF US WHO LOVE  
BEING IN FRONT OF CROWDS?**



**I DON'T KNOW, MEG. ALL I CAN SAY  
IS THAT ONCE UPON A TIME I THOUGHT  
I WAS AN INFJ... UNTIL MICK JAGGER  
GRABBED ME AND SCREAMED SOMETHING  
ABOUT NOT GETTING ANY SATISFACTION.  
I'VE BEEN A MIC EVER SINCE.**

**IN ALL SERIOUSNESS,  
THE MYERS-BRIGGS ASSESSMENT  
IS A WONDERFUL TOOL AMONG  
MANY THAT CAN HELP YOU BEGIN TO  
UNDERSTAND THE UNIQUE ELEMENTS  
OF YOUR PERSONALITY—JUST LIKE  
THE TESTIMONIES SAID. PEOPLE WHO  
ARE ON A RECOVERY JOURNEY HAVE A  
WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN  
ABOUT THEMSELVES, AND IN DOING SO  
SHAPE THEIR RECOVERY JOURNEY.**



## Tool #4: NAMI Peer to Peer (P2P)

NAMI'S Peer-to-Peer program is designed for people living with serious mental illness who want to maintain their wellness and recovery. The program is led by a team of two trained mentors who are personally experienced in living with mental illness. NAMI Peer-to-Peer is a free eight-session educational program for adults with mental health conditions who are looking to better understand themselves and their recovery. Taught by trained leaders with lived experience, this program includes activities, discussions, and informative videos. However, it does not include recommendations for treatment approaches.

<https://www.nami.org/Support-Education/Mental-Health-Education/NAMI-Peer-to-Peer>

This is an in-person, group class that is 2 hours per week for 10 weeks, and it is free. It is mentor-guided, led by 2 NAMI-trained mentors, and the day and time varies based on the people attending. Minimum of 7 people to do it... usually more sign up than show up. If you miss a class or two, you can still complete it and “graduate” and earn a certificate of completion. It would be good to have a few testimonials about this...

**NAMI P2P Testimony:** *My name is Beverly Pettigrew. NAMI P2P is educational program designed to help consumers learn how to help themselves by teaching several different mindfulness techniques and creating a relapse prevention chart that starts with discussing a specific event that happened. Think about your thoughts, feelings, body sensations, behaviors and the action needed. It is a program that I enjoy mentoring. It also helps one look for triggers and hot buttons and the stages of recovery.*

**NAMI P2P Testimony:** *My name is Monica Wolters. I took the NAMI Peer to Peer (P2P) education class to learn more about my mental disorder and to advance my recovery. The course turned out to be so much more than I imagined. Although some aspects of the course were triggering for me, the P2P class was a safe place for me to work through difficult emotions and to ultimately grow. I especially liked the way the course is like a “buffet.” So many wellness tools are offered and one can take and personalize what works for them. I was so excited about the P2P class, I trained to become a mentor a few years later and now routinely facilitate the course for others. As a mentor, I continue to learn and grow. Every class is different and made up of unique and beautiful individuals that offer the class their own unique personal gifts. It is through this program I have made long lasting supportive friendships.*

**NAMI P2P Testimony:** *My name is Auvergne Williams. Peer-to-Peer helped me learn more about the biological causes of various mental illnesses, including my own. We learned different approaches to treatment, relapse prevention and strategies for coping. Perhaps the most important part of the experience for me was participating in the course with other people, learning from them and sharing with them, and gaining confidence in the feeling that we can support each other and are not alone.*

## Tool #5: Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP)

The WRAP is an evidence-based strategy that can be used for maintaining wellness. A WRAP requires identifying one's own triggers and gaining insight into one's illness; therefore, it is a useful tool for getting to "know thy self." WRAP can be done individually, or WRAP workshops may be offered at your local mental health center.

THIS TOOL IS  
MY FAVORITE.



<https://copelandcenter.com/wellness-recovery-action-plan-wrap>

***"Personality is an unbroken series of successful gestures."***  
— F. Scott Fitzgerald

WRAP training is available in many states and communities across the nation.

For example, MHASM (Mental Health Association of South Mississippi) is offering a WRAP training in a 2-day class, to train people to do their own WRAP, and it is a prerequisite to then attend the 5-day WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) Facilitator Training. Our state's Department of Mental Health provides this grant. Their vision is that every region will have WRAP facilitators who can work with people who have learned about WRAP while in an inpatient setting—sort of a like a post-inpatient follow-up. If there is someone at the community mental health center who is familiar with WRAP then all people will have access to WRAP as a resource.

You can go to the Copeland Center link above and complete a large part of the plan on your own if that is how you work best. Then, come back together and put the pieces together. The best part of WRAP is there is no right or wrong, you can have as much or as little as you want in it. You can change it as often as you would like to. It is your plan, and you complete it voluntarily.

**WRAP Testimony:** *My name is Denika Poole. I have attended WRAP training and I utilize this tool with our PACT clients. WRAP teaches the client how to monitor uncomfortable and distressing feelings and behaviors and, through planned responses, reduce, modify, or eliminate those feelings according to the Copeland Center for Wellness and Recovery. Each of our clients were given a copy of the WRAP and was assisted with completing their personal WRAPs. Clients were able to inform staff about their medications, triggers, what their symptoms are before they become ill. Clients were able to inform Staff what being healthy looks like for them. Clients were also able to inform staff what they look like when they are sick. As a Peer Specialist I recommend more WRAP trainings. AMPSS can assist by educating all peers on the wrap trainings. AMPSS could also assist with encouraging peers to complete their personal wraps.*

**\*\*\*Denika passed away in her home in 2020, we valued her and her effort in making a difference in the lives of those we serve. As well as helping all of you with her testimony. \*\*\***



**WRAP Testimony:** *My name is Ekoko Onema. I am a Certified Peer Support Specialist for Adult Mental Health and Parent Caregiver. I currently work at Hinds Behavioral Health Services in the Alcohol and Drug Department and with our Re-Entry Program. I am a person in long-term recovery from substance use disorder, PTSD, and anxiety.*

*Before coming into recovery, I thought that I knew myself. I now realize that I did not really know myself at all. I discovered I had become complacent and lost hope and sense of direction in my life. During that time my life was consumed by my addiction and facing challenges related to my mental illness. What I was doing no longer worked but that was the best thing that ever happened to me because this was instrumental in my surrender and asking for God's help.*

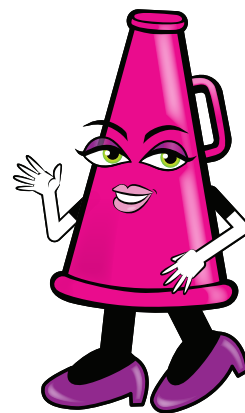
*My journey of self-discovery began with recovery. All my old ideas, thinking, behaviors, associates, and lifestyle had to change. I had to have God's help, and the help of others. Most importantly I had to take positive action. Initially I just wanted the pain to stop. I did not want to use alcohol and drugs anymore.*

*After becoming employed I was provided an opportunity to attend a 2-day WRAP training. This was my introduction to the Wellness Recovery Action Plan. It was extremely important because after attending the Certified Peer Support Specialist Training I understood how important wellness is and how it impacts my life and the lives of others. My experience with this tool was life changing because it helped me to look at myself and what I want and need to stay well. It also helped me to set boundaries and the total experience was empowering.*

*WRAP helped me to make my wellness a priority. Using the Toolbox and Daily Maintenance, I am more aware of my triggers and early warning signs. Once I feel them coming on, I am more capable of changing things, so I stay well.*

**WRAP Testimony:** *My name is Sandra Caron. Upon taking the 3-day WRAP course, I quickly realized the value of creating a plan for my own mental health care. Looking at what I'm like when I'm well, what my own wellness tools are and continuously adding to my wellness toolkit has been empowering. I now facilitate groups to teach them how to create their own WRAP. One peer related to me, "For years, y'all have been telling me I could do this, I could get better. Until now, no one ever showed me 'how' to do it. WRAP teaches me the 'how' y'all have been talking about." Learning to create your own WRAP is a tool you, yourself, can use to manage your disorder.*

**I TOTALLY UNDERSTAND WHY WRAP IS YOUR FAVORITE, MIKE. BUT I THINK MY FAVORITE IS THE STRENGTHSFINDER OR MYERS-BRIGGS. I LIKE THE SPECIFIC, TANGIBLE INSIGHTS.**



## Tool #6: NAMI In Our Own Voice (IOOV)

The NAMI IOOV in person training workshop is a free program that provides a proven framework for presenting our recovery story in a de-stigmatizing format. As peers, our recovery story is an important tool in assisting others in finding their own recovery pathway, and NAMI's IOOV program is great way to organize your recovery story. One may also find it therapeutic and find their recovery strengthened by the process of organizing and telling one's personal story. The IOOV is broken down into categories that flow and requires personal reflection, thus aiding in one's growth and knowledge of self. The NAMI IOOV is a great tool in aiding the peer to further "know thy self." Sharing your story is moving into the advocacy stage of recovery.

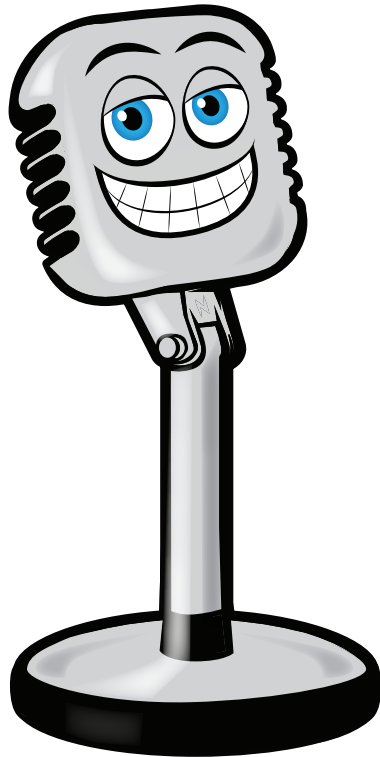
<https://www.nami.org/inourownvoice>

Once you get to the place where you are able to share your story, know that many peers find it helpful to participate in community and faith-based events that give them platform to share their recovery stories.

**In Our Own Voice Testimony:** *My name is Monica Wolters. I am an advocate by nature and was drawn to the In Our Own Voice (IOOV) program to confront stigma. Before advocating for mental illness, I was an advocate for animal rights and the environment so the IOOV was a good fit for me. I found the experience of organizing and telling my story extremely therapeutic, but also triggering. It was a safe place to explore my feelings and learn and grow from the experience. Once I perfected my story and began telling it to others, my confidence grew. I found telling my story extremely rewarding along with greatly advancing my communication skills. The IOOV program was great way to learn about myself and to enhance my recovery journey.*

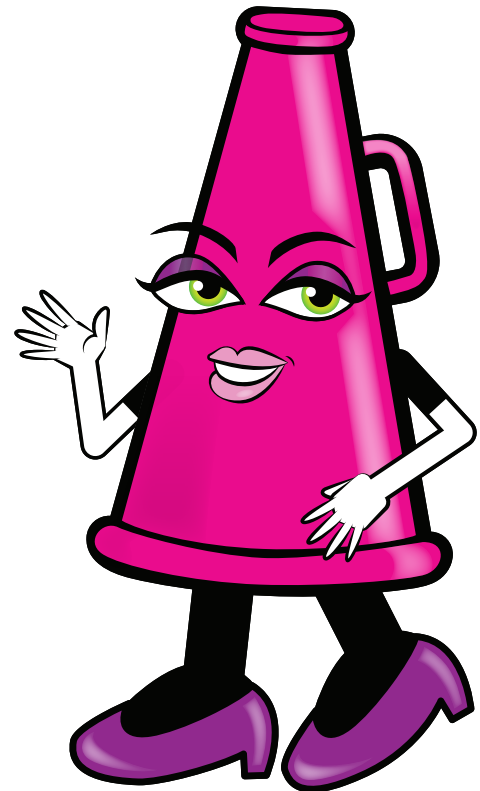
**In Our Own Voice Testimony:** *My name is Sandra Caron. The first part of the IOOV presentations focuses on different areas of my life, such as I am a parent, I love gardening and crafting. I enjoy reading the news on the internet, and love mysteries when watching tv. My 'light bulb', so to speak, didn't come on right away. Until one day after a presentation, I began to realize deep down, that I was not the illness. This was an important step in my own recovery, to be able to recognize the separation between my person and the illness. They are not the same. When I was first diagnosed, I became that diagnosis. That was a huge setback for me, I became lost in the diagnosis itself. It crippled me, the very concept of recovery was unfathomable. I truly needed to understand and clearly see that I am not an illness, it's something I have, not who I am. I give credit to NAMI's IOOV for helping me understand that there is so much more to me, than an illness.*

**In Our Own Voice Testimony:** *My name is An Anonymous Peer. Some results from using this tool are it helped me to take a honest look at my past, present and future. My past consists of the choices that I made and the consequences. The present is to stop looking in the rearview mirror, because I can't change anything in the past, but I can learn from any mistakes and not carry them in to the present. To evaluate my where I am presently and make sure the choices made are build a strong foundation for my future.*



HOW ARE YOU DOING WITH ALL OF THESE TOOLS? WE JUST FINISHED №6 INSIDE MODULE 1. I THINK THERE ARE A TOTAL OF 10 SO FAR. SOMEDAY WE MIGHT ADD MORE. CAN YOU THINK OF ANY THAT CAN BE ADDED? ANYWAY, TAKE YOUR TIME. THERE'S NO REASON TO RUSH THROUGH THESE. CHOOSE ONE, READ IT, THINK ABOUT IT FOR YOURSELF, MAYBE TRY IT... YOU GET THE PICTURE. SHE'S MY COUSIN, BY THE WAY... PIC.

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN ADD TO THESE TOOLS IF YOU COME ACROSS ONE THAT YOU LIKE AND WOULD RECOMMEND TO OTHERS TO TRY. ALL YOU NEED TO DO IS SEND AN EMAIL TO [CAFETACENTER@GMAIL.COM](mailto:CAFETACENTER@GMAIL.COM). GIVE THEM A HEADS UP ABOUT IT, OR ATTACH IT. TELL THEM MEG SENT YOU... IT WILL HELP YOU GET PAST THE SPAM FILTER.



## Tool #7: Faith and Spirituality

This module would be incomplete without mentioning the impact of faith and spirituality on knowing ourselves. The insight and wisdom gained from reading holy writings has been dramatic in the lives of many peers. The power of prayer is backed by scientific research as well as the benefits of being involved in a faith community. A spiritual journey has the potential to mold us and encourage growth that is powerfully positive and results in a demonstration of God's love, peace, and compassion. As peers in recovery, we strive to maintain balance in body, mind, and the spirit.

As you choose a path of faith and spirituality, it is wise to understand that all your work to know yourself, and become the person you truly are, works hand in hand with your spirituality, not against it. Being who you are truly created to be will help you find the balance you need and give you the power to strengthen your faith.

***“If you try to understand the whole universe you will understand nothing.  
If you try to understand yourself, you will know the whole universe.” – Unknown***

- Seeking a mentor who is a spiritual guide could be helpful.
- The Serenity Prayer
- A Sponsor

**Faith and Spirituality Testimony:** *My name is Ekoko Onema.*

*During the last days of my addiction, I prayed and asked for God's help. I prayed for willingness, courage, and for him to order my steps. I also prayed for him to send people to help me, and he has done just that.*

*In early recovery, one of the first things I began to do more is to pray and started attending church regularly again. I began to read positive information such as my Bible which was instrumental in building my faith. By attending support groups, I was able to connect with other people just like me and to begin a process of self-discovery. My sponsor is exactly the person God knew I needed. We are continuing to walk this spiritual journey together. She is such a blessing in my life.*

*Prayer and meditation are also imperative for me. I spend time with God daily and enjoy surrounding myself with people who are positive and who are enjoying life. I say the Serenity Prayer, work closely with my Sponsor, and reach out to work with others.*

*Service is everything because it allows me to honor God by helping those he puts in my path. There is no greater joy than partnering with others as they grow on their journey. My faith and spirituality are pillars in my recovery.*

*Over the years my faith has increased. I understand that God created me for a purpose and that is to help others. My life is a testimony of what God can do. I am only here today because of God's Grace and Mercy. I know his plans for me are good. God has always taken care of me and been with me through it all and he will continue to.*

**Faith and Spirituality Testimony:** *My name is An Anonymous Peer.*

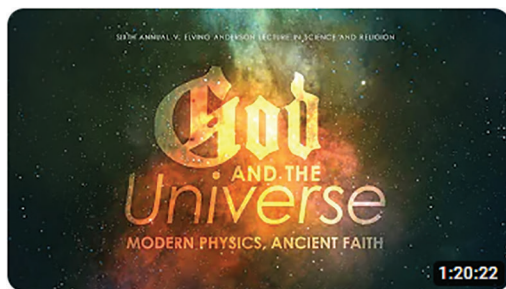
*My faith in God has kept me through this journey called life. Praying and reading the bible has kept me grounded when I wanted to give up. My relationship with God keeps me positive. God's unconditional love has gotten me through many storms in my life. My spiritual life coach, my pastor, has given me the motivation to stay focused on the positive things in life. Jesus was there when no one else was, I can always lean and depend upon, because he is my strength. When Jesus looks at me, it is a look of love, not disappointment. I feel accepted by him, I can be real with him and tell him all of my secrets and not feel shame. He still calls me his own.*

**Testimony:** *I would like to keep my name out of this testimony for various reasons.*


*I believe in a higher power, a power larger than my own, I believe the Universe guides those that have eyes to see. We must but look and the universe answers. Is this "God", is it the being of all beings? Do I see Buddha? There are so many out there that my own belief is in the universe.*

*When I am sitting on a mountain, I get my guidance of how to remain sober and healthy. While wadding in a stream I know that it will carry me along with it. I speak of my higher power as does those that speak of their God, it is "The God of my understanding". It is not a popular belief but believing in something is when they are in need. Karma is real, I have witnessed it, I believe the Universe will send me all I need.*


**Some YouTube research** on this topic will reveal many videos on God and the universe. One may lead to another... here are a couple very good ones suggested by peers.





Dr. Stephen Barr, "God and the Universe: Modern Physics, Ancient Faith"  
100K views • 3 years ago

 Anselm House



Soak in The SPIRIT (EXTREMELY Powerful) Complete Peace Activation  A  
Your Faith as You Rest

2M views • 2 years ago

 Abide - Sleep Meditations 



## Tool #8: An Attitude of Gratitude

If you have made it to this point, you may have already started journaling. If you haven't, now would be a great time to start. Enough cannot be said about becoming intentional about being grateful for the little things during this recovery journey. Write it out. Keep it close enough so that when tough times arrive, you have something to reflect on.

***“The single greatest thing you can do to change your life today would be to start being grateful for what you have right now.”***

***– Oprah Winfrey***

***“Gratitude makes sense of our peace for today and creates a vision for tomorrow.” – Melody Beattie***

***“It’s not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is not effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least he fails while daring greatly...”***

***– Theodore Roosevelt***

**Attitude of Gratitude Testimony:** My name is Stephanie Stout. When I first began my journey of recovery, I wasn't grateful for anything. I felt I had been given a raw deal. I didn't understand why I had to be sick or why all the terrible things had happened in my life. When it was first suggested to me to begin a journal and make a gratitude list, I was angry and thought “there is nothing to be grateful for.” I was at a point where I knew I was ready to try anything to feel alive again. I just wanted to live and not just exist anymore. I began (under advisement from staff at a facility I was in) to learn to be grateful for having a chair to sit in, having paper to write on and a writing utensil. It started small and that's how it had to for me. Over the next few days, I became grateful for staff, for education, for meals and things like that. It grew to an extreme gratefulness for family and friends and eventually for life. I look at situations so much differently today. I heard many years ago that your attitude determines your altitude. I truly believe that. Attitudes are basically rooted in a person's belief about themselves. My attitude toward myself improves as I become grateful for all things in my life, big and small.

*When you begin to journal about daily events, it makes things real. When it is seen on paper, it makes it real and almost “alive.” I remember a year into my recovery, I sat on the front porch at my mother’s house and began reading the journal of things I had written over the last 365 days. I was reading where I was being negative about my mother wanting me to plant roses for her and was suggesting I get a hobby such as this. I wrote that I couldn’t do anything or make anything grow and was resentful that she was trying to push me into doing things that I couldn’t do and how I would be happy when the rose bush died so she would stop pushing me. I looked over to the same rose bush I was complaining about in my journal and saw the biggest rose bush full of beautiful pink roses. I began to cry when I realized that not only my attitude had changed but my life had changed.*

**Attitude of Gratitude Testimony:** *My name is Cassandra James-Weathersby. I was always one of those positive people. Yet I lacked truly being grateful and operating in an attitude of gratitude. I would put on a positive face, pull myself up by my boot strings, all the while wondering, “Why do things keep happening to me?”*

*What I have learned however, that is not only do I feel better when I am genuinely grateful, but the universe and the Lord respond in kind.*

*I remember not having transportation. Every time it worked out that someone could take me where I needed to go, I was thankful. I also reminded myself of how thankful I was to have somewhere to go (job, store, bank, meeting, etc.) when it was especially tough, and I couldn’t find a ride.*

*When God finally blessed me with a vehicle of my own, I thanked Him every time I saw it or thought about it. (It had been almost two years since I’d had a vehicle in my own name! ) After the first week, the belt broke just as I was heading out of town. Old me would have been freaking out on the inside. Grateful me, said thank you! Thank you that we were not on the road yet when it happened. Thank you that I had a vehicle for a belt to break on. Thank you that it was that only thing wrong with it. Thank you that we were close to a repair shop. Thank you that the part and labor were not expensive. Thank you that we had the funds to fix it. Thank you. We made it to our destination and back (9 hours 45 mins).*

*This attitude has been essential to my Mental Health journey. When I start to panic on the inside, often what could turn into days in bed, can be warded off by me reminding myself of what is true and good and how grateful I am. When just telling myself isn’t enough, I refer to my sticky notes.... yes, sticky notes. I have “Being Mary Janed” my mirror and a board that I have with scriptures, quotes, and sayings that remind me of who I am and whose I am. This helps me tremendously and I am PRO STICKY NOTE! They help keep you grounded AND grateful!*

*Finally, I am reminded of Philippians 4: 8: “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”*

***“The more grateful you are, the more you get to be grateful about. It’s that simple.”***

***– Louise Hay***

***“Gratitude, like faith, is a muscle. The more you use it, the stronger it grows, and the more power you have to use it on your behalf. If you do not practice gratefulness, its benefaction will go unnoticed, and your capacity to draw on its gifts will be diminished. To be grateful is to find blessings in everything. This is the most powerful attitude to adopt, for there are blessings in everything.”***

***– Alan Cohen***

***“Gratitude makes a person modest.  
A sense of gratitude expands the heart.”***

***– Daisaku Ikeda***

Here are some smartphone apps that can help you maintain an Attitude of Gratitude:

- Gratitude Garden
- Longwalks – Journal Together
- Three Good Things
- Morning! A 5-Minute Journal
- Happyfeed – Gratitude Journal & Daily Happiness



## **Tool #9: Positive Thinking**

Positive Thinking is a mental and emotional attitude that focuses on the bright side of life and expecting positive results.

Positive thinking is not a concept that everyone believes and follows. Some, consider it as nonsense, and scoff at people who follow it. However, there is a growing number of people who accept positive thinking as a fact, and believe in its effectiveness.

To use it in your life, you need more than just to be aware of its existence. You need to adopt the attitude of positive thinking in everything you do.

The following story illustrates how this power works:

Allan applied for a new job, but he didn't believe he would get it, since his self-esteem was low, and he considered himself as a failure and unworthy or success. He had a negative attitude toward himself, and therefore, believed that the other applicants were better and more qualified than him.

Allan's mind was occupied with negative thoughts and fears concerning the job, for the whole week preceding the job interview. He actually anticipated failure.

On the day of the interview, he got up late, and to his horror he discovered that the shirt he planned to wear was dirty and the other one needed ironing. As it was already too late, he went out wearing a wrinkled shirt and without eating breakfast.

During the interview, he was tense, negative, hungry and worried about his shirt. All this, distracted his mind and made it difficult for him to focus on the interview. His overall behavior made a bad impression, and consequently, he materialized his fear and did not get the job.

Jim applied for the same job too, but approached the matter in a different way. He was sure that he was going to get the job. During the week preceding the interview, he often visualized himself making a good impression and getting the job.

In the evening before the interview, he prepared the clothes he was going to wear, and went to sleep a little earlier. On the day of the interview, he woke up earlier than usual, and had ample time to eat breakfast, and then to arrive to the interview before the scheduled time.

**Jim made a good impression and got the job.**

**Here are some links to resources on Positive Thinking:**

<https://www.successconsciousness.com/blog/category/positive-attitude/>

<https://www.healthline.com/health/how-to-think-positive#tips>

[Positive Mindset: How to Develop a Positive Mental Attitude \(positivepsychology.com\)](https://positivepsychology.com/positive-mindset/)

<https://positivepsychology.com/positive-mindset/>

<https://www.intelligentchange.com/blogs/read/how-to-create-positive-mindset-and-attitude>

## Tool #10: My Recovery Project

Organizing your recovery story can be a great tool for getting to “know thy self.” What quotes or verses have been meaningful to you? What would the title of your book be called? Have you written poetry or what poetry would you quote? What could the mental health system learn from your recovery story? How can your recovery story help others? The “My Recovery Project” is a tool for organizing and sharing your story on paper or electronic format. I have found it useful for preparing for various speaking engagements which may range in length from 5 minutes to 1 hour.

***“In life, finding a voice is speaking and living the truth. Each of you has a distinctive voice. When you find it, your story will be told. You will be heard.” – John Grisham***

### Introduction

The idea for this project originated from a desire to create a tool or “training module” to promote thinking in a more recovery-oriented direction. I also had the goal to get my story organized on paper, so I used my personal recovery story to create what could be called a “Recovery Training Workbook.” After creating this so called workbook, I thought that others wishing to also document their own recovery stories could use it as a template and I simply called it “My Recovery Project.”

The overall format of the My Recovery Project is highly customizable. The project has been especially helpful in preparing me for various speaking engagements. One may get invitations to tell their recovery story as they advance in their recovery, training, and/or CPSS career path. I may be asked to talk anywhere from 3 to 30 minutes, and the My Recovery Project can be easily customized to fit any time request or structure.

I encourage you to explore yourself and keep in mind that there is no right or wrong way. Notice that the example makes the use of time as a label for chapters, but this is only one of many possibilities. Quotes and poems maybe authored by the user or a favorite authored by someone else. Users should be encouraged to customize to their personal tastes, using as many or as few quotes, poems, etc. as they choose. Most of all have fun. I hope you find documenting your story as therapeutic as I did!

### Key

1. **Date:** The example lists the date the project was created. You may want to change the date as you update your project, or use a date range.
2. **Title:** What is the title to your story? What would your book be called? Perhaps you know what you want your title to be or consider saving this part to last.
3. **Dedications:** Who do you dedicate your story too? Was there someone in particular in your life that was influential or important. In the example I dedicate my story to my late husband.
4. **Chapters:** The template lists 3 chapters, plus a final chapter but the user may use as few or as many chapters needed. Additional chapters can always be added later or maybe your final chapter is not yet complete.
5. **Quotes:** Are there quotes, scriptures, sayings, or proverbs that are particularly meaningful to you or sum up your story? Don't be afraid to author your own quotes!

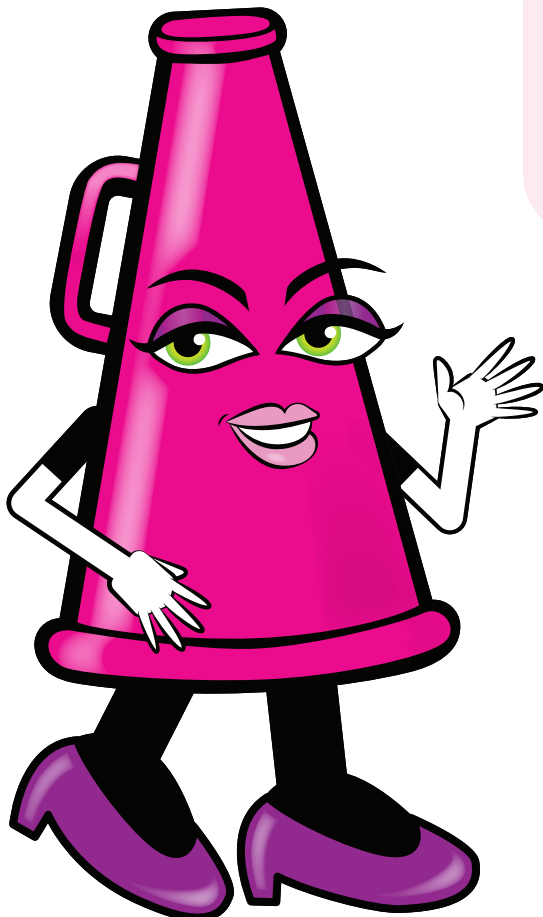
6. **Body:** Write as much or as little as needed. Notice in the example some chapters are very short while others are lengthier.
7. **Poems:** Are you a secret poet? Do you have a favorite poet or poem that relates to your story? Anybody can write poetry . . . don't be afraid to get creative and write your own recovery poem!
8. **Reflections/Questions:** Did you learn anything? What do you want others to learn? What can your story teach us?
9. **Final Chapter:** The example uses becoming a CPSS as a completed goal and final chapter, but the story doesn't end there . . . there's always post-recovery goals!

## Template

The following pages include the template for documenting your Recovery Project.

## Example

A completed example of My Recovery Project can be found in Appendix 3.



OKAY, SO JUST SO  
Y'ALL ARE UNDERSTANDING . . .  
THE NEXT FEW PAGES ARE THE TOOL  
WITH BLANK LINES SO YOU CAN TRY  
THE TOOL YOURSELF BASED ON THE  
INFORMATION ABOVE.

AN EXAMPLE OF THE TOOL  
ALL COMPLETED IS BACK IN THE  
APPENDICES BECAUSE IT'S LONG.

GIMME A 'Y! GIMME AN 'A!  
GIMME ANOTHER 'Y! WHAT DOES  
THAT SPELL? YAY!

OH MY GOODNESS...  
I'M SO AWESOME. LOL! PHEW!  
OKAY. KEEP GOING, PEOPLE!  
I NEED TO CATCH MY BREATH.

Title of My Recovery Project

Dedications

## Chapter 1 Title

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Pertinent quotes, scriptures, etc.

Body

*Poems*

Reflections

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Study Questions?

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## Chapter 2 Title

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Pertinent quotes, scriptures, etc.

Body

*Poems*

Reflections

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Study Questions?

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## Chapter 3 Title

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Pertinent quotes, scriptures, etc.

Body

*Poems*

Reflections

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Study Questions?

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## Final Chapter – Goal Achieved – *What's next?*

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Pertinent quotes, scriptures, etc.

Body

*Poems*

What are your recovery goals?

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What are your “after-recovery” goals?

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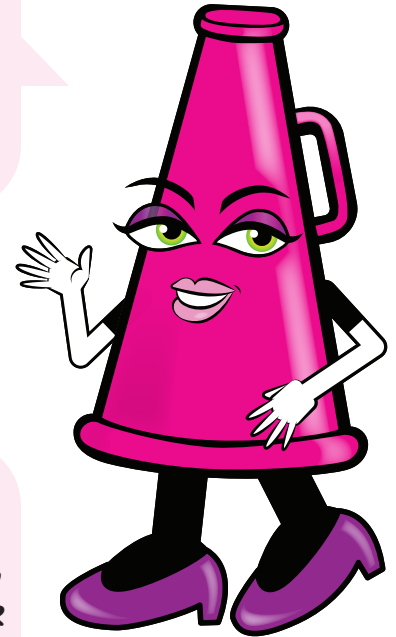
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## Module 2: My Tiers of Competency

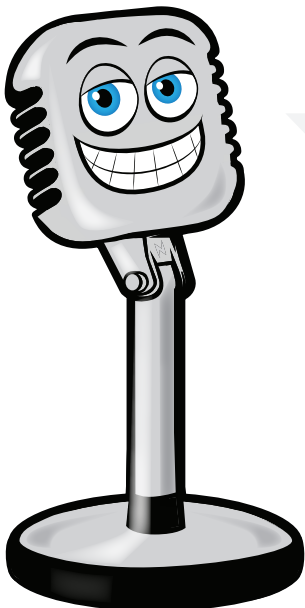
WELCOME TO MODULE 2! DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOU'VE LEARNED A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF IN MODULE 1? IF YOU USED SOME OF THE TOOLS, YOU'VE PROBABLY LEARNED WHAT YOUR STRENGTHS, PASSIONS, AND SKILLS ARE. OR, MAYBE YOU'RE MORE COMFORTABLE WITH YOUR PERSONALITY TRAITS AND HOW THEY SHAPE WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU DO, AND THINK ABOUT, AND GET INVOLVED WITH.

NOW THAT YOU HAVE A BETTER IDEA ABOUT YOURSELF, YOU'RE IN A REALLY GOOD POSITION TO ADD TO YOUR OVERALL IDENTITY BY LEARNING AND/OR ENHANCING SOME KEY SKILLS THAT WILL HELP YOU HELP YOURSELF TO BE INCLUDED AND ENGAGED (IF AND WHEN YOU CHOOSE TO DO SO).

MODULE 2 INTRODUCES SOME KEY TOPICS, KNOWLEDGE, AND SKILLS THAT WILL BE USEFUL TO YOU IN YOUR QUEST TO SHARE YOUR VOICE. AFTER ALL, YOUR VOICE IS WHAT'S GOING TO HELP MAKE THE SYSTEM OF SERVICES BETTER FOR EVERYONE—AND SO THESE SKILLS ARE INTENDED TO ASSIST YOU TO DEVELOP YOUR VOICE EVEN MORE THAN IT ALREADY IS. AND TO REFRESH YOUR MEMORY, HERE'S THE OFFICIAL DEFINITION OF MODULE 2:



**Module 2: My Tiers of Competency.** In this module, the individual will be able to see how his or her skills match up against the types of skills and competencies that are necessary for successful engagement and participation in various venues. Once the person uses the Tiers of Competency to map his or her skills, he or she will be able to identify and pursue the necessary training to increase various competencies that, when improved, will help the person to more effectively represent his or her Voice. This module, then, is the heart of personal development. If Module 1 assists a person to know his or her purpose and direction, Module 2 provides that person the training to be able to pursue that purpose and direction.



BEFORE WE GET GOING, IT'S IMPORTANT TO KNOW THAT THIS PART OF THE CPIEM IS STILL GROWING AND THE TOPICS THAT ARE INCLUDED HERE STILL HAVE SOME DEVELOPMENT NEEDED. IN FACT, THERE IS NO SINGLE OR BEST WAY TO LEARN A PARTICULAR SKILL, AND THAT'S THE NEAT THING ABOUT THE CPIEM—IT WILL BE FOREVER GROWING AND CHANGING AS PEOPLE LIKE YOU SHARE NEW TOOLS, SKILLS, TESTIMONIES, ETC. IT'S OUR JOB TOGETHER TO MAKE SURE THAT THE CPIEM IS AS AWESOME AS POSSIBLE.

MMMMM—HMMMM. THAT'S GOOD.  
NOW, HOW DO I DROP MYSELF?

## Overview of Competencies

This section covers 7 Competencies, including:

1. Leadership
2. Communication
3. Organization
4. Assimilation/Collaboration
5. 5 Stages of Recovery
6. Problem Solving
7. Decision Making

They are not listed in any particular order. These are the seven competencies that the Committee prioritized as being important to begin with. As Mike and Meg mentioned above, this section will grow as many of you will contribute additional competencies, or add information to the existing ones.

If you plan to send something to CAFÉ TAC or AMPSS, be sure to follow the table format below:

Competency Name	Resources
<b>Tier 1</b>  Basic knowledge of the competency itself.	Description of the basic knowledge of the competency. Resources that present the basic knowledge.
<b>Tier 2</b>  Understanding of my current situation in relation to the basic knowledge.	Description of my current situation and how this competency is relevant to me. An example that illustrates the competency's relevance to your current situation.
<b>Tier 3</b>  I have identified tools that work for me to practice this competency.	Identify some tools that help develop the competency.
<b>Tier 4</b>  I have used the tools to practice this competency.	Description of your experience using the tools.
<b>Tier 5</b>  My proficiency with the competency positively affects other areas of my life.	Description of applying the competency to other parts of your life.

## Competency #1: Leadership Skills

Leadership Skills	
<p><b>Tier 1</b></p> <p>Basic knowledge of the competency itself.</p>	<p><b>10 Principles of Effective and Authentic Leadership</b> By Anush Kostanyan</p> <p>There is a great amount of definitions and theories about effective leadership. Each leader chooses their unique formula of success, but still there are keys to authentic leadership that can't be ignored. Below are 10 important principles each leader should know.</p> <p><b>1. Leadership Is Behavior, Not Position</b> Leaders are the ones who take responsibility for making decisions and bringing change. Leaders are the ones who empower people to discover and use their greatest potential. The executive position on someone's visit card won't do all of these. People are the ones to choose their leader. And how will they do that? They will judge by behavior, attitude and actions. If you want to be a leader, then act like a leader and shape a better reality.</p> <p><b>2. The Best Way of Influence Is Setting an Example</b> Each leader wants to get the best out of their team. Excellence orientation is great, as there is always need for development. But here is the simple truth. Instead of telling your team members what to do, show it to them by your own example. They are following you each and every moment. Practice what you preach, and the results will astonish you. Especially during hard times, when chances to give up are very big, you should be the one who faces obstacles with confidence and determination towards success. Be sure that they will do the same and stand by your side.</p> <p><b>3. Leading Means Making an Impact</b> Think about the greatest leaders in history. What was the one thing they had in common? Yes, they all made an impact. Leadership is not just setting goals and effectively achieving them with your team. Leadership is not just brilliant public speaking and great communication skills. If you want to be an authentic leader, you should have your unique contribution to the welfare of the society. You should make a positive change.</p> <p><b>4. Leadership is Chasing Vision, Not Money</b> Without a vision, your activities are meaningless. Each person can be very busy implementing various tasks, but the key is devoting your efforts and time to the realization of your vision. Vision is what inspires people to take action and go forward. Discover your unique vision and coordinate all your activities towards it. Inspire each and every member of your team with that vision.</p>

## Leadership Skills

### **5. Actions Speak Louder Than Words**

It's not a secret that much talking and less acting has nothing to do with effectiveness. What people see affects them many times greater than what they hear. So, choose actions. Don't waste your and other people's time on endless conversations about your plans. Just realize those plans and be sure that everyone will see it.

### **6. Flexibility May Refer to Behavior, Not Values**

Depending on circumstances you may choose a different style of leadership or communication. Flexibility is a truly effective trait, if it doesn't affect your values. Each and every decision of yours, no matter the situation, must be based on your value system. As long as your actions are value-driven, you will have the trust and respect of people around you.

### **7. Leadership is All About People**

Could you be a leader in an empty room by having profound goals and skills? Of course not. Leading means communicating, influencing and engaging. Communication skills are the foundation of effective leadership. Constantly improve your relationships with people, and the amazing results won't make you wait.

### **8. It Is Fine To Admit Mistakes**

If everything has always been done perfectly, we would have somehow lost the ability to analyze and improve. Mistakes are proof that you are doing something. You won't become a worse leader if you admit your mistakes. By doing that, you will show that you are wise enough to learn from your each and every experience.

### **9. Unity Is Strength**

Team is somehow the most important resource for each leader. Embrace your team and devote your energy to care about its unity each and every day. As long as your team is splendid, nothing can stand in your way to success. Make sure that all people in your team consider themselves as members of a strong, unified family.

### **10. There Is Always Room for Growth**

Remember, satisfaction should be a short-term feeling. Life would become useless without ongoing improvement. This doesn't mean that you shouldn't appreciate what you have. This means that you should be thankful for everything you have achieved, but still try to do a little more for this world.



## Leadership Skills

### Tier 2

How do I know when to lead, or whether or not I've got what it takes to be the leader?

Most people don't walk around proclaiming that they are the leader. There are many tools online that can help you assess whether or not you're ready to lead in your situation. The following article highlights this topic from the angle of identifying 5 signs that a person demonstrates to signify they are a leader. So, when people think of you, do they see these signs?

#### **Leadership Skills? Look for These 5 Signs**

By Marcel Schwantes

Sometimes the only way you'll truly know whether a leader's skills are genuine is to measure the manager that made your life miserable against the one that had you thinking often, "This is too good to be true."

If you think your boss is some freak of nature and you're the luckiest person alive, I'll break it to you gently: He or she is most likely the kind of leader who demonstrates best-in-class behaviors identified in the research of those leading the most profitable companies on the planet.

They are often referred to as servant leaders, conscious leaders, authentic leaders, or transformational leaders. Whatever you call them, one thing is for sure: their helm releases discretionary effort across an organization. That's good for business.

What I have witnessed in the past ten years in my own practice developing servant leaders is that such leaders shine the spotlight on other people. They don't want the attention, and they share their power and status to benefit the people under their care.

The secret comes down to three words: People over profit. And when that happens, companies will actually make more profit. Imagine that.

To get practical, let's dive into the most prevalent leadership behaviors of such leaders. While there are countless leadership practices that lead to great outcomes, for this discussion, I'll narrow it down to five:

#### **1. They spread joy and drive fear away.**

Let me ask you an honest question: Do you look forward to going to work when you get up on a Monday morning? Do you look forward to interacting with your colleagues? Do you feel appreciated by your boss because he/she takes care of you?

## Leadership Skills

If you're nodding your head yes, you probably experience joy. Congratulations! Joy is an emotion evoked by well-being and success that's experienced by every employee in healthy cultures under great leaders.

It's the feeling you get in a highly collaborative environment where people respect one another, where there's real teamwork among colleagues who encourage each other, where co-workers share the same values, and there's constant synergy in the air. Next thing you know, you look up, it's 5:30 p.m., and the place is still buzzing with energy and excitement, and people find it hard to pull away and go home. This is joy!

And leaders create the environment for this to happen.

### **2. They provide employees with meaning, purpose and a sense of belonging.**

In Give and Take, Adam Grant says when a person finds purpose in their work, it will not only improve that person's happiness, it will boost productivity.

Give the people what they want – purpose. One way to do it, according to Grant, is to give employees the chance to connect with and meet the people they are serving.

In research cited by Grant, three groups of employees in a university fundraising call center were tasked to call donors to ask for contributions. One of the groups read personal stories from scholarship recipients, about how those scholarships had changed their lives. Turns out that group increased their fundraising by 143 percent versus the other groups who just made calls as part of their duties.

Grant takes it a step further: When these same fundraisers were given the opportunity to meet a scholarship recipient and ask them questions for as little as five minutes, their fundraising went up by more than 400 percent!

Grant's conclusion? Having employees meet the people they are helping is the greatest motivator, even if it's limited to a few minutes.

Employers have a competitive edge when they can give their people access to customers, so they can see firsthand the human impact their work makes.

This is about having work that brings with it meaning, every day. When employees feel they are making a difference in the world through the work they do – whether they're designing apps or laying down asphalt – it increases their motivation to perform.

### **3. They foster a learning spirit within the organization.**

People development is not a separate retention activity enforced by HR. It's ingrained in the mindset of servant leaders. Obviously, this is good business strategy, as it will increase team performance.

## Leadership Skills

But beyond that, developing people is a goal of leadership in and of itself. It's a way of being. And this is how great leaders do it:

- They identify their employees' gifts, talents, strengths, and personality types for the best job fit, so they can reach their potential.
- They champion a learning spirit within the organization, sending a clear message that "growing our people is one of our highest priorities."
- They provide ongoing training, coaching, and mentoring opportunities that are aligned with job purpose, performance measures, and fulfilling the organizational mission.

### **4. They build trust that leads to business outcomes.**

Let's face it, if you are considering developing leaders, trust is a pillar your company's leadership should stand on.

In his book *The Speed of Trust*, Stephen M. R. Covey highlights leadership trusting behaviors that are culturally ingrained in the structures of companies known for high employee engagement, including Whole Foods, Campbell Soup, and Semco.

Among those trusted behaviors are:

- Practicing accountability
- Creating transparency
- Confronting reality
- Clarifying expectations
- Listening first

This is how their leadership teams and employees interact day-to-day. Imagine the possibilities of leveraging such behaviors to increase trust across the board. Employee performance ratings go up, and as a result, your customers will notice a difference.

### **5. They are open and transparent in how they communicate.**

A clear example of this practice is modeled by Melissa Reiff, the CEO of The Container Store, which is ranked No. 49 on Fortune's annual list of "100 Best Companies to Work For."

Reiff personally crafted the organizational principle of "Communication IS Leadership," which is defined as the "daily execution of practicing consistent, reliable, predictable, effective, thoughtful, compassionate, and yes, even courteous communication."

In its purest form, the culture of The Container Store strives for every employee to know absolutely everything. While this can be a daunting undertaking for any company, The Container Store firmly acknowledges the power behind this principle on its website, which states "nothing makes someone feel more a part of a team than knowing everything has been communicated to them. We know that some information we share could fall into competitors' hands, but the advantages far outweigh the risks."

## Leadership Skills

Tier 3

I have identified tools that work for me to practice this competency.

The following article is from the Center for Management and Organization Effectiveness.

### **7 Amazing Tools Everyone In Leadership Should Be Using**

Have you ever tried to complete a task and it doesn't turn out quite the way you planned? Did you realize that maybe you just didn't have the right skills or use the correct tool for the job?

This situation can happen in business as well. A leader may have great intentions, but may not have the skills and tools they need to anticipate and manage challenges or realize successful outcomes. Having the right tools in your leadership toolbox allows you to accomplish your goals. We've compiled a list of 8 skills and tools every leader should have in their toolbox to effectively handle any situation that may arise.

#### **1) Strategic Thinking**

Chess players know that, in order to win, they must outsmart their opponent by thinking several moves ahead. A chess player has to see where they want to move and anticipate where their opponent is going to move well in advance of taking action. This ability to think strategically is a skill that Peer Supporters and Peers alike need to have as well.

By thinking strategically, you can effectively plan ahead and identify how you will respond to a variety of situations including movements in your team, rising concerns, opportunities for advancement, or new competitors entering the market. While every leader is different, there are some that will always benefit Peers.

#### **2) Decision Making Skills**

We make decisions every day. Situations that require a decision, both big and small, can seem to creep up on us or can come at us, fast and furious. Sometimes, the decision is small and has no major impact on our daily lives. Other decisions are major and will not only impact our lives but the lives of our employees as well. Experts suggest that utilizing some simple apps could help improve your decision making skills. Apps like Lumosity or Fit Brains Trainer are like a gym for your brain. These exercises allow you to work your mental muscles and keep your mind sharp. You may also consider adding other physical activities like dancing and getting a good night's sleep to improve this important skill.

## Leadership Skills

### 3) Conflict Resolution Skills

Conflict is a natural part of any relationship, working or personal. Resolving conflict is a learned skill and one that can be taught, developed, and refined. A study by Purdue University found that students who have hands-on learning experiences gain a deeper understanding of the concepts that are being taught. Attending a conflict resolution workshop can provide you with the experience in a controlled environment so that you can better handle difficult and uncomfortable situations, and work towards a positive resolution.

### 4) Team Building Activities

Seventy-five percent of employees rate teamwork and collaboration as very important. Yet, 86 percent of employees and executives blamed a lack of collaboration or ineffective communication as the reason for workplace failings. A good leader recognizes that they are only as good as the people that surround them. Instituting teambuilding activities allows teams time to bond together as well as provides an opportunity for them to decompress from their jobs for a few minutes.

### 5) Delegation Skills

One of the key tools a leader can use to increase efficiency and develop others is delegation. Delegating your responsibilities doesn't just benefit you by allowing you to complete other, critical tasks, it also allows your team to grow. When you delegate responsibly, you have more time to focus elsewhere and your team has the opportunity to learn new skills and take on new responsibilities. It also allows you to see how different team members respond when faced with a new task.

### 6) Mentorship Programs

Have you ever been faced with a new project and you went to Google or YouTube to learn how to do it? Don't you wish you had that direct of a resource for solving business problems? Many organizations recognize this need and have implemented mentorship programs to support new or rising employees. A mentorship program can help identify and groom high-potentials for management positions. It also provides employees with a sounding board for problem-solving, instantly gives them a friendly face around the office, and has been shown to increase job performance.

### 7) Innovation

"If you're not evolving, you're dying" – Marcus Lemonis

## Leadership Skills

That statement holds truer today than ever before. The ability to lead innovation and create change is what allows a company to thrive. Apple is known for its innovation and it has changed the world because of its consistent drive toward making new, improved, and unique products.

Often times, people believe innovation happens when you are just sitting around waiting for inspiration to hit you and then taking action. In reality, innovation is a process of brainstorming, collaboration, and trial and error. Much like conflict resolution, you can refine and learn the skills to be innovative. It's a conscious decision that requires discipline and dedication to master.

In addition to the above article, the following link will take you to a site where you can explore and develop your leadership skills:

[www.mindtools.com/pages/main/newMN\\_LDR.htm](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/main/newMN_LDR.htm)

### Tier 4

I have used the tools to practice this competency.

**UPON FIRST PUBLICATION, WE DON'T HAVE ANY TESTIMONIES FOR THIS COMPETENCY, YET. SO I THOUGHT I'D SHARE AN EXAMPLE OF MY OWN.**

**I REALLY LIKE THAT STATEMENT ABOUT IF YOU'RE NOT EVOLVING, YOU'RE DYING. IT'S PRETTY DRAMATIC, AND NOT LITERAL, AND THAT'S WHAT I LIKE ABOUT IT. I TOOK THE STRENGTHSFINDER TEST TO LEARN MY STRENGTHS SO I COULD BE A LEADER WITHIN THOSE STRENGTH AREAS. THAT'S A WAY TO EVOLVE MYSELF AND MY LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL.**

**IT TURNS OUT THAT I'M A GOOD COMMUNICATOR. GO FIGURE. SO, WHEN THERE'S A NEED FOR GOOD COMMUNICATION, I TRY TO STEP FORWARD AND PROVIDE SOME LEADERSHIP WITH THAT SKILL.**

**I BET YOU COULD DO THAT . . . USE WHAT YOU LEARNED ABOUT YOURSELF IN MODULE 1 AND PROVIDE LEADERSHIP WITHIN AREAS WHERE YOU HAVE A LOT OF SKILL AND TALENT.**

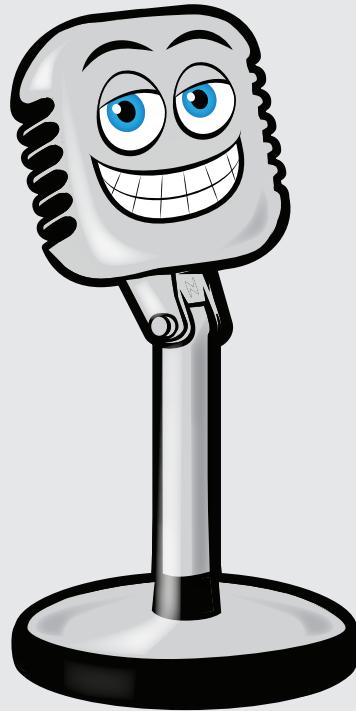




## Leadership Skills

### Tier 5

My proficiency with the competency positively affects other areas of my life.



IT'S ME, AGAIN... MIKE. SAME AS BEFORE—SO I WILL SAY A LITTLE ABOUT MY EXPERIENCE REGARDING HOW MY LEADERSHIP SKILLS IN ONE AREA AFFECTED MY BROADER AREAS OF LIFE.

I MENTIONED I WAS A GOOD COMMUNICATOR. I FOCUSED ON STANDUP COMEDY. I WAS IN NIGHTCLUBS AND HELPING COMEDIANS AND COMEDIENNES RISE TO STARDOM. YOU SHOULD HAVE HEARD MY QUALITY. MAN, I WAS GOOD. AND THE FIRST TIME BRIAN REGAN DESCRIBED THE SPELLING BEE WAS THROUGH ME TO THE AUDIENCE. HE'S A VISUAL PERFORMER (IF YOU'VE NEVER SEEN HIM), BUT HIS TONE HAS TO BE JUST RIGHT, AND MY MIC QUALITY WAS PERFECT FOR HIM. HE THANKED ME AFTERWARD. IT WAS PRETTY COOL.

BUT IT GOT ME THINKING: WHAT IF I BROUGHT MY COMMUNICATION SKILL AND LEADERSHIP ABILITY AS A COMMUNICATOR TO OTHER AREAS? SO I GOT INTO ROCK CONCERTS, AND POLITICAL SPEECHES, ETC. I'VE HAD SOME FAMOUS VOICES PASS THROUGH ME AND IMPACT THEIR AUDIENCES IN A SPECIAL WAY.

IT MIGHT NOT BE THE TYPE OF LEADERSHIP YOU'RE THINKING OF... YOU KNOW, LIKE BEING THE CEO OF SOME FANCY COMPANY AND MAKING A LOT OF MONEY. BUT LEADERSHIP ISN'T ALWAYS ABOUT BEING ON TOP. I HOPE YOU GOT THAT OUT OF THE ARTICLES.

I HOPE YOU CAN LEARN TO TAKE THE SKILLS YOU'RE REALLY GOOD AT, AND APPLY THEM IN DIFFERENT WAYS.

## Competency #2: Communication Skills

Communication Skills	
<p><b>Tier 1</b></p> <p>Basic knowledge of communication skills.</p>	<p>Found on the MindValleyBlog, here are three important communication skills to focus on, particularly related to sharing your Voice.</p> <p><b>3 Effective Communication Skills for Personal Growth &amp; Empowerment</b></p> <p>Being aware of bad communication habits to avoid is beneficial, but so too is taking the time and effort to cultivate newer, better communication habits for the future.</p> <p>If you find yourself struggling to converse with others, or have difficulty voicing your opinion, don't worry. Add a few of these positive habits to your repertoire and you'll be well on your way to confident, productive communication in no time!</p> <p>Here are 3 effective communication skills to work on:</p> <p><b>1. Be Aware of Your Body</b></p> <p>Did you know that most experts in the field agree that more than half of what you're saying isn't coming from your mouth?</p> <p>That's right. Body language accounts for a staggering percentage of our communication, and most of the time, we're not aware of the messages we're sending.</p> <p>Your body, your posture, and your facial expressions all play a role in the way you communicate. So, to begin mastering the first of these effective communication skills, you'll need to become more aware of your body, and how you occupy the space you're in when you communicate with others.</p> <p>Can body language contradict our vocal communication? Absolutely, it can. And that's how miscommunications occur.</p> <p><b>Here are some examples of common body language signals and what they communicate:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crossed or folded arms – Defensiveness, insecurity</li> <li>• Hands clasped behind the body – Authority, confidence</li> <li>• Adjusting clothes, watch, jewelry – Nervousness</li> <li>• Finger pointing – Aggression</li> <li>• Clenched fists – Anger, resolve, anxiety</li> <li>• Clasp or squeezing hands – Self-soothing</li> <li>• Hands on the hips – Authority, assertiveness</li> </ul>

## Communication Skills

Without realizing it, we're telling a story with our bodies. The next time you're speaking to another person, perform a quick body scan to find out how your body is positioned.

Are you closed off? Are your arms folded? Or do you have a relaxed, open posture, with your arms at ease by your sides?

Be aware of the power of body language and the role it plays in effective communication.

### 2. Active Listening

Have you ever had a conversation with someone in which you could later barely recall what it is they said to you? Were you perhaps too busy thinking about what you were about to say next, rather than actually listening?

Many of us are guilty of this one. Sometimes it stems from an inherent attitude of competition instilled in us at a young age. Other times, it's merely a symptom of feeling unheard or undervalued.

Some of us even go so far as to interrupt what others are saying in mid-sentence, just to interject our own thoughts and opinions.

We have to learn to practice active listening to be better communicators. This is but one of many effective communication skills, but could be one of the most important.

Active listening means being fully present and aware of what the speaker is attempting to impart. It means offering the speaker your full and undivided attention. That means no cell phones, no laptop screens, no half hearted listening over your shoulder as you poke through the fridge looking for leftovers.

We demonstrate active listening by making eye contact with the speaker. We nod our heads to affirm that we're paying attention. We may even interject a periodic "mmhmm" and "yes" to encourage the speaker onward.

Of course, active listening isn't always possible. Sometimes we're in a rush and need to do several things at once, so having a conversation with our partner while we do the dishes becomes a necessity.

When you can, try to practice active listening. Effective communication skills aren't just about cultivating a powerful message. They're also about being a careful and considerate listener.

## Communication Skills

### 3. Deliver With Confidence

Many people have a fear of public speaking. It's not easy to get up and speak in front of those you don't know well. Sometimes, it's even more challenging to get up and speak in front of those you do know well!

If you want to make your voice heard, you'll need to cultivate a strong and confident delivery.

Becoming a more confident speaker takes time and practice. It's a skill that must be curated over time, so don't expect too much from yourself right off the bat. Be patient, be kind to yourself, and work at it, bit by bit, day by day.

#### Do's and don'ts of confident communication:

- Don't speak before you think. Take time to decide what you'd like to say.
- Don't ramble. The key to confident communication is to be succinct.
- Don't yell. Bold communication is about much more than simply raising the volume of your voice. You want to be clear and concise, but you don't need to be loud.
- Do slow down. One tip-off of nervous communication is high pitched, quick pace speech. Take a deep breath. Slow down. Take your time.
- Do stay present. One way we trip ourselves up when speaking is trying to conjure up what we're going to say next. Trust in yourself. Trust that the words will come. You can only say one thing at a time. Stay present.
- Do be aware of your body. Confidence is about much more than just your voice. Your body language says a lot too. Relax your shoulders, ease your jaw, stand tall, and take a deep breath. When you're ready, begin to speak.

### Tier 2

Do I have a good assessment of my communication style and skills?

### Which Of These 4 Communication Styles Are You?

By Mark Murphy, Forbes Contributor.

What's your communication style? You have a particular style of communicating, of course, but do you know what it is, including its strengths and weaknesses, and how it compares to the styles of others? Over the past two decades of research, my team and I have found that there are four fundamental communication styles: Analytical, Intuitive, Functional and Personal.

No one communication style is inherently better than another. But picking the wrong style for a particular audience, whether it's one person or a thousand, shuts down listening and can spell trouble. Learning to build flexibility around your preferred style allows others to more successfully hear the important things you need to communicate. (There's a free communication styles assessment to assess your preferred style.)

## Communication Skills

One major philosophical difference that separates the four communication styles is the extent to which you communicate with emotions or with data. For example, would you say something like ‘I feel like we’re off to a good start this quarter’ (emotions). Or would you say ‘this quarter sales are up by 7. 2%’ (data).

Another major philosophical difference is the extent to which you communicate in a linear way (e. g. do you like to start with A then B then C then D, all the way to Z) or in a freeform way (e. g. do you like to skip over most of the details and jump right to Z).

Of course, there’s a lot more to the four communication styles than just these two philosophical differences. But as a starting point, these are emblematic of the myriad ways that we like to communicate.

Here are descriptions of each of the four communication styles (Analytical, Intuitive, Functional and Personal). See which style you think resonates with you, and take the communication styles assessment to corroborate your intuition.



### The Analytical Communicator

As an Analytical communicator, you like hard data, real numbers, and you tend to be suspicious of people who aren’t in command of the facts and data. You typically like very specific language and dislike vague language. For example, when someone tells you ‘sales are positive’ you’re likely to think ‘what does positive mean? 5. 2% or 8. 9%? Give me a number!’ And those with an Analytical communication style often have little patience for lots of feeling and emotional words in communication.

One big plus of having an Analytical communication style is that because you like communication to be fairly unemotional, you’re often able to look at issues logically and dispassionately. This means others tend to see you as having high-levels of data and informational expertise.

The potential downside of having an Analytical communication style is that you may strike certain people as being cold or unfeeling. For example, when interacting with people like Personal communicators (who tend to like warm and chatty personal relationships), it’s possible for Analytical communicators to get irritated and terse. This sometimes has negative political and relational consequences.

## Communication Skills

### The Intuitive Communicator

As an Intuitive communicator, you like the big picture, you avoid getting bogged down in details, and you cut right to the chase. You don't need to hear things in perfect linear order but prefer instead a broad overview that lets you easily skip right to the end point. For example, some people, like Functional communicators, will tell you things step-by-step (they start with A, then go to B, then C, then D, then E, etc.). But this can drive you nuts; you'd rather jump right to Z.

One big plus of having an Intuitive communication style is that your communication is quick and to the point. You don't get stalled by needing too many details, and you're comfortable with big ideas and out-of-the-box thinking. Because you're good with thinking big, you can also enjoy challenging convention.

The potential downside of having an Intuitive communication style is that you may not always have enough patience when you're in a situation that actually requires getting into nitty-gritty detail (and you may risk missing an important point). Typically, Intuitive communicators have the most difficulty dealing with Functional communicators (those are the 'process-driven' people, they're very methodical, walk through things step-by-step, and like nitty-gritty detail).

### The Functional Communicator

As a Functional communicator, you like process, detail, timelines and well-thought-out plans. You like to communicate things in a step-by-step fashion so nothing gets missed. By contrast, there are some people, like the Intuitive communicators, who like to skip all the detail and just jump right to the end. But this can drive you nuts; especially when you think about all the important bits of information the Intuitive person is potentially missing.

One big plus of having a Functional communication style is that your communication generally hits all the details and nothing gets missed. When you're on a team, people will often turn to you to be the implementer, because they have confidence in your love of process and detail. And because you're focused on things like process and detail, you're the person who is typically asked to play Devil's Advocate.

The potential downside of having a Functional communication style is that you may risk losing the attention of your audience, especially when you're talking to Intuitive communicators (those are the 'big picture' people who skip to the end and don't get bogged down in too much detail).



## Communication Skills

### The Personal Communicator

As a Personal communicator, you value emotional language and connection, and use that as your mode of discovering what others are really thinking. You find value in assessing not just how people think, but how they feel. You tend to be a good listener and diplomat, you can smooth over conflicts, and you're typically concerned with the health of your numerous relationships.

One big plus of having a Personal communication style is that your communication allows you to build deep personal relationships with others. People will often turn to you as the 'glue' that holds groups together. And you're typically able to pick-up 'vibes' that others may miss because you're attuned to the emotional aspect of communication.

The potential downside of having a Personal communication style is that you may occasionally be derided as 'touchy-feely.' For example, when dealing with Analytical communicators (people who like data, hard numbers, logical discussions, and dislike that 'warm-and-fuzzy' stuff), it's possible for Personal communicators to become exasperated and emotionally upset.

### Conclusion

So, what's your communication style? As I said at the beginning, one style isn't better than another. The key is to first understand your own particular communication style so you can match your communication style to that of your audience. Whether you're speaking with your boss, a small sales meeting, your employees or an audience of thousands, matching your communication styles to the folks you need to hear your words is an essential step to effective communication.

Below is a link to a page that offers an excellent assessment of your communication skills. Just by reading the questions you'll improve your understanding of what it means to be a good communicator.

[https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newCS\\_99.htm](https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newCS_99.htm)

Another option is the communication skills assessment at this link:

<https://www.activia.co.uk/communication-skills-test>

## Communication Skills

### Tier 3

I have identified tools that work for me to practice this competency.

The following is an article that offers a brief description and summary of 10 ways to improve your communication skills. Of course there are many additional tools and exercises you can use... just Google the tools and get crackin'!

#### **Top 10 Ways to Improve Your Communication Skills**

By Melanie Pinola via LifeHacker

Effective communication is one of the most important life skills we can learn—yet one we don't usually put a lot of effort into. Whether you want to have better conversations in your social life or get your ideas across better at work, here are some essential tips for learning to communicate more effectively.

#### **10. Watch Your Body Language**

You tell your partner you're open to discussion but your arms are crossed; say you're listening but haven't looked up from your phone yet. Our non-verbal and non-written cues often reveal more than we think they do. Whether it's how you make eye contact or how you hold yourself during a video interview, don't forget that you're constantly communicating even when you're not saying a word. One strange way to tap into your body for better communication? Think about your toes. Or adopt a power pose if you need to boost your confidence before a big talk. Or learn how to read other people's body language so you can respond appropriately.

#### **9. Get Rid of Unnecessary Conversation Fillers**

Um's and ah's do little to improve your speech or everyday conversations. Cut them out to be more persuasive and feel or appear more confident. One way is to start keeping track of when you say words like "um" or "like." You could also try taking your hands out of your pockets or simply relaxing and pausing before you speak. Those silences seem more awkward to you than they do to others, trust us.

#### **8. Have a Script for Small Talk and Other Occasions**

Small talk is an art that not many people have mastered. For the inevitable, awkward silences with people you hardly know, it helps to have a plan. The FORD (family, occupation, recreation, dreams) method might help you come up with topics to discuss, and you can also turn small talk into conversation by sharing information that could help you and the other person find common ground. Hey, all that small talk could make you happier in the long run.

## Communication Skills

### 7. Tell a Story

Stories are powerful. They activate our brains, make presentations suck less, make us more persuasive, and can even help us ace interviews. Learn the secrets of becoming a phenomenal storyteller with these rules from Pixar or by simply using the word “but” more to structure your narrative. Everyone’s got at least one great story in them.

### 6. Ask Questions and Repeat the Other Person

Let’s face it, we’ve all drifted off when someone else was talking or misheard the other person. Asking questions and repeating the other person’s last few words shows you’re interested in what they say, keeps you on your toes, and helps clarify points that could be misunderstood (e.g., “So to recap, you’re going to buy the tickets for Saturday?”).

It also helps for small talk and to fill in awkward silences. Instead of trying to stir up conversation on mundane topics like the weather, ask the other person questions (e.g., “Got any plans for the summer?” or “What are you reading lately?”) and engage in their answers. It’s more important to be interested than to be interesting.

### 5. Put Away the Distractions

It’s pretty rude to use your phone while someone’s talking to you or you’re supposed to be hanging out with them. Maybe we can’t get rid of all our distractions or put away technology completely, but just taking the time to look up could vastly improve our communication with each other.

### 4. Tailor Your Message to Your Audience

The best communicators adjust how they talk based on whom they’re speaking to; you’d probably use a different style of communication with co-workers or your boss compared to when you’re speaking with your significant other, kids, or elders. Always try to keep the other person’s perspective in mind when you try to get your message across.

### 3. Be Brief Yet Specific

There’s actually a BRIEF acronym—Background, Reason, Information, End, Follow-up—to help you keep your emails short without leaving anything out. It’s a good policy for both written and verbal communication (I’ve always felt that my job as a writer was to clearly get the point across and then get off the page as soon as possible. Just two more items on this list! ) Clear and concise are two of the 7 Cs of communication, along with concrete, correct, coherent, complete, and courteous.

## Communication Skills

### 2. Up Your Empathy

Communication is a two-way street. If you practice taking the opposing viewpoint, you can reduce the difficulty and anxiety that sometimes arises when trying to truly communicate with others. (For example, knowing what your significant other really means when she says she's too tired to talk.) Developing empathy helps you better understand even the unspoken parts of your communication with others, and helps you respond more effectively.

#### 1. Listen, *Really* Listen

Finally, going hand-in-hand with most of the points above, the best thing you can do to improve your communication skills is to learn to really listen—to pay attention and let the other person talk without interrupting. It's hard work, we know, but "A good conversation is a bunch of words elegantly connected with listening." Then, even if your communication styles don't match, at least you're both working off the same page. And hopefully the other person will be attentively listening to you too.

#### Tier 4

I have used the tools to practice this competency.

**I TOOK ONE OF THOSE ASSESSMENTS... IT TOLD ME THAT I'M A SUPPORTIVE COMMUNICATOR. THAT FITS WELL WITH MY ROLE AND MY UNDERSTANDING OF MYSELF. THE ASSESSMENT HELPED ME PRACTICE MY COMMUNICATION SKILLS, TOO, AND I LEARNED THAT I COULD DO A MUCH BETTER JOB KEEPING AN EYE ON MY VOLUME.**

**IT ALSO TELLS ME THAT I WILL BE MORE EFFECTIVE WHEN I COMMUNICATE IF I KEEP IN MIND THAT I AM SUPPORTIVE, AND IF I LOOK FOR PEOPLE WHO NEED SUPPORT WHEN THE COMMUNICATION IS CHALLENGING.**



#### Tier 5

My proficiency with the competency positively affects other areas of my life.

**THE BETTER I BECOME WITH MY COMMUNICATION SKILLS, THE MORE ABLE I AM TO INTERACT WITH PEOPLE IN DIFFERENT SETTINGS OR SITUATIONS.**

**FOR EXAMPLE, YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN ME AT THE FOOTBALL GAME HELPING OUR FANS OUT-CHEER THE OTHER TEAM'S FANS. I WAS ABLE TO ENHANCE THE CHEERLEADER'S VOICE AS HE GRABBED ME TIGHTLY AND SCREAMED THROUGH ME. SO EXHILARATING!**

## Competency #3: Organizational Skills

### Organizational Skills

#### Tier 1

I know the basic principles of being organized.

This article offers an excellent overview of basic organizational skills that will serve you well in both your personal and work life.

#### 6 Organizational Skills of Effective People

by Scott Hirschfeld

**In business, we often hear or maybe even state that we are looking for excellent organizational skills. We see this in a job ad, or we might wish that a current team member had better organizational skills. Do we really know what we are asking for?**

I was considering this just last week as I worked through quarterly reviews and as I interviewed candidates for a sales position. I had to ask myself, "What are the skills I want people to have when I ask for this?" If someone could hit a home run in with organizational skills, what would that look like? I identified

#### 6 Organizational Skills of Effective People:

1. **Taking Notes** – I am always surprised when someone applying for a job shows up with nothing in hand or when a team member shows up to a meeting without paper or electronic note taking capability. It doesn't make someone unemployable, but it does give me insight into their level of preparation and experience. What are important skills in taking notes? First, come prepared to take some. Next take notes in a way that exhibits some continuity. Don't just show up with a blank page, keep some history and know what was discussed in our last meeting. If using paper this usually means a notebook or diary that holds notes from previous meetings. If using a tablet, Evernote or one of the other note taking apps provide easy history.
2. **Making Lists** – Keeping lists is an essential part of prioritization and getting things done. What is next? Check out your list. I prefer to use a Top 5 list with my most important 5 things to get done for the day on that list. I then keep another list of things that will move to the top 5 in future days. Lists are also an essential outcome of a good meeting. The list should contain action items agreed to by each person in the meeting with a goal for completion.

I AM *SO* GOOD AT THESE.



## Organizational Skills

3. **Keeping a Schedule** – Everyone keeps a schedule of some sort, but often the schedule just includes meetings with other people. Someone with good organizational skills schedules their own time as well. They are good at moving unscheduled “to do” type items to scheduled actions. By date activating things, they have a better chance of moving them to completion. Another scheduling skill is to set a default calendar. For instance, on Mondays between 8: 00 and 11: 00 is my start of week planning time. It is in my schedule or it would never happen. Something more urgent or more interesting could take over, but without a schedule I would never have Monday AM planning time. I find the default calendar especially helpful for salespeople. Following the “eat that frog” concept, it is important to get cold calling and lead generation on the schedule as a priority so that it actually happens before everything else takes over.
4. **Delegating Tasks** – The temptation in thinking about delegation is to think that it is a skill that is only required by a manager. And yet, we all delegate at times by simply asking someone to help us with a task. Even if our opportunities to delegate are rare, understanding delegation will help us manage the way that others delegate to us, increasing our chance of success. Someone with good organization skills will know how to clearly define each task, set a timeframe, define the level of authority, set checkpoints, debrief, and validate for understanding. If you want to brush up on your delegation skills, check out the excellent short book on delegation, “If you want it done right, you don’t have to do it yourself” by Donna Genett.
5. **Prioritizing the Important** – It is so easy to get caught up in the urgent and become entirely reactive as we go through our day. Some of us have jobs that are mostly based on being reactive. However, even in these types of positions, finding a way to carve out time to learn, think, and plan is essential. This seems like such a simple concept, but it is one of the hardest things to do. Being reactive is just easier. We get into a mode where we just handle whatever faces us and appears to be urgent, whether it is truly a priority or not. By contrast, someone with good organization skills will plan that time to do the important but not necessarily urgent. It may be before or after the start of the work day, or carved out in the middle, but time to learn, think, and plan is part of their schedule.
6. **Setting Goals** – A number of years ago, we began to set quarterly goals or “Rocks” each quarter as a business and with each of our team members. This was a completely new discipline for us, and it has created a great deal of change and progress in our company. We don’t always make the goals we set in the timeframe we choose, but we progress them forward. And, everyone on our team is learning to set and achieve goals. We have lots of discussions on how to make a goal SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timely). Setting goals is essential to be effective. Someone with strong organization skills will have a discipline for setting goals and achieving them.



Organizational Skills	
	<p>The interesting thing to me in identifying these skills is that they can be learned. They take study and devotion to get better, but they are something everyone can learn, develop, and grow. So the next time someone asks about your organizational skills make sure you can tell them you take notes, keep lists, have a default calendar, are good at giving and receiving delegation, carve out regular planning time, and set goals like a pro.</p>
<p><b>Tier 2</b></p> <p>I understand what needs to be organized in my situation.</p>	<p>Every person's situation is different. By reading the following three categories of organization skills, you can begin to identify the types of activities you're involved in and that need to be organized.</p> <p><b>Time Management Skills</b></p> <p>The point of a deadline is to keep tasks, deliverables, and projects under control so that business operations can flow smoothly. In retail or restaurant jobs, time management is crucial for serving customers promptly and keeping them pacified even when it is busy. Time management is an important skill employers look for because without it, a business can lose clients, miss goals, fail in efficiency, or miss important time-specific opportunities. Time management requires a good sense of work gauge so that you can correctly allot the time needed for a task. But it's not just about scheduling. Good time management also requires discipline, quick thinking, knowing how and when to delegate, and knowing when to use strategies for dealing with procrastination, distraction, and even unplanned events.</p> <p>A person with great time management skills can adapt to new problems and readjust as needed to complete an assignment. This combination of planning, scheduling, strategy, delegation, and adaptability are the kinds of traits that make an employee dependable, and employers look out for that. How do you list these types of skills on your resume? Here are some organizational skills example buzzwords and terms related to time management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating and keeping deadlines</li> <li>• Delegation</li> <li>• Goal setting and meeting goals</li> <li>• Decision making</li> <li>• Managing appointments</li> <li>• Team management</li> <li>• Project management</li> <li>• Making schedules</li> <li>• Coordinating events</li> <li>• Problem solving</li> <li>• Productivity</li> <li>• Teamwork</li> <li>• Team leadership</li> <li>• Multitasking</li> <li>• Strategic thinking</li> <li>• Implementing strategy</li> </ul>

## Organizational Skills

### Mental organizational Skills

Many jobs demand strong focus, concentration, clear, coherent thinking, and good memory - all traits of a mentally adept and alert person. Mental organization skills allow you to process information quickly, translate thoughts to clear and articulate communication, and focus on fine details correctly. Mental organization can also apply to the way you use tools and strategies to aid mental tasks.

Keeping a special notebook on your desk is a useful strategy for storing spontaneous information that might otherwise escape your mind later on. You can jot down notes, inspirations, ideas, or things to remember. It's a relatively simple technique, but it's a productivity technique nonetheless; not everyone knows how to capitalize on small resources to increase productivity. Experience working with a scheduler or calendar are other examples of mental organizing. Working with databases is an example of an activity that requires the keen focus of an organized mind. Here are some examples of organizational skills related to mental efficiency:

- Analysis
- Assessment and evaluation
- Listening skills
- Communication
- Creative thinking
- Working with data
- Design
- Taking notes
- Documentation
- Identifying problems
- Conflict resolution
- Multitasking
- Developing strategies
- Developmental planning
- Public speaking
- Reviewing, reporting, and research
- Attention to detail
- Making presentations

## Organizational Skills

### Physical organization Skills

Keeping your work space - whether that's your desk, restaurant kitchen, or desktop computer - neat and functional is another important organizational skill. Clutter all over your desk spells coming trouble. It's just a matter of time before items get misplaced, lost, or accidentally damaged. Examples of physical organization skills are keeping track of items as they're used, returning items to their places after use, and creating and developing sensible strategies and physical solutions for facilitating work flow, cleanliness, and efficiency in a work space. Skills you could put on your resume that show physical organization include:

- Filing
- Record keeping
- Office solutions
- Office management
- Resource management
- Stock inventory
- Multitasking
- Responsibility for office materials and equipment
- Office maintenance
- Coordinating and executing events

When you take the time to think about what needs to be organized, then you'll be able to organize it!

### Tier 3

I have identified tools that will help me to be organized.

The following is an article with 5 great tips for getting more organized.

Even if your personal life is perfectly organized, it isn't always easy to transfer those skills to your work life. Whether you're an entrepreneur, a freelancer, or an employee, being organized at work is a key to efficiency, time-saving, and deadline meeting.

The better organized you are, the simpler your job will be to do. If your organizational skills are currently pretty pathetic, these five tips will help you get going today:

#### 1. Start with pen and paper

There are a million digital tools in the world that help people manage their work lives. If you have one you want to try, that's fantastic, but if you're new to the world of organization, it's a good idea to just start with pen and paper.

Why? Because they're inexpensive, you probably have them within reach right now, and they'll help you get going.

If you start your quest for better organization with reading online articles about the best organizational widgets and notifications options, you'll get lost in details and never actually start organizing. Your best bet is to figure out how you organize things, and then find a tool that lets you do that, rather than trying to fit the tool from the start.

## Organizational Skills

### 2. Embrace lists

When you're just starting with getting organized, you need to complete a total survey of plates that are spinning, as well as what tasks you need to work on going forward.

Lists are a great way to get started. Lists get everything out of your head and free up brain space for more complicated tasks down the road.

If you try to put everything on one list, you will likely get overwhelmed and want to quit. A better plan is to start with broad categories.

You might have "To-Do Today," "To-Do This Week," and "Ongoing Long Term," for example. Then, you might have categories for any major projects that are upcoming or in progress.

Once you have your categories, start listing more granular items. Today's To-Do list might include checking with a coworker about status, emailing a different department to see what's going on with a report, and sending in a payroll statement, for example.

As you break down tasks in your projects, you may be able to break them up into tasks that will eventually migrate to Today or This Week to-do lists.

### 3. Embrace priorities

Once you have a good idea of what you have going on, the next step is to figure out what has to happen immediately.

It's often a good idea to organize your daily schedule in a way that gives you natural breaks and changes in attention to refreshing your mind. For example, you might schedule an hour cleaning paperwork off your desk and then walk to another department to check up on the status of an item.

Many highly organized professionals choose three things off their to-do lists to accomplish right now and then choose three more when those are done. This helps keep them moving without getting overwhelmed at the quantity of items.

### 4. Choose a time to organize tomorrow

What makes you feel good about your day? Do you feel better knowing that you can walk into work and dive straight into a project that needs a great deal of focus and attention first thing?

When you know how you want to start your day, you can choose when you will make a habit of organizing. Usually, the beginning or end of the day is best.

Organizational Skills	
	<p>People who like to organize at the beginning of the day often want to start with a clear goal or an easy task or two, while those who like to organize at the end of the day want a feeling of leaving work at work, and being ready for tomorrow.</p> <p><b>5. Reward yourself for success</b></p> <p>If you want to create a habit, you need to reward yourself for your success. For some people, simply crossing items off their to-do lists is reward enough; for others, an extra break or a nice coffee in the morning as a reward for getting things done in a more efficient manner might work.</p> <p>You should choose something that makes you smile, and feel like you're doing something good by approaching your work in a more organized manner.</p> <p>We often hear that entrepreneurs are too busy to get organized. The truth is that anyone can organize their work, and the more organized you can be, the less busy you will feel. You might have a lot to do, but that feeling of being out of control and constantly putting out fires will fade, letting you focus on the aspects of your business that matter the most to you.</p> <p>Below is a link to a website that offers an overview of tools to become more organized:</p> <p><a href="http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newHTE_76.htm">www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newHTE_76.htm</a></p>
<p><b>Tier 4</b></p> <p>I have used the tools to keep myself organized.</p>	<p>A person who takes time to review these tips and tools will learn about their patterns and be in a position to change how they organize themselves. Organization can be helpful in your work place, personal life, within tasks and initiatives, inside complex projects, etc.</p> <p>Everyone, even the most organized person, can benefit from learning what their organization style is, and how to improve that skill and make it add value to their life!</p>
<p><b>Tier 5</b></p> <p>I am able to apply my organizational skills to other projects.</p>	<p>Once you're organized in one area of your life—let's say your household—you'll draw strength, motivation, and clarity of focus from that organized space and be able to bring organization to other areas of your life. Being organized can be contagious from one part of your life to the next.</p> <p>Pick a spot in your life that needs more organization, and start there. You don't need to organize everything at once. Organize one thing, organize it well, and expand to other things.</p>

## Competency #4: Collaborative Skills

Collaboration Skills	
<p><b>Tier 1</b></p> <p>I know the basic principles of collaboration.</p>	<p>This article offers an excellent overview of basic principles of collaboration.</p> <p><b>6 Principles of Effective Collaboration</b> by Larry Glickman</p> <p>Collaboration does not happen on its own. Keeping these six principles of effective collaboration in mind will help organizations and leaders be more successful by being more collaborative and transparent.</p> <p><b>1. Openness</b></p> <p>Collaboration begins with adopting a new mindset of openness and working out loud. This openness will welcome others into your work, and into the work of your team. Share your work, share your work progress, and share your work in progress. A spirit of openness and generosity brings more opportunity for more collaboration and connection.</p> <p><b>2. Bravery</b></p> <p>We want our work to represent the very best of who we are and what we do, and sharing our work before it is complete is brave. We make ourselves vulnerable to criticism and correction, even before our work is done. Trying new tools and techniques requires a level of bravery. The tools are unknown. The tools may not work as well as we wish they did, or in the way we wish they did. We are experimenting, and we don't know the outcome. We are being brave, and our bravery can result in more communication and more confidence in our partnerships. Being brave leads us to try new things, and encourages collaboration with others.</p> <p><b>3. Experimentation</b></p> <p>Our work will only improve and move forward if we try new things. Leaders and their organizations need to always explore new tools, new organizational structures, new policies and procedures, and new ways of working together. Sometimes, these explorations will result in work being done quicker with more people involved and engaged in the process. We will find new opportunities for saving time and for accessing expertise. Other times, these explorations will result in failure. The tool we select won't work well, a person we invite into the process does not add value. Time is not saved. Whether we succeed or fail, we will learn, and what we learn will help us when it comes time for the next project.</p>

## Collaboration Skills

### 4. Trust

Collaboration does not work unless there is trust. Colleagues need to trust one another that work comes before ego, acclaim and attribution. Supervisors need to trust that their direct reports are engaged in the work, monitoring progress and feedback, and actively communicating with stakeholders. Staff need to be able to trust their supervisor. Supervisors need to be engaged without being overbearing. Supervisors need to engage with projects and staff, and they need to be able to get involved with a project when there are opportunities to constructively support its successful completion.

### 5. Transparency

When we are open with our work, when we are trusting and brave, when we experiment, we can be truly transparent in our work. When we are more transparent, we collaborate more effectively. Share work in progress. Invite feedback, correction and suggestions. Encourage your team to meet in a way that others can monitor agendas and projects. Take advantage of the transparency of others, and let their work inform your work. Utilize this transparency so your organization can work smarter and leaner.

### 6. Determination

Collaboration does not happen on its own. An obligation needs to be made to a new way of working, where the entire organization is purposeful about being more collaborative. Organizational leaders must compel staff to be more engaged in collaboration by strategically deploying new policies, procedures and digital tools to support a new work culture. Once deployed, the new strategy must be supported by a sustained commitment to collaboration, to taking advantage of the new policies and procedures, to constructively using the digital tools that have been deployed. Only when an organization is truly determined to be more collaborative will the benefits of collaboration be realized.

So be brave and determined. Share your work, trust your colleagues, and experiment with new tools and policies. Your new collaboration software will only work if you are collaborative, and if you work out loud.



## Collaboration Skills

### Tier 2

I know the skills to collaborate effectively.

We participate on teams based on our personalities, skill sets, talents, knowledge, attitudes, etc. Following is an article that explains key skills necessary to be an effective collaborator.

#### **6 Skills Needed for Effective Collaboration**

by Joanne Wood, Rise Above

Does your team currently have the right skill set they need to work together effectively? As leaders or executives, the pressure is on us to increase our team's output and deliver better results, leaving us constantly on the lookout for innovative ways to increase productivity. One way to do this is through creating better conditions for collaboration to thrive.

In our experience, teams that have the necessary skills to collaborate effectively largely outperform those which don't. In this article, we share our expertise and insight by looking at 6 crucial skills that will largely transform the way your team interacts with each other.

If you're currently leading a team and are involved in any collaborative efforts, you need to start by asking yourself some important questions. Is your team currently collaborating effectively? Have you created the conditions necessary for collaboration to thrive? Have you offered training and support to your team to develop the essential skills needed for collaboration?

Effective collaboration is achieved when the results of the team's efforts are greater than those which individual members could achieve on their own. But the bolstered results from effective collaboration don't come easily. Collaboration comes with its own set of challenges – challenges that require specific skills to overcome.

We've put together a list of the 6 most important skills needed by great collaborators:

#### **1. Communication**

One of the most crucial factors in collaboration is communication. Your team members need to be able to express themselves clearly to each other and successfully manage channels of communication with regards to their project. All individuals need to understand their responsibilities and report on them regularly to others. If everyone on your team has good communication skills, they will all be on the same page, working towards a common goal, all the while aware of current challenges encountered and milestones reached.

#### **2. Authenticity**

One of the reasons why collaboration is such a successful tool, is because it brings people from different walks of life together and harnesses the different strengths of each individual personality. This means that the ability to be authentic and true to oneself is an important skill to have when collaborating. Effective collaboration will only be achieved if each team member is bringing their unique perspectives, talents and feedback to the table.

## Collaboration Skills

### 3. Compromise

For any team to work together in harmony and collectively solve problems, all individuals on the team need to have the skill of compromise. Not every battle has to be fought. If your team can compromise with each other, they will be able to reach the best possible solutions from an amalgamation of ideas. The ability to compromise is extremely important not only for results but also for team dynamics and work happiness. If there is someone on your team who does not know how to compromise, their stubbornness may be hindering the overall productivity and morale.

### 4. Tolerance

Everyone on your team must have the ability to be tolerant and accepting of others. Creating a team, means grouping individuals together who more than likely have an endless list of differences. Members may have different values, culture, perspectives, work methods, as well as diverse ways of handling conflict and stress. It is vital that everyone involved can put differences aside and practice tolerance towards each other. Without tolerance, effective collaboration will not take place.

### 5. Team Player

For effective collaboration to occur, every person involved needs to be a team player who is focused on reaching a common goal. Individuals who are looking out for their own interests will not contribute to team efforts. Good collaborators need to be able to work well with others and conduct themselves in a way that adds value to the socially shared work task. Ability to work as part of a team is key for any collaborator – and it's unfortunately not a skill that everyone possesses naturally!

### 6. Reliability

Collaboration requires trust, and trust comes from reliability and consistency. Each and every collaborator has to have the skill of being consistent and being reliable. Members on the team need to have faith in each other in getting tasks done and in trust among one another when sharing ideas and giving feedback. If your team members aren't reliable, your results will be unpredictable and often disappointing. Make sure that they are actively working on reliability and putting measures in place that keep them from dropping the ball.

The benefits of collaboration in any organization are numerous. If the members of your team have the above 6 skills, the results from their collaborative efforts will reach all-new heights. As a team leader, you need to encourage your team to develop and work on these skills. You may need to provide training and support in improving their collaboration skills and even incorporate these skills into your organization's values and culture.

## Collaboration Skills

### Tier 3

I have identified tools that will help me to be organized.

Understanding what it takes to be a good collaborator is the first task in building your collaborative skill set. Consider this article from SamePage.

Collaboration is one of the top 3 soft skills employers are looking for in candidates in 2016. So, you might be wondering how to find out if a candidate is a gifted collaborator. Or you might be wondering if you're a natural collaborator yourself. Chances are, if you're dealing with a natural collaborator, he or she has several of these qualities:

#### 1. Team focused

While there are plenty of aspects that make a person a team player, there's a really simple test. A team-focused individual thinks about "we" rather than "I". He/she makes sure to keep the team focused on group goals and group success rather than individual agendas.

#### 2. Generous

A great collaborator is willing to take the first step and pitch in, even if they won't get the spotlight. Generosity is also an incredibly desirable leadership characteristic.

#### 3. Curious

They're good at asking the right questions. A great collaborator is always looking for the root of the issue. They don't interrogate; they simply follow their natural curiosity because they want to understand.

#### 4. Appreciative

The best collaborators express sincere appreciation for all that team members have contributed. They're not shy about expressing this appreciation to the entire team and they give credit where credit is due.

#### 5. Listens to understand

Great collaborators listen attentively to what is being said. But more importantly, they listen to understand. How can you tell someone is a great listener?

[Check out this guide from Stephanie Lee at LifeHacker.](#)

#### 6. Seeks to find and answer the bigger questions

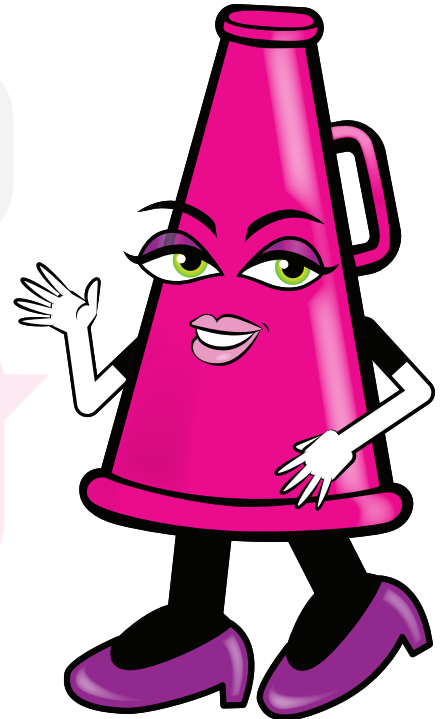
Projects are rarely just about the task in front of you. It's important to make sure that every project contributes to a company's high level strategy. Highly effective collaborators make sure that the team is working towards the right goals.

Collaboration Skills	
	<p><b>7. Connects the dots or creates the dots</b></p> <p>Natural collaborators are dot-connectors and/or dot-creators. They are either deeply knowledgeable in a specific subject, or they know how different pieces work together. Collaboration is equal parts bringing the right knowledge and the right people to the same table.</p> <p><b>8. Gives and expects trust</b></p> <p>More than anything, highly successful teams are <u>built on safety and trust</u>. Great collaborators help create and maintain that trusting environment. They give their trust freely and expect to receive your trust in return.</p> <p><b>9. Builds relationships; breaks down walls</b></p> <p>Collaboration is all about working together. Great collaborators know someone in every department. They have a pulse on the entire company, and they usually have great external networks too. When you need help from someone outside of the team, the natural collaborator knows just whom to ask.</p> <p><b>10. Diplomatic</b></p> <p>The best collaborators are diplomats. They know that relationships are built on mutual respect, and that being liked is not always the most important thing. Great collaborators also know that building consensus and establishing buy-in are musts for successful projects. That's why they're great at managing both up and down.</p> <p>The good news, too, is that there are many types of collaborative personalities and approaches. So, you don't have to be a certain way in order to collaborate! You can assess your own collaborative skill set and type at this link:</p> <p><a href="https://imeetcentral.com/quiz-what-type-of-collaborator-are-you">https://imeetcentral.com/quiz-what-type-of-collaborator-are-you</a></p> <p>Once you know your type, you can review the above lists and begin to improve your collaborative skills.</p>
<p><b>Tier 4</b></p> <p>I have used the tools to keep myself organized.</p>	<p>Collaborating is sometimes difficult. The resources listed above are designed to help you understand your true level of collaborative skill. The skills are not technical, so you can always become a better collaborator very quickly. Challenge yourself to identify one thing you can do to improve your collaborative skill set. Then, add another element, and keep going until you are recognized by others as someone they want on your team.</p>
<p><b>Tier 5</b></p> <p>I am able to apply my organizational skills to other projects.</p>	<p>Once you improve as a collaborator, you'll be able to coach and lead others to collaborate more effectively.</p> <p>Can you be the spark on your team to lead the team towards better collaboration? It's more than just being nice and listening, and supporting each other—check out the lists again, and strive to achieve the best collaboration you can with your teammates.</p>



I THINK WE COMPLEMENT EACH OTHER WELL, MEG – AND THAT LEADS TO SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATION.

YES, I SUPPOSE YOU COMPLEMENT ME, ESPECIALLY WHEN I'M IN NEED OF A SHINY ACCESSORY. OH, JUST KIDDING, MIKE! I LOVE WORKING WITH YOU! LOL!



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## Competency #5: The Five Stages of Recovery

by Cassandra James-Weathersby

This is both the guidance for the inner green circle in the model, as well as a Competency in the sense that it is teaching you to always be aware of your stage of recovery and how to navigate this model based on where you're at with your recovery. (It's a competency in and of itself to be able to understand and manage your recovery path.)

**Introduction** When I first learned of the Five Stages of Recovery (Appalachian Consulting Group, Inc. 2009), I was sitting in the front row of my Certified Peer Support Training. At the time, I actually resented being gathered under the umbrella of “recovery.” To my limited knowledge, it had always been a term reserved for those recovering from addiction. Little did I realize, that sitting in that class on that beautiful sunny day in May, that I would learn that recovery is recovery – whether it is from addiction, mental illness, or both. It takes you through the same process to get healthy. Some of us go faster than others because some of us remain at certain stages longer than others. Nevertheless, it is still recovery.

As Peer Support Specialists in recovery ourselves, we remain hopeful and believe that everyone that is affected by mental illness and addiction is capable of recovery. Thus, we want you to see what the stages look like. Perhaps you will recognize yourself in one of the Five Stages and find some light to move forward to the next stage. If you are reading this and have already moved through each Stage, maybe you will find the courage you need to help someone else find their light or be a voice for others stumbling through the darkness. No matter where you find yourself, remember, deep down somewhere beyond what you can see in front of you at this very moment, that you CAN RECOVER and live the life you want. All it takes is one breathe at a time, one step at a time, one day at a time.

Peace and Blessings, Cassie

## **Stage 1: Impact of the Illness:** “The shattering of one’s world, hopes, and dreams.”

In Stage One of the Recovery Process, you may often be overwhelmed by your diagnosis. The impact of the illness itself is the dominating experience in your life at this Stage. You may find that you are having great difficulty functioning.

The Danger of Stage one is that you can stop looking at yourself as an individual and start to define yourself by your illness. This causes you (and yes others) to place limits on you and who you can become. Stage One in Our lives: Stage one for me was like getting punched in the gut and just when the wind was escaping your body from the punch, being suspended, mid-air that way. As a Parent/Caregiver CPSS and CPSS, I have experienced this gut punch seemingly back-to-back. “Mentally ill” became who we were as a family, it became who I was as a person. I remember having a conversation with a therapist in our home about goals my sons wanted to reach. At this point in their lives, even with all the hospitalizations, they each planned on going into the military.

I’d watched my eldest son, from the time he was three years old, want to be a Soldier. His room had even been decorated “all things military” too. That day, however, sitting in my living room, we learned that “with his diagnosis, a military career was out of the question.” He would need to find something else. Maybe he could do security. . . . This was one of those days that we found hard to function. I had to call back for afterhours service that evening because he had gone over the top, manic. Later, I cried myself to sleep. As a mother, I’d encouraged his dream since he spoke it. I was so proud that he stuck with it so long that my dream for him had been to reach his dream. This illness had already taken away our peace, but now, it was taking away our dreams too, while someone with a clipboard asked us to think of new ones. Reasonable ones . . . . It was shattering. Each of my boys went through this process. Mental Illness took their dreams. What were they supposed to work towards now? Who were they? Who were we? Mentally ill.

Questions that may help: 1. Do you see yourself in this Stage? 2. What has your inner dialogue told you, you were/ were not any because of your illness? 3. What is your truth?

## **Stage 2: Life is Limited:** “Giving up was a solution.”

During this Stage, you fall into the belief that “this is it.” This is who I am and all I will ever be. The danger zone here is that you could risk identifying so much with the illness and/or stigma, that it may be too hard for you to see that there is any hope.

While I meant to stay focused and strong, there was a point I reached that slipping away was just easier. I had accepted that this was now my life. I accepted that the life my boys wanted was never to be. I just could not deal with most things that were more than what I had to do. It became so difficult. When the shouting and the throwing things could not be contained, and I could no longer control the situations, I would just withdraw to my room, lock the door, and ball up under the covers. I would stay in my room until I had to leave the house. I could feel myself slipping and zoning out . . . and I wanted to give in to the delicious nothingness that was deep within the shadows of my mind.

Questions that may help: 1. Do you see yourself in this Stage? 2. Is this truly it? 3. Without focusing on the things you cannot change, what things can you focus on to make the next minutes/days/weeks/months better for you?

## **Stage 3: Change is Possible:** “A small spark of hope.”

During Stage 3, you may have found that you have started to question yourself and the hold that the illness/stigma has on you. What sparks you is different and personal for everyone in their recovery journey, yet this one this is clear – a crucial pivotal point in the recovery process and essential to moving forward. This spark is not a forest fire; it is a small fragile spark. You may liken it to the tiny flame that is there when you first strike a match or light a candle. If it is blown too quickly, it cannot withstand and is put out. The danger zone here is that you might be afraid to move and take chances to see a change and remain Stage 2. I experienced my small spark of hope one day, sitting on the couch of my then home. My kids were literally chasing each other with knives through the house. I'd been screaming to the top of my lungs, trying to get control of the situation. It was as if I was talking to the wall. The boys had been cycling in and out of mania and right now they were manic, and their sibling was not helping the situation.

I did not have the strength to retreat to my room, so I just plopped down on my couch. I began to think to myself that the State Hospital was not such a bad place after all. That I could live there. I could have Jell-O, the red kind. I like Jell-O. There were ponds out there and ducks, and I love the water. Oh, I love the water! Yes, this is where I need to be!

When I came to myself, I was sitting there rocking. I don't know how long I'd been sitting there in that daydream, but one of my boys had said “Ya'll look at Mama! Something's wrong with Mama!” That is what had brought me back. I immediately thought about what would happen to my children if I were not around. I began to shake. My daydream of the State Hospital vanished away. I went to my room but this time I did not lock the door and get under the covers. Ok, I did lock the door, but I called to get into see my first Therapist. I didn't know why, but something in me just knew that I needed to get help, and that maybe, there was something better than this.

Questions that may help: 1. Do you see yourself in this Stage? 2. What do you do when the “numb” feeling wears off and you get that glimpse that maybe it could be different? How do you respond to it? 3. Who/what is a trusted, safe place that could help fan your flame and not put it out?

## **Stage 4: Commitment to Change:** “Baby Steps” ... “Progress and NOT Perfection.”

During this stage, you have begun to see that life can be different, but what exactly different is that you're still trying to figure out. You are willing and trying to explore some changes to see what works best for you. The Danger Zone here is that you might not get the skills, resources, or support that you need to move forward through change. (No one makes life changing change on their own – but keep reading and do not get discouraged! ) You might get frustrated and quit. During this stage, I began to try to make changes. I began to see a therapist. I began to work on my physical health. I also began to work through what it was I wanted to career wise. These each took time. While the words may seem easy to type, it was not easy at all. There were appointments that I missed with my therapist because he had taken me so much into my trauma that I just could not see him the following week. There were times in my quest for better health. That I teeter tottered back and forth. In my quest to find what I would enjoy and do well at in a career, well let's just say that first I learned what I would NOT enjoy or be good at. However, baby step, by baby step, I was further and further from where I'd started. It truly is about the journey of who you are becoming in the process, so BECOME!

Questions that might help: 1. Do you see yourself in this Stage? 2. What are the things that you are doing great? (They are there, sometimes you just must change your perspective.) 3. Can you look back and see where you were? Yes? Progress! No? Look again and keep going!



## **Stage 5: Actions for Change:** “Lives rebuilt!”

So, you are here! You have moved beyond the bad stuff and are in recovery!!!! You finally made it, now what? The Danger Zone here is that this little monkey called doubt will try to creep in. He is very mischievous and will try to destroy and steal all that you have worked for by making you doubt that you have what it takes to make it, stay clean, remain, stable, effect change, etc. Please show that little monkey to the nearest exit!!!! Once I got to a point where I was starting to really believe that I could do something with all of this recovery experience and remain stable myself, doubt would creep in, and remind me of all the things I didn't have, the qualifications I didn't have, the formal experience I did not have, my poor track record because of what my illness and that of my boys had taken from me. I would begin to doubt who I was and all that I'd worked through. I would wither away deep down inside and hide within myself. This still happens. When it happens now, I am reminded of who I am and whose I am. I have also learned to start to give myself some of the same compassion I show others.

Questions that might help: 1. Do you see yourself in this Stage? 2. Do you know that you are a Rockstar for making it here? 3. What are You going to do to change YOUR life/world?

## **Empowering Quotes:**

***“The process of spotting fear and refusing to obey it  
is the source of all true empowerment.”***

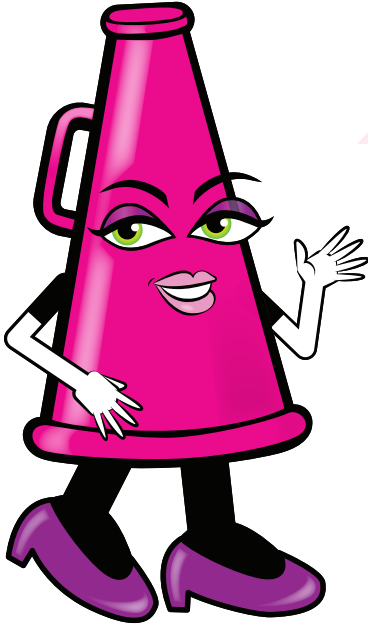
**- Martha Beck**

***“The most common way people give up their power  
is by thinking they don't have any.”***

**- Alice Walker**

***“You may not control all the events that happen to you,  
but you can decide not to be reduced by them.”***

**- Maya Angelou**



**HEADS UP, EVERYONE!**  
THIS COMPETENCY AND THE NEXT ONE ARE NOT IN THE SAME FORMAT BECAUSE THEY ARE A BIT DIFFERENT. THEY ARE SPECIFIC METHODOLOGIES AND ARE SHARED HERE BECAUSE THEY REALLY ARE A GOOD FIT FOR WHAT WE DO DAY TO DAY ON OUR RECOVERY JOURNEYS. **OKAY READY! SET! GO!!!**

GOTTA LOVE HER EXUBERANCE....



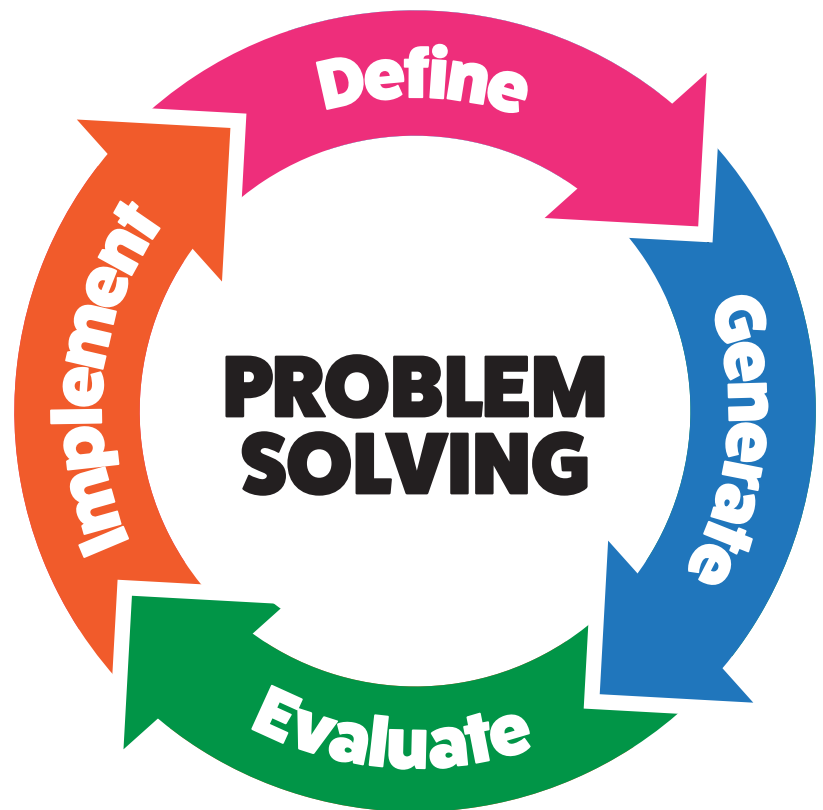
## Competency # 6: Problem Solving

Problem solving is the process of achieving a goal by overcoming obstacles, a frequent part of most activities. Problems in need of solutions range from simple personal tasks to complex issues in business and technical fields.

### Problem Solving Chart

#### THE PROBLEM SOLVING PROCESS

In order to effectively manage and run a successful organization, leadership must guide their employees and develop problem-solving techniques. Finding a suitable solution for issues can be accomplished by following the basic four-step problem-solving process and methodology outlined on the next page.



STEP	CHARACTERISTICS
1. Define the problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Differentiate fact from opinion</li><li>• Specify underlying causes</li><li>• Consult each faction involved for information</li><li>• State the problem specifically</li><li>• Identify what standard or expectation is violated</li><li>• Determine in which process the problem lies</li><li>• Avoid trying to solve the problem without data</li></ul>
2. Generate alternative solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Postpone evaluating alternatives initially</li><li>• Include all involved individuals in the generating of alternatives</li><li>• Specify alternatives consistent with organizational goals</li><li>• Specify short- and long-term alternatives</li><li>• Brainstorm on others' ideas</li><li>• Seek alternatives that may solve the problem</li></ul>
3. Evaluate and select an alternative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Evaluate alternatives relative to a target standard</li><li>• Evaluate all alternatives without bias</li><li>• Evaluate alternatives relative to established goals</li><li>• Evaluate both proven and possible outcomes</li><li>• State the selected alternative explicitly</li></ul>
4. Implement and follow up on the solution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Plan and implement a pilot test of the chosen alternative</li><li>• Gather feedback from all affected parties</li><li>• Seek acceptance or consensus by all those affected</li><li>• Establish ongoing measures and monitoring</li><li>• Evaluate long-term results based on final solution</li></ul>

## 1. Define the problem

Diagnose the situation so that your focus is on the problem, not just its symptoms. Helpful problem-solving techniques include using flowcharts to identify the expected steps of a process and cause-and-effect diagrams to define and analyze root causes.

The sections below help explain key problem-solving steps. These steps support the involvement of interested parties, the use of factual information, comparison of expectations to reality, and a focus on root causes of a problem. You should begin by:

- Reviewing and documenting how processes currently work (i.e., who does what, with what information, using what tools, communicating with what organizations and individuals, in what time frame, using what format).

Evaluating the possible impact of new tools and revised policies in the development of your “what should be” model.

## 2. Generate alternative solutions

Postpone the selection of one solution until several problem-solving alternatives have been proposed. Considering multiple alternatives can significantly enhance the value of your ideal solution. Once you have decided on the “what should be” model, this target standard becomes the basis for developing a road map for investigating alternatives. Brainstorming and team problem-solving techniques are both useful tools in this stage of problem solving.

Many alternative solutions to the problem should be generated before final evaluation. A common mistake in problem solving is that alternatives are evaluated as they are proposed, so the first acceptable solution is chosen, even if it’s not the best fit. If we focus on trying to get the results we want, we miss the potential for learning something new that will allow for real improvement in the problem-solving process.

## 3. Evaluate and select an alternative

Skilled problem solvers use a series of considerations when selecting the best alternative. They consider the extent to which:

- A particular alternative will solve the problem without causing other unanticipated problems.
- All the individuals involved will accept the alternative.
- Implementation of the alternative is likely.
- The alternative fits within the organizational constraints.

## 4. Implement and follow up on the solution

Leaders may be called upon to direct others to implement the solution, “sell” the solution, or facilitate the implementation with the help of others. Involving others in the implementation is an effective way to gain buy-in and support and minimize resistance to subsequent changes.

Regardless of how the solution is rolled out, feedback channels should be built into the implementation. This allows for continuous monitoring and testing of actual events against expectations. Problem solving, and the techniques used to gain clarity, are most effective if the solution remains in place and is updated to respond to future changes.

## Competency # 7: Decision Making

Decision making is the process of making choices by identifying a decision, gathering information, and assessing alternative resolutions. Using a step-by-step decision-making process can help you make more deliberate, thoughtful decisions by organizing relevant information and defining alternatives.



## BAD HOTEL REVIEWS

Let's say that you're the general manager at a nice hotel. Suddenly, you notice that customers are rating your property two and three stars instead of the customary five stars you and the team are used to earning. You need to make a decision about next steps to solve this issue. Let's start right at the top of the rational decision making model.

- **Understand the issue.** The issue is clear to you. Customers are rating their experience at your property online, and they're not happy. This will surely damage your team's efforts to generate new business. You need to find a way to earn better customer ratings.
- **Define the problem.** You and your team sit down and read the last twenty or thirty customer reviews on three different travel sites. It turns out that customers' unhappiness coincides with a recent increase in rates. They no longer feel they're getting good value for their money.
- **Define the objectives.** What criteria will your solution have to meet? Clearly, you want to start getting better ratings from customers. You don't want to see customers complaining about anything online. Your objective is 100% happiness, 100% five-star ratings.
- **Diagnose the problem.** This is the stage where you look to determine and understand the root causes of your issue. Perhaps you decide that all customer-facing staff report daily on quality issues. And maybe you consult with operations on additional perks that can be incorporated into the guest experience without giving away too much margin.
- **Develop alternatives.** You ultimately want to create a lengthy list of alternatives and not decide on one too quickly. You look over your employees' reports on quality. You wait on operations for recommendations on extra perks. You collect all the data.
- **Evaluate alternatives.** Once you have all your alternatives on the table, you can start to make a choice. Every employee suggestion, every operations recommendation should be in front of you, and you consider each option carefully.
- **Select an alternative.** One of your employees has suggested two additional members for the housekeeping staff, as the current level of staff is having difficulty keeping up with the increase precipitated by an office building opening up down the street. A member of your operations team has suggested providing a continental breakfast for business travelers in response to the increase in that customer type. Both seem like good ideas. Which will provide the bigger impact?
- **Implement alternative.** You decide to hire the two additional members for the housekeeping staff, understanding that your customers view quality in clean rooms and common spaces. You get the budget approved and post for those two jobs. You make a plan to check in at the thirty day mark to see if customers' ratings have improved.

The goal of the rational decision making model is to eliminate possibilities for error and biases. It assumes the following:

- Managers have all the information about the situation.
- Managers are aware of all alternative options and are equipped to evaluate them properly.
- Managers are looking to make the best possible decision.
- Managers are capable of eliminating misperceptions and biases.
- There are no cost or time constraints.

In a perfect world, where all of those assumptions are met, this model is how the decision making process works best. But we know that those assumptions can't all be met. And that's why we have the bounded rationality model.

## Bounded Rationality Model

The bounded rationality model assumes numerous organizational and individual factors restrict rational decision making. This is the version of decision making that occurs most often in organizations, because the assumptions of this model are much closer to the truth:

- Early alternatives and solutions are quickly adopted because of perceptual limitations.
- Managers often don't have access to all the information they need.
- Managers are not aware of all the alternatives and can't predict the consequences of each one.
- Organizational goals constrain decisions.
- Conflicting goals of multiple stakeholders can force a compromise of a decision.

Because a human being is limited in the amount of information he or she can process, when a complex decision needs to be made, he or she will reduce the problem to a manageable size. By limiting the number of choices and the amount of necessary information, the product is a decision that's acceptable and satisfactory. This is sometimes referred to as the Satisfying model.

In the bounded rationality model, the same steps are used in the decision making process, only instead of reviewing all information and all alternatives, those aspects are limited to the amount the decision maker is willing to gather.

## Linear Model of Decision Making

Linear decision making involves listing positive and negative factors of each decision alternative. If you've ever made a list of pros and cons around a certain decision, then you've embarked on linear decision making.

In order for it truly to be linear decision making, the decision maker must then assign a numerical "weight" to each of his pros and cons, and arrive at a total score for each side. For instance, let's say you were trying to decide if you should or should not hire a very experienced but very expensive candidate for a position in your office. Your linear decision-making model might look like this:

### Pros

Very experienced—5  
Familiar with the role—4  
Speaks multiple languages—2  
Total: 11

### Cons

Very expensive—5  
Would need to relocate to our city—3  
Cannot start for two months—1  
Total: 9

Pros outweigh the Cons, 11 to 9. She's hired!



## Intuitive Decision Making

Intuitive decision making is a model that assumes managers make decisions by relying on past experience and their personal assessment of a situation. This model of decision making is often used when there are high levels of uncertainty or complexity around a particular problem, or when the decision is novel and the managers don't have past experience with this kind of problem.

If managers are faced with uncertain, complex situations and they can't get the right information to make a good decision quickly, they are apt to rely on hunches and intuition. Given the choice between this model and a linear model (like the one discussed above), managers would reach for the linear model.

## Garbage Can Model

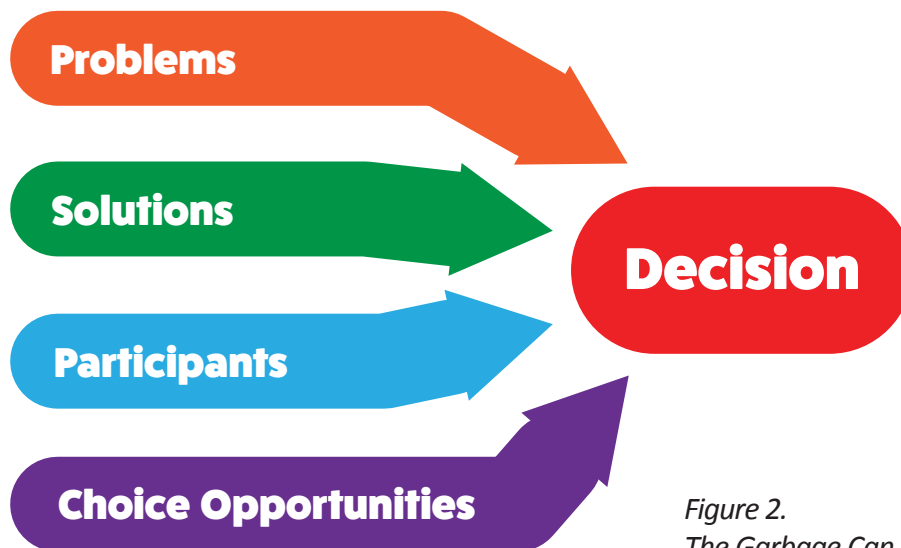


Figure 2.  
The Garbage Can Method

The garbage can model is one where managers use information about problems, participants, solutions and opportunities haphazardly to generate ideas and potential decisions. Unlike other decision making models as we discussed, the garbage can model does not always lead to satisfactory solutions, because the problem does not always precede alternatives and solutions.

For instance, the corporate office of an organization might have been recently informed of the benefits of going to an "open environment" where people can talk and collaborate freely. Senior management may get behind this idea and start looking for ways to knock down cube walls and make their environment more collaborative before it's even been determined that their office has issues being collaborative.

As you can see in Figure 2, there is no sequence of steps the way there is in rational decision making, but rather the decision comes by looking at independent streams of events.

## Module 3: My Engagement Opportunities

SOMEONE ONCE SAID, 'WHEN YOU PUT YOURSELF OUT THERE, YOU ONLY GET BETTER, EVEN IF IN THAT MOMENT IT DOESN'T FEEL LIKE IT.'

YOU KNOW WHO SAID THAT? ME! I JUST MADE THAT UP. BUT IT'S TRUE. AND DO YOU KNOW HOW I KNOW IT'S TRUE? BECAUSE I'VE LIVED IT. AND BECAUSE I'VE HEARD SO MANY PEOPLE SPEAK THROUGH ME (REMEMBER, I'M A MIC), TO GIVE THEIR TESTIMONY ABOUT THIS EXACT THING.

OUR VOICE IS SO SPECIAL. YOUR VOICE IS INCREDIBLY SIGNIFICANT. MAYBE NOT ALL THE TIME BECAUSE YOU'RE NOT A ROCK STAR, OR REPORTER, OR FAMOUS. BUT TO SOMEONE, SOMEWHERE, AT SOME TIME . . . WHEN THEY HEAR YOUR VOICE, YOU WILL TOUCH THEIR LIFE. AND JUST AS IMPORTANT, YOU WILL HEAR YOUR OWN VOICE AND CONTINUE TO EXPLORE IT AND STRENGTHEN IT

MODULE 3 PRESENTS SOME POSSIBILITIES FOR WHERE AND WHEN YOU CAN SHARE YOUR VOICE. IT MAKES SENSE, DOESN'T IT? IN MODULE 1 YOU UNDERSTOOD MORE ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR VOICE. IN MODULE 2 YOU UNDERSTOOD SOME IMPORTANT SKILLS FOR SHARING YOUR VOICE, AND PERHAPS EVEN STRENGTHENED THEM. SO MODULE 3 IS ALL ABOUT FINDING A PLACE TO SHARE YOUR VOICE. HERE'S THE OFFICIAL EXPLANATION SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO LOOK BACK TO THE BEGINNING:

**Module 3: My Engagement Opportunities.** In this module, a person learns of the many different possibilities and venues for sharing his or her Voice, and how to identify the engagement opportunities that would be a good fit for their purpose and skills. A person might also be able to learn what competencies might be needed for a specific type of engagement and go back to Module 2 to accomplish additional training.



YOU MIGHT BE WONDERING: DO I HAVE TO SHARE MY VOICE IN A BIG AND SPECTACULAR WAY IN ORDER FOR IT TO BE WORTHY? OF COURSE NOT. SURE, MAYBE YOU'LL BE INVITED TO SPEAK AT A CONFERENCE, OR PARTICIPATE IN SOME BIG POLICY MEETING WITH THE STATE. OR, MAYBE YOU'LL BE ASKED BY A FRIEND WHO HAS A DAUGHTER WHO IS EXPERIENCING SOMETHING SIMILAR TO WHAT YOU EXPERIENCED WHEN YOU WERE THAT AGE, AND YOUR FRIEND HOPES THAT YOU CAN SIT DOWN WITH HER DAUGHTER AND HELP HER UNDERSTAND HER JOURNEY.

IN EITHER CASE, YOUR VOICE IS ONLY AS GOOD AS YOUR ABILITY TO SHARE IT EFFECTIVELY, SO I ENCOURAGE YOU TO ALWAYS GO BACK THROUGH MODULES 1 AND 2 TO CONTINUE TO IMPROVE YOUR VOICE.

THAT'S ALL FOR NOW, EXCEPT THIS ONE LAST THING I WANT TO ADD: YOU ARE A ROCK STAR, EVEN THOUGH THERE MIGHT NOT BE A STAGE, OR SPOTLIGHTS. AND YOU ARE A ROCK STAR BECAUSE YOU'VE MADE THE DECISION TO BE EMPOWERED AND TO SHARE YOUR VOICE IN WHATEVER WAY YOU CHOOSE.

## **Types of Places to Share Your Voice**

There are many ways to share your Voice. The Mental Health Consumer Voice, as a collection of all Consumer Voices in a community, state, or nation is only as strong as the number of people who share their Voice, as well as their ability to do so at the place and in the time they have chosen. That's not meant to cause pressure on you! Instead, understanding that concept should help you think about where and when you'd like to share your Voice.

Sometimes you can insert your Voice into a very serious setting, or venue, like a high-stakes policy-shaping meeting. And sometimes it's informal, like talking with that friend's child who is on the verge of adulthood and is trying to navigate some new mental health challenges.

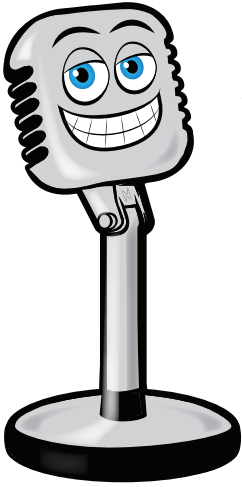
Sometimes you'll plan when you'll share your Voice. Other times it will just happen spontaneously. Sometimes you'll even withhold your Voice because that is the best form of Voice in the moment.

The CPIEM is not designed to tell you when and where you should share your Voice. And Module 3 is not a definitive list of opportunities for sharing your Voice—but it does provide a good list of some possible venues for providing your Voice and insights on behalf of achieving a better future for mental health consumers.

## **How to Assess a Meeting**

Before you attend a meeting, you should keep the following questions in mind and attempt to answer them. And, when you attend a meeting, it would be great if you wrote answers to these questions and shared them with us to add to this section!

1. Is this a good one to attend, and why?
2. What would I do at this meeting?
3. Is there an opportunity to speak and what would I speak about?
4. Are there people I should/could get to know?
5. What is the culture of the event?
6. Is there a fee to attend?
7. Do I need to register? If so, how?
8. What do I wear?
9. Will other peers be in attendance and do I know them?
10. Is this event open to the public?



QUICK REMINDER, HERE: WHEN YOU DO THE TASKS AND INITIATIVES INSIDE THESE MODULES, I REALLY ENCOURAGE YOU TO WRITE DOWN YOUR EXPERIENCES AS A TESTIMONY AND SEND IT IN TO CAFÉ TAC. THIS DOCUMENT WILL BE A LIVING DOCUMENT— AND WILL REFLECT AS MUCH OF OUR COLLECTIVE VOICE AS WE ARE WILLING TO DOCUMENT AND SHARE. YOU CAN DO IT ANONYMOUSLY, TOO. SO, I HOPE YOU CONSIDER THAT. DON'T BE SHY. AT LEAST YOU WON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT BEING GRABBED BY A GYRATING ELVIS PRESLEY IN FRONT OF ALL THOSE SCREAMING FANS!

DID YOU JUST SAY... GYRATING...  
ELVIS? AM I BLUSHING?  
I'M NOT BLUSHING, AM I?  
OH, GOOD THING I'M PINK!



## Meeting Venues/Possibilities

### *Related to Consumer-led/Advocacy:*

One place to share your Voice in your state or community is at advocacy events designed to create awareness of issues like mental health, substance use, recovery, healthcare, or other issues connected to recovery. These advocacy events often create a space for people to share their experiences, or talk about how a particular issue impacts them personally.

Here are a few examples of consumer advocacy events in Mississippi that people from AMPSS were able to name. What opportunities like these exist in your state or community?

Catholic Charities Jackson  
Catholic Day at the Capitol  
Press Conference and Rally

Engaged Recovery  
Addiction and Recovery Awareness and  
Legislative Day

Empower Mississippi  
National School Choice Week  
Press Conference

Mississippi KIDS COUNT  
Mississippi Kids Count Capitol Day  
Exhibit to Inform Legislators

## *Related to Municipal/Legislative:*

State and local governments offer many opportunities to collect input from the public. That's what democracy and participatory public administration are all about! There are formal opportunities to engage with elected officials, like legislative hearings or local council meetings, as well as events dedicated to connecting with elected officials in a more informal manner, where advocates can share their experiences and talk about how public policy impacts their lives.

Here are some examples of chances to engage with elected officials that people from AMPSS came up with. Are there similar opportunities in your state or community?

Election Association of Mississippi (ECAM)  
Election Commissioners  
Meet and Greet with Legislators

Mississippi Municipal League  
Mississippi Municipal League Press Conference

Mississippi Economic Development Council  
MEDC Day at the Capitol

Mississippi Health Care Association  
MHCA Day at the Capitol

Mississippi Department of Mental Health  
Mental Health Day at the Capitol

Service Providers  
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention  
AFSP State Capitol Day

Mississippi Center for Nonprofits  
Nonprofit Day at the Capitol

Engaged Recovery  
Addiction and Recovery Awareness and  
Legislative Day

MEMA  
Mississippi Emergency Management Day at the  
Capitol

Certifying/Accrediting/Training entities  
Mississippi State Medical Association Alliance  
Capitol Screening Initiative  
Informational Presentation to Legislatives

National Association of Social Workers MS Chapter  
MASWMS Chapter Press Conference

Mississippi Coalition for Domestic Violence  
Legislative Appreciation Day

Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities  
Exhibit and Legislative Day

Professional Groups and Events:  
Mississippi Counseling Association  
Display Table

**Additional common meeting types** that you can look into: County Council, City Council, Chamber of Commerce, YWCA, Support Groups, Homeless Coalitions, Private Businesses, Foundations, State Agencies, Church Groups, Mental Health Meet Up, Schools (Especially During Red Ribbon Week), Boys and Girls Clubs, College and University Student Affairs Activities, Drug and Alcohol Rehab Centers, Parent Meetings, Community Centers, Various Support Groups (AA, CA), etc.

## *Mental Health Planning Councils*

Did you know that every state receives “block grant” funding from the federal government specifically dedicated to mental health? As the name implies, the federal government gives a big block of funding to the state. The state, in turn, decides how to spend that money.

In many states, there are bodies that either advise or determine how that mental health block grant funding is spent. They often have names like “Mental Health Block Grant Council” or something similar. Those bodies often include mental health consumers on them, and all of them accept input from the public about what their priorities should be and how their state’s block grant funding should be spent.

Using your Voice to share your perspective with your state’s block grant planning body can be a great way to make a difference. To find out how to get started, try searching the internet for “mental health block grant” and the name of our state.

## *Consumer Organizations*

Many states have mental health consumer organizations similar to AMPSS in Mississippi. These organizations are unique, because they are run by and for people in recovery from mental health conditions. They can be an important vehicle for the consumer voice in their states, and adding your individual Voice to that of your state’s consumer organization can be a great way to increase your impact in a supportive environment of other peers that understand the recovery experience.

Many states have organizations that receive specific grants from SAMHSA that exist to support consumer organizations. Those grants are called “Statewide Consumer Network” grants, or SCN’s. An easy way to find your state’s SCN is to visit the SAMHSA website at [www.samhsa.gov/grants-awards-by-state](http://www.samhsa.gov/grants-awards-by-state) where you will find a map of the entire country. Click on your state, then click the full list of discretionary grants, and look through the list of grants to find the Statewide Consumer Network.

Of course, there are also many great statewide mental health organizations that aren’t SCN grantees. They are also there to help elevate the consumer voice by creating a place for people in recovery to come together. Our partner TA Center, the National Empowerment Center, maintains a list of them at [power2u.org/consumer-run-statewide-organizations/](http://power2u.org/consumer-run-statewide-organizations/).



## Module 4: Preparing Myself and Participating

IF I'M GOING TO BE ON STAGE FOR A CONCERT, I NEED TO BE SHINED UP, ADJUSTED TO THE RIGHT HEIGHT, TILTED AT THE PROPER ANGLE, AND PLUGGED IN. I PROBABLY NEED TO BE TESTED.

I CAN'T TELL YOU HOW MANY TIMES SOMEONE HAS GONE STRAIGHT INTO THEIR SHOW WITHOUT GETTING ME ALL READY AND TESTING ME, AND THEN THEY HAVE TO DO IT BETWEEN SONGS, OR EVEN DURING A SONG OR A SPEECH.

THE SAME IS TRUE FOR YOUR VOICE. YOU CAN PRESENT YOURSELF HOWEVER YOU'D LIKE. I'M NOT GOING TO JUDGE YOU—YOU'LL JUDGE YOURSELF, LIKE YOU ALWAYS DO. SO I'M HERE TO SAY THAT IF YOU'RE GOING TO JUDGE YOURSELF ON HOW WELL YOU SHARED YOUR VOICE, YOU WOULD BE WELL-SERVED TO PREPARE YOURSELF AS BEST AS YOU CAN. THE FIRST THING YOU NEED TO DO TO PREPARE YOURSELF IS TO UNDERSTAND THAT NO ONE IS EVER PERFECT, AND EVERY EXPERIENCE IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO INCREASE YOUR CONFIDENCE, BECOME MORE COMFORTABLE WITH YOUR STORY AND YOUR VOICE, AND IMPROVE YOUR OVERALL IMPACT.

MODULE 4 IS SHORT AND PRESENTS SOME BASIC INSIGHTS ABOUT BEING PREPARED FOR A MEETING, OR AN EVENT, OR AN OPPORTUNITY WHERE YOU'LL SHARE YOUR VOICE.

BY THE WAY, ANY PREPARATION YOU DO FOR ONE THING WILL SERVE YOU ACROSS THE BOARD FOR OTHER VOICE-SHARING OPPORTUNITIES. FOR EXAMPLE, MAYBE YOU'RE JUST MEETING UP WITH SOME RELATIVES. MAYBE YOU'RE TALKING TO SOME NEIGHBORS AT THE BLOCK PARTY. MAYBE YOU'RE SHARING A TESTIMONY AT A POLICY MEETING WITHIN A STATE AGENCY. MAYBE YOU'RE ON THE PHONE WITH A FRIEND WHO IS EXPERIENCING A CRISIS AND THEY'VE CALLED YOU. WHATEVER PREPARATION YOU DID FOR ONE THING WILL BE LIFELONG PREPARATION FOR THE OTHER OPPORTUNITIES, BECAUSE YOUR VOICE AND HOW YOU SHARE IT IS GENUINE AND CONSISTENT. YOU MIGHT SHAPE THE STYLE OF YOUR DELIVERY BASED ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES, BUT YOUR MESSAGE IS THE ESSENCE OF YOU, AND IT IS VALUABLE AND PEOPLE WANT TO HEAR IT.

HERE'S THE OFFICIAL EXPLANATION SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO LOOK BACK TO THE BEGINNING:

**Module 4: Preparing Myself and Participating.** In this module, the individual learns how to prepare for a specific engagement, and conducts preparatory exercises. The module also provides guidance for actual participation and engagement. This is the module that assists a person to take all that has been discovered, learned, and planned in the first three modules and put those insights and skills into action.

LIKE THE REST OF THIS WORKBOOK, WE WANT TO CONTINUE ADDING TO IT. SO IF YOU HAVE EXPERIENCES THAT YOU WANT TO SHARE, OR TOOLS AND RESOURCES THAT ARE A GOOD FIT FOR THIS MODULE, PLEASE SEND THEM TO CAFÉ TAC. I'LL DO MY BEST TO INCORPORATE THEM INTO THIS DOCUMENT.

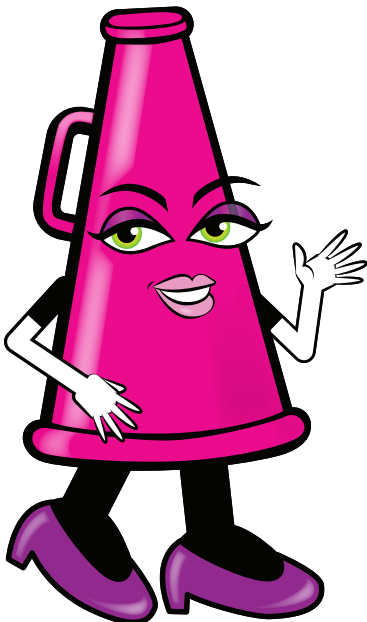




## Basic Preparation

When I've decided to attend a meeting or share my Voice at a particular Venue (from Module 3), how do I prepare myself to be the most effective? Below is a brainstorm list of techniques and insights generated by 55 peers who responded to that question. Which of these can you identify with? And, for which questions do you have a good answer that you'd like to share with others?

1. Get proper rest
2. Know what the meeting or situation is about
3. Be knowledgeable about the topic being discussed
4. If it's legislative, know the legislator's theme and research the topic
5. Understand the directions of how to get to the location; practice getting there if you need to
6. Wear the proper attire
7. Make a check list that will help you be successful
8. Be able to counter the arguments with facts and figures (so, possibly prepare your research)
9. Take good notes at the meeting
10. Go in with a specific ask or call to action
11. Know who will be there
12. Practice your speech
13. Know your role in the meeting, and where you are in the agenda
14. Strength in numbers: go with others
15. Have your elevator speech ready to go
16. Ensure that you have reliable transportation
17. Define what outcomes you hope to achieve
18. Prepare positive affirmations to recall during the event
19. Make sure you take off work
20. Be sure to leave with an attitude of gratitude and thank them
21. Take mindfulness breaks... being aware of your surroundings
22. Understand what you're allowed to stay and not to say, if there are boundaries



We presented the above list in its raw form (just a list) because that was the Voice of the Peer Summit, and it demonstrates the vast experience with this topic that peers were able to share. This is a valuable perspective, as it demonstrates (again) that collectively we know a lot and have valuable experiences that we need to share with each other.

**I LIKE LISTS BECAUSE THEY HELP ME ORGANIZE MY THOUGHTS. IF YOU'RE LIKE ME AND YOU PREFER SMALLER, CHUNKED LISTS, CHECK OUT THE NEXT PAGE. I'VE IMPROVED THE ABOVE LIST... YOU'LL SEE.**

## Preparing for a Meeting

### Information about the meeting

- Where is the meeting? Date, time and location
- Know who the leaders/facilitators are and their views on the topic
- Become familiar and knowledgeable about the topic of discussion
- Be familiar with who will be there (Legislators, Executives, Board President, spectators, interested parties)
- Prepare counter arguments with facts and figures, if applicable
- Know what you are allowed to say and not to say

### How to Prepare

- What is the dress code? Formal, business, business-casual or casual
- Do I need someone to go with me?
- Prepare positive affirmations
- What are my expected outcomes?
- Clear your calendar
- Make sure you have secured transportation and have directions

### What about you?

- Make sure to get proper rest
- Have an elevator speech ready, and practice it
- Know your role in the meeting. Are you on the agenda? Are you gathering information?
- Take notes
- Do you have a business card or way to pass out your contact information?
- Take mindfulness breaks and be aware of your surroundings

**Always leave with an attitude of gratitude and thank others for allowing you to attend**

**A few good links to research strategies of preparing:**

<https://www.entrepreneur.com/article>

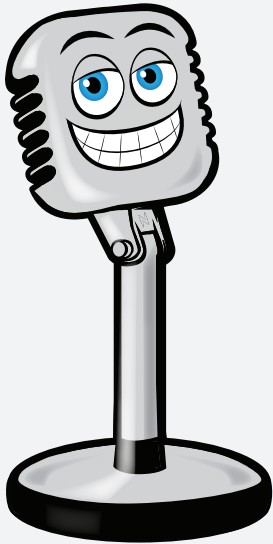
<https://www.greatspeech.co/speech-preparation-checklist>

<https://leadersexcellence.com/preparation-is-key-for-public-speaking>

[Preparation is essential if you want to be a good public speaker \(mannerofspeaking.org\)](https://mannerofspeaking.org)

There are many links to learn how to prepare to speak. As you review them you will see that they all have one thing in common, preparation can “make or break” the outcome of the speaking event.

## Module 5: Reviewing My Growth



SO YOU'VE BEEN TO A MEETING WHERE YOU EXPRESSED YOURSELF AND SHARED YOUR VOICE. HOW'D IT GO?

MAYBE IT WAS SCARY. OR EXHILARATING. OR DEFEATING. OR UPLIFTING. OR PROFOUND. OR HUMBLING. OR ALL OF THESE THINGS AND MORE.

MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE RESULT OF THE MEETING IS THE QUESTION, HOW DO YOU USE THE EXPERIENCE TO GROW AS A PERSON WITH AN IMPORTANT VOICE? WHETHER YOU THINK YOU FAILED OR HIT A HOME RUN, THE BOTTOM LINE IS THAT YOU ARE DIFFERENT FOR THE EXPERIENCE. YOU HAVE MORE WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE. YOU KNOW MORE ABOUT YOURSELF. YOU KNOW MORE ABOUT OTHERS, AND ABOUT MEETINGS, AND ABOUT SHARING YOUR VOICE, ETC. MAYBE YOU CAN'T FEEL IT OR THINK, YET, BECAUSE YOU'RE TOO WRAPPED UP IN THE EMOTIONAL AFTERMATH—BUT YOU ARE DIFFERENT.

THE REAL QUESTION NOW, IS, WHAT DO YOU DO WITH THIS DIFFERENCE?

THERE WAS THIS SINGER, ONCE, AND HE HAD WRITTEN A SONG IN REMEMBRANCE OF HIS FRIEND WHO HAD PASSED AWAY TRAGICALLY. HE DELIVERED THE SONG AT THE FUNERAL—I WAS THERE... I WAS IN HIS TREMBLING HAND—AND THE SONG CAME OUT BEAUTIFULLY. AND PEOPLE WERE BOTH MOVED TO TEARS AS WELL AS SET ABLAZE WITH LOVE AND WARMTH. BUT FOR THE NEXT THREE MONTHS HE COULDN'T EVEN TOUCH ME, LET ALONE SING A SONG THROUGH ME. HE WAS AN EMOTIONAL WRECK AFTER THAT CATHARTIC EXPERIENCE OF SINGING AT THE FUNERAL. THEN ONE DAY HE TURNED ON THE RECORDING TAPE, PLUGGED ME IN, AND STARTING TALKING. HE DIDN'T SING. THERE WAS NO AUDIENCE. NO MUSIC. NO MELODY IN HIS VOICE. HE JUST NEEDED TO TALK OUT LOUD. I WILL NEVER DIVULGE WHO IT WAS OR WHAT HE SAID—BUT IT WAS HEART-WRENCHING, AND I KNEW THAT AS HE PROCESSED HIS FEELINGS AND THOUGHTS BY TALKING INTO ME, HE WAS HEALING.

WHEN YOUR VOICE IS GENUINE AND AUTHENTICALLY YOU, IT IS ALWAYS RIGHT—AND THE IMPACT IT HAS ON OTHERS AND ON YOU WHEN YOU SHARE IT IS SIMPLY THE IMPACT, NOTHING MORE. HOW YOU PROCESS YOUR EXPERIENCE OF SHARING IS WHAT'S IMPORTANT. AND THAT'S WHAT MODULE 5 IS ALL ABOUT: EXPLORING HOW YOU ARE DIFFERENT AFTER SHARING YOUR VOICE, SO THAT YOU CAN CONTINUE TO GROW AND SUSTAIN YOUR RECOVERY JOURNEY AND TO STRENGTHEN YOUR VOICE (REGARDLESS OF WHETHER YOU DECIDE TO SHARE IT AGAIN, OR NOT). ULTIMATELY, MODULE 5 LEADS BACK TO MODULE 1—WITH A CLEARER UNDERSTANDING OF "WHO AM I?"

HERE'S THE OFFICIAL EXPLANATION OF MODULE 5 SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO LOOK BACK TO THE BEGINNING:

**Module 5: Reviewing My Growth.** After each experience, the individual will have grown—regardless of whether the experience was successful, or not, the person will be able to use the tools in this module to assess and reflect on the experience, and be prepared to enter Module 1 again with additional insights about his or her Why and What. He or she will be able to assess their state of Recovery, as well, and determine if this path is a healthy path at this time. At this point the cycle continues, and with each iteration the person develops his or her whole self, ultimately resulting in a stronger representation of their Consumer Voice.

## Tools to Help You Grow from Your Experience

Below are several tools accompanied by testimonies/examples to assist you to explore your experience and to grow from it. The tools include:

- Questions to Prompt Learning from Experience
- Questions to Problem-Solve
- How to Measure Personal Growth
- SMART Goals as a Tool for Personal Growth

### Questions to Prompt Learning from Experience

1. What would have made this better?
2. What from this experience do you most appreciate about yourself?
3. How do you feel about this situation now?
4. What result did you want?
5. What could you learn about yourself from this experience?
6. What could you do differently next time?
7. What do you remember thinking but not saying?
8. What surprised you about the situation?

Here is an example of using Questions to Learn from Experience, submitted by An Anonymous Peer:

**Situation:** I attended a training, where we had to be in teams. My team did not work well together. Some of the teams said that they did not feel like they were included in the process. No one wanted to get us and present the information we completed.

1. What would have made this better?

The first step is to establish unity within the team. If everyone on the team would observe and affirm each other's position, values and concerns. The team should try to relate the other's position, values and concerns to your experiences as an individual. Offer a "we" statement that acknowledges the common ground and promotes partnership in creating another way of doing things. The team being flexible, willing to listen, and being open to change.

2. What from this experience do you most appreciate about yourself?

From this experience I appreciate that when it came time for our team presentation, and everyone else refused share the information, that I did get up and share the information. I did not realize that I was that bold. I was really proud of myself. I learned that no matter what happens or what negativity occurs, that I have the power and courage to still stand and do my best.

3. How do you feel about this situation now?

I feel confident in my ability to be a good team player and leader. The next training or meeting that requires teams working together, how to do my best to make sure everyone is heard and their voice does matter. Through this experience I learned that it does not matter how others respond to a situation, I am only responsible for my own actions. I feel that this situation showed me that I need ways to better relate to people with from other walks of life and see things from their environments and cultures. Team members do not have to see eye to eye, but find a middle ground to reach our goal.

4. What result did you want?

The result that I wanted was for the team was to stand out from everyone else. We would be praised for our work. Everyone on the team would be excited about the topic and that all of us would share our ideas and make them sound as one voice.

5. What could you learn about yourself from this experience?

This experience has taught me how to work with groups or a team in a positive way. I also learned that each person has an opinion and mine is not the only one that counts. Compromise is the key to a unified team or group. Some people's experience with the topic may not be a positive one and to tread carefully before making assumptions. Lastly to encourage the team to stay focused on the topic and to do it justice to the person who came up with the topic and try to upgrade it.

6. What could you do differently next time?

Next time I will not just sit quietly and wait on the rest of the group to do all of the work. Observe other people and learn a little about their culture before making statements that offend them. If there is a conflict ask the presenter what she wants the team to focus on. I will not assume just because a person talks a lot that it means they will be the one that does the presentation for the team.

7. What do you remember thinking but not saying?

I was thinking this is not going well. I wanted to move to another group. I wanted everything to just be over with. I was thinking a lot of talking and no one listening. The other teams have finished but we haven't started writing yet.

8. What surprised you about the situation?

The lack of unity. The way some people refused to participate. How no one was willing to get up and present our topic. The way we as a team should have had a united front on the topic.

Here is another example of using Questions to Learn from Experience, submitted by Stephanie Stout:

**Situation:** I attended a meeting and didn't feel like I was prepared. I also let other peoples' behavior start to bother me and cause me to not have a good experience.

1. What would have made this better?	Printing more materials and having things "on hand" rather than in my computer. I like to have paper copies of things. I also believe not being so rushed prior to the meeting would have made things easier. I tend to procrastinate because I feel I work better under pressure. That works unless other "life events" happen when I'm already limited on time.
2. What from this experience do you most appreciate about yourself?	The ability to communicate with others. Having enough confidence to engage in a discussion regarding topics and discuss my view on a situation.
3. How do you feel about this situation now?	I feel good about the situation. I feel like there were many things accomplished.
4. What result did you want?	I wanted to be able to get my thoughts together and to make everyone feel included, as well as able to engage in discussions.
5. What could you learn about yourself from this experience?	That attitudes are infectious. I believe that my attitude can affect others that I am around. The attitudes of those sitting around me can affect my attitude as well.
6. What could you do differently next time?	Get in the room early enough to choose who I sit around. I need to know those in the room and the general attitude that they have as well as my own attitude.
7. What do you remember thinking but not saying?	"I wish you would shut up and stop the side talk."
8. What surprised you about the situation?	When I changed my attitude and chose what I was going to allow to bother me, my feelings began to change. I began to be calmer and not so uptight. My blood pressure lowered and I was able to discuss situations rather than feel like I was going to jump out of my skin.

Here is one more example of using Questions to Learn from Experience, submitted by Denika Poole:

**Situation:** I did not have as good of a Treatment Team Meeting as I would have liked.

1. What would have made this better?	I believe having confidence to speak on behalf of the clients is beneficial to their recovery. I believe advocating more would have made this treatment team meeting better.
2. What from this experience do you most appreciate about yourself?	I become involved with the wellbeing of our clients. I can appreciate that I do advocate for them without allowing myself to become angry and completely shut down. I have learned that our staff consists of different backgrounds and experiences.
3. How do you feel about this situation now?	I feel that as a Peer Specialist I am our client's voice.
4. What result did you want?	I wanted a fair decision to be made on behalf of all clients. I wanted equality across the board for each individual that we service as a team. I believe that each client has unique situations and should be cared for according to their situations.
5. What could you learn about yourself from this experience?	I have learned not to become emotional and upset if a co-worker has a difference of opinion about the treatment our client may need to receive. I feel we are all there as a team to work together for all of our clients. I could learn how to compromise more with my coworkers and to listen to the different opinions they may have concerning our clients. I have learned that my opinion does matter.
6. What could you do differently next time?	The next time I'm involved in a Treatment team staffing I will be more open minded about the opinions and ideas of others. I will try not to take everything personally.
7. What do you remember thinking but not saying?	During Treatment team staffing, I always think that I'm not being heard or that I'm invisible. I sometimes shut down and don't advocate for our clients for those reasons. I remember thinking everyone on this team has a degree so I shouldn't dispute anything being said.
8. What surprised you about the situation?	To my surprise my coworkers value my opinions. They encourage me to speak more during our treatment team staffing. They encourage me to complete my own degree.



## Questions for Problem-Solving

1. What does your response to this situation tell you about yourself?
2. How do you know this? What are you feeling inside? (examples: guilt, shame, embarrassment, fear, happiness, hurt, pride . . .)
3. What could you do differently? What coping skills could you have implemented?
4. Where could you get help to improve this situation?
5. What is positive about the situation?
6. What is the simplest thing you could do?
7. What is the relationship between how things are now and how you want them to be?
8. What about this situation would you most like to change?
9. How does this situation affect you personally?
10. If you get what you want what will this achieve for you?
11. What do you need to do first?
12. What is stopping you?
13. What will happen if you are not successful in getting what you want?
14. What about this situation causes you the most anxiety or distress?

Here is an example of using Questions for Problem-Solving, submitted by An Anonymous Peer.

**Situation:** I experienced the betrayal of a friend.

1. What does your response to this situation tell you about yourself?	This situation tells me that I have a lot of growing to do, because I did not respond well when I found out about this person that I considered a friend for many years betrayed me. I should have handled the situation better. This situation tells me not to do anything when you are angry, because you hurt other people and yourself. Words and actions you cannot take back; no matter how sorry you are.
2. How do you know this?	I know this because my actions hurt people that I love and care about. Some words that I spoke I can't take back. As soon as the words came out of my mouth, I was so ashamed, just like feathers once they are released there is no way to gather them again. I made myself look bad. I am better than the way I behaved. I live by standards and I lowered them during this situation.
3. What could you do differently?	Realize that we all make mistakes and forgive my friend. Think about the time I have said things about people that I heard and spread not knowing if it was true or not. Not responded in such a negative way; because it does not matter what someone else does. I am responsible for only my behavior.
4. Where could you get help to improve this situation?	I could get help by talking to my pastor, because everything I share is confidential. Look up something on the internet that deals with betrayal and how to handle it. Not over think the situation. To grow from my mistakes and not repeat them.

5. What is positive about the situation?	The positive thing about this situation is that I learned how to have a forgiving heart. I learned that I am stronger because of it. Jesus was betrayed, so I am in good company. My expectations from people around me are often too high.
6. What is the simplest thing you could do?	The simplest thing I can do is continue to associate with this individual. I learned to forgive myself for allowing this to happen. Realize that the power of life and death is in the tongue, and from now on I choose to speak life to my friends and well as my enemies.
7. What is the relationship between how things are now and how you want them to be?	Things between my friend and I are not like they were before. I want them to be close again. I want to embrace her again for real. I want to be open to people again. She did apologize and it was sincere. I made a choice to forgive her; it will take time for the trust to return to where it once was.
8. What about this situation would you most like to change?	My response when I first heard the news of my friend's betrayal. The way that I spoke to her. My mom told me two wrongs don't make a right. The pain I felt, and sometimes it surfaces to the top now. The hurt I caused during this situation.
9. How does this situation affect you personally?	It was a blow to me at first. It was like someone punched me in the stomach and knocked the air out of me. It made me doubt people for a while. I had to reach within my heart to find forgiveness and strength.
10. If you get what you want what will this achieve for you?	This will give peace of mind. A forgiving heart. My character will be stronger. I will realize that everything happens for a reason and if it does not kill you it makes you stronger.
11. What do you need to do first?	Clearly identify and state the problem. Identify how I am impacting the problem. Explore the pros and cons of solving the problem. Come up with 3-5 ways to address the problem. Pick 1-2 ways to begin to address the problem and move forward with it. (Appalachian Consulting Group, Inc)
12. What is stopping you?	Pride did for a while. The feeling of entitlement that I should be angry and not forgive the person.
13. What will happen if you are not successful in getting what you want?	A friendship will be lost. A wall can be built up and I will not trust people easily. I will be stuck in a place that is not positive. I will really be hurting myself in the long run. I will not be effective in communicating because of what I say and not be free to express myself because of negative feed back
14. What about this situation causes you the most anxiety or distress?	My mistake is exposed by a friend. The way others perceive after the information was disclosed. How I reacted to the situation. The negativity that was within me that I did not realize was there. The bond was broken between two friends.

Here is another example of using Questions for Problem-Solving, submitted by Stephanie Stout

Situation: I experienced the loss of a job.

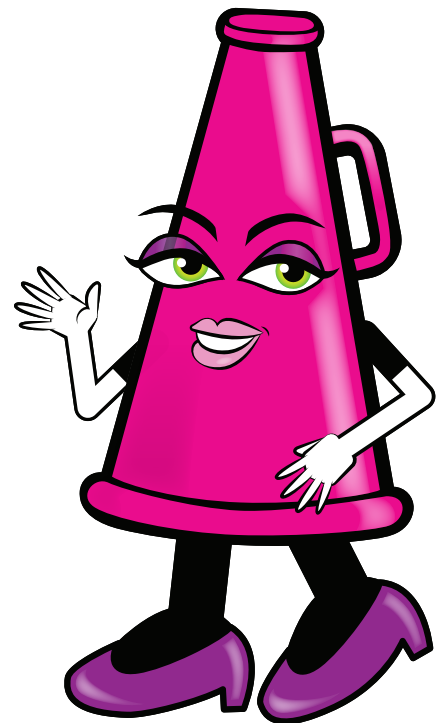
1. What does your response to this situation tell you about yourself?	That I am stressing too much over this and not using positive self-talk
2. How do you know this?	I become engulfed with constant worry, have a headache in the back of my neck, and I feel like I am going to explode when I start thinking about it.
3. What could you do differently?	Practice mindfulness exercises by trying to relax and focus on a calming word or phrase. I could also use what I learned in the CPSS training, to catch it (the negative thought), check it (is it fact or story), and then change it (to a more appropriate thought based on facts).
4. Where could you get help to improve this situation?	I could talk to someone about it, begin to research possible job opportunities and update my resume.
5. What is positive about the situation?	I am learning to depend more on God, and realize that He always provides a way. I am able to take the time to heal from a recent surgery.
6. What is the simplest thing you could do?	Probably the simplest thing I could do is try to ignore it and pretend it isn't happening.
7. What is the relationship between how things are now and how you want them to be?	Things are difficult but not impossible. I guess no one wants to go through difficult times, but I feel like I would feel better about myself and be happier if this worked out. I would like to have a dream job and work with people again on a daily basis.
8. What about this situation would you most like to change?	I would like for the situation never to have occurred, but I am thankful that it has. These questions help me process and realize that as bad as I think things are, there really isn't anything I would change. I wouldn't change the fact that I am able to depend more on help from God.
9. How does this situation affect you personally?	Personally, I feel a lack of confidence that I once had. I feel down and like I don't have a purpose a good bit of time. I have to practice more positive self-talk and make gratitude lists daily. When I first began my recovery journey, I wrote down everything I was grateful for. I stopped doing this daily throughout the years. By beginning to write it down again, it lifts my spirits and shows me that despite everything that has happened, I have so many things to be grateful for.

10. If you get what you want what will this achieve for you?	I believe it would boost my self-confidence. I would feel like I have a purpose and am able to help others. I would have more security in knowing I am able to pay bills and attend necessary medical visits as well as pay for medications.
11. What do you need to do first?	Look online and ask if anyone knows of an agency hiring. I need to begin applying for jobs even if I don't think they would hire me.
12. What is stopping you?	What has stopped me are feelings of being "tainted," not a good employee, thinking no one would hire me and feeling that I wouldn't be able to do the job.
13. What will happen if you are not successful in getting what you want?	I will take a job outside of my career of choice just to pay the bills.
14. What about this situation causes you the most anxiety or distress?	What causes me the most stress in this situation is the fear of not being good enough and letting people down. I feel like I know what field I want to work in and that I know I want to help others. When I allow self-doubt to enter my mind, I begin to wonder if I chose the wrong field and wonder if I can ever be of any good to anyone. I begin to doubt all of the things I have ever done.

THOSE WERE **AMAZING** TESTIMONIES.

I'D LIKE TO TAKE A MOMENT TO PERSONALLY THANK ALL OF THE PEERS WHO CONTRIBUTED THEIR TESTIMONIES TO THIS CPIEM BOOK-THINGY. ALL OF THE TOOLS IN THIS DOCUMENT ARE HELPFUL, FOR SURE—BUT IT'S THE PERSONAL LIFE-SHARING OF PEER VOICES THAT MAKES THE TOOLS COME TO LIFE. IF YOU'RE A PEER AND YOU'RE READING THROUGH THIS, I HOPE YOU'RE INSPIRED TO THINK ABOUT HOW YOUR VOICE CAN TOUCH THE LIVES OF OTHERS.

I DON'T THINK I CAN SHOUT ANYTHING MORE APPROPRIATE THAN A SIMPLE **THANK YOU!**



Anger can get the better of you in any of the above situations. Next are some tips to dealing with anger:

## Anger management: 10 tips to tame your temper

Keeping your temper in check can be challenging. Use simple anger management tips — from taking a timeout to using “I” statements — to stay in control.

By Mayo Clinic Staff

Do you fume when someone cuts you off in traffic? Does your blood pressure rocket when your child refuses to cooperate? Anger is a common and even healthy emotion. But it's important to deal with it in a positive way. Uncontrolled anger can take a toll on both your health and your relationships.

Ready to get your anger under control? Start by considering these 10 anger management tips.

### 1. Think before you speak

In the heat of the moment, it's easy to say something you'll later regret. Take a few moments to collect your thoughts before saying anything. Also allow others involved in the situation to do the same.

### 2. Once you're calm, express your concerns

As soon as you're thinking clearly, express your frustration in an assertive but nonconfrontational way. State your concerns and needs clearly and directly, without hurting others or trying to control them.

### 3. Get some exercise

Physical activity can help reduce stress that can cause you to become angry. If you feel your anger escalating, go for a brisk walk or run. Or spend some time doing other enjoyable physical activities.

### 4. Take a timeout

Timeouts aren't just for kids. Give yourself short breaks during times of the day that tend to be stressful. A few moments of quiet time might help you feel better prepared to handle what's ahead without getting irritated or angry.

### 5. Identify possible solutions

Instead of focusing on what made you mad, work on resolving the issue at hand. Does your child's messy room make you upset? Close the door. Is your partner late for dinner every night? Schedule meals later in the evening. Or agree to eat on your own a few times a week. Also, understand that some things are simply out of your control. Try to be realistic about what you can and cannot change. Remind yourself that anger won't fix anything and might only make it worse.

### 6. Stick with 'I' statements

Criticizing or placing blame might only increase tension. Instead, use “I” statements to describe the problem. Be respectful and specific. For example, say, “I'm upset that you left the table without offering to help with the dishes” instead of “You never do any housework.”

### 7. Don't hold a grudge

Forgiveness is a powerful tool. If you allow anger and other negative feelings to crowd out positive feelings, you might find yourself swallowed up by your own bitterness or sense of injustice. Forgiving someone who angered you might help you both learn from the situation and strengthen your relationship.

## 8. Use humor to release tension

Lightheartening up can help diffuse tension. Use humor to help you face what's making you angry and, possibly, any unrealistic expectations you have for how things should go. Avoid sarcasm, though — it can hurt feelings and make things worse.

## 9. Practice relaxation skills

When your temper flares, put relaxation skills to work. Practice deep-breathing exercises, imagine a relaxing scene, or repeat a calming word or phrase, such as “Take it easy.” You might also listen to music, write in a journal or do a few yoga poses — whatever it takes to encourage relaxation.

## 10. Know when to seek help

Learning to control anger can be a challenge at times. Seek help for anger issues if your anger seems out of control, causes you to do things you regret or hurts those around you.

# How to Control Anger: 25 Tips to Help You Stay Calm

Anger is a normal feeling and can be a positive emotion when it helps you work through issues or problems, whether that's at work or at home.

However, anger can become problematic if it leads to aggression, outbursts, or even physical altercations.

Here are 25 ways to control your anger:

### 1. Count down- count down from 10.

If you're really mad, start at 100. In the time it takes to count, your heart rate will slow, and your anger will likely subside.

### 2. Take a breather

Your breathing becomes shallower and speeds up as you grow angry. Reverse that trend (and your anger) by taking slow, deep breaths from your nose and exhaling out of your mouth for several moments.

### 3. Go walk around

Exercise is a trusted resource that can help calm your nerves and reduce anger. Go for a walk, ride your bike, or hit a few golf balls. Anything that gets your limbs pumping is good for your mind and body.

### 4. Relax your muscles

Progressive muscle relaxation calls on you to tense and slowly relax various muscle groups in your body, one at a time. As you tense and release, take slow, deliberate breaths.

### 5. Repeat a mantra

Find a word or phrase that helps you calm down and refocus. Repeat that word again and again to yourself when you're upset. “Relax,” “Take it easy,” and “You'll be OK” are all good examples.

### 6. Stretch

Neck rolls and shoulder rolls are good examples of nonstrenuous yoga-like movements that can help you control your body and harness your emotions. No fancy equipment required.

## 7. Mentally escape

Slip into a quiet room, close your eyes, and practice visualizing yourself in a relaxing scene. Focus on details in the imaginary scene: What color is the water? How tall are the mountains? What do the chirping birds sound like? This practice can help you find calm amidst anger.

## 8. Play some tunes

Let music carry you away from your feelings. Put in earbuds or slip out to your car. Crank up your favorite music and hum, bop, or sashay your anger away.

## 9. Stop talking

When you're steamed, you may be tempted to let the angry words fly, but you're more likely to do harm than good. Pretend your lips are glued shut, just like you did as a kid. This moment without speaking will give you time to collect your thoughts.

## 10. Take a timeout

Give yourself a break. Sit away from others. In this quiet time, you can process events and return your emotions to neutral. You may even find this time away from others is so helpful you want to schedule it into your daily routine.

## 11. Take action

Harness your angry energy. Sign a petition. Write a note to an official. Do something good for someone else. Pour your energy and emotions into something that's healthy and productive.

## 12. Write in your journal

What you can't say, perhaps you can write. Jot down what you're feeling and how you want to respond. Processing it through the written word can help you calm down and reassess the events leading up to your feelings.

## 13. Find the most immediate solution

You might be angry that your child has once again left their room a mess before going to visit a friend. Shut the door. You can temporarily end your anger by putting it out of your view. Look for similar resolutions in any situations.

## 14. Rehearse your response

Prevent an outburst by rehearsing what you're going to say or how you're going to approach the problem in the future. This rehearsal period gives you time to role-play several possible solutions, too.

## 15. Picture a stop sign

The universal symbol to stop can help you calm down when you're angry. It's a quick way to help you visualize the need to halt yourself, your actions, and walk away from the moment.

## 16. Change your routine

If your slow commute to work makes you angry before you've even had coffee, find a new route. Consider options that may take longer but leave you less upset in the end.

## 17. Talk to a friend

Don't stew in the events that made you angry. Help yourself process what happened by talking with a trusted, supportive friend who can possibly provide a new perspective.



## **18. Laugh**

Nothing upends a bad mood like a good one. Diffuse your anger by looking for ways to laugh, whether that's playing with your kids, watching stand-up, or scrolling memes.

## **19. Practice gratitude**

Take a moment to focus on what's right when everything feels wrong. Realizing how many good things you have in your life can help you neutralize anger and turn around the situation.

## **20. Set a timer**

The first thing that comes to mind when you're angry likely isn't the thing you should say. Give yourself a set time before you respond. This time will help you be calmer and more concise.

## **21. Write a letter**

Write a letter or email to the person that made you angry. Then, delete it. Often, expressing your emotions in some form is all you want, even if it's in something that will never be seen.

## **22. Imagine forgiving them**

Finding the courage to forgive someone who has wronged you takes a lot of emotional skill. If you can't go that far, you can at least pretend that you're forgiving them, and you'll feel your anger slip away.

## **23. Practice empathy**

Try to walk in the other person's shoes and see the situation from their perspective. When you tell the story or relive the events as they saw it, you may gain a new understanding and become less angry.

## **24. Express your anger**

It's OK to say how you feel, as long as you handle it in the right way. Ask a trusted friend to help you be accountable to a calm response. Outbursts solve no problems, but mature dialogue can help reduce your stress and ease your anger. It may also prevent future problems.

## **25. Find a creative channel**

Turn your anger into a tangible production. Consider painting, gardening, or writing poetry when you're upset. Emotions are powerful muses for creative individuals. Use yours to reduce anger.

## **The bottom line**

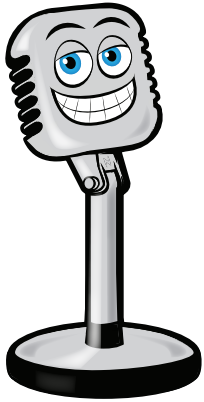
Anger is a normal emotion that everyone experiences from time to time. However, if you find your anger turns to aggression or outbursts, you need to find healthy ways to deal with anger.

## How to Measure Personal Growth

Measuring personal growth is a subjective undertaking. You need to evaluate yourself as a whole, recognize where you feel you needed to grow and determine whether you have made positive changes. The process of measuring your growth, therefore, requires honesty and discipline. Consider the following ways to measure personal growth.

### Steps

- 1. Think about all the areas in which you feel you needed to grow.** You can measure in thought how you have improved in these areas or you can write down your findings. Note that the areas of personal growth for you will be different compared to others.
  - a. Example: I needed to be more sensitive to the feelings of others, because I often say things that make them angry. Kim doesn't like when I say . . . I've learned that if I say "This is my opinion" ahead of something, it makes me sound less aggressive.
- 2. Assess your sense of personal responsibility when evaluating personal growth.** Ask yourself how much you believe that you are responsible for having a good life. You need to recognize that only you can make this happen. Make sure that you have improved in this area of your character, and if you are serious about growing personally, then you have to improve in this capacity.
- 3. Look back in order to determine whether you have made positive changes.** Avoid looking back in order to feel regret or guilt about the past. The process of looking back is to see how you have become better in certain areas or your character. This should be a positive experience which allows you to learn from any bad choices that you may have made.
- 4. Determine how much more you recognize that negative thoughts can cause negative results.** Maybe in the past you did not realize that your negative attitude had a negative impact on your life. Determine whether you have become more positive in your thought process.
- 5. Contemplate how much you now appreciate what you have.** If you find that you are no longer complaining about your situation, but rather looking at all the good things in your life, then that demonstrates success when assessing personal development and growth.
- 6. Evaluate your integrity.** Assuming you feel that you were not as honest as you wanted to be, ask yourself if you have improved in that area. Contemplate your relationship with others in this context. Determine if you are honest in both word and deed and whether being truthful comes naturally now.
- 7. Question whether you are a "giver" or a "taker."** Personal growth is calculated in many ways, but one of the best ways to grow is to help others. Being there for someone else or others often provides a moment of clarity. Not only are you giving to someone else, but you can see that you are fortunate enough to be able to give to someone else. Giving to others, whether charity or friendship, puts a lot of things in perspective and offers substantial personal growth in many areas of a person's character.
- 8. Don't allow yourself to make excuses for not growing as much as you had hoped.** If you find that you have not improved in certain areas, find out why. You have control of your own actions, so understand why you did not allow for improvement and come up with a plan to be more proactive at making your desired changes.



**DON'T FORGET TO SHARE YOUR OWN EXAMPLES WITH THESE TOOLS WITH US! THE MORE WE SHARE, THE MORE WE HELP AND INSPIRE EACH OTHER, AND TOGETHER WE GET STRONGER.**

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## SMART Goals as a Tool for Personal Growth

*Personal growth is always good, even the times we think we've failed.* Following is an allegory submitted by Sandra Caron.

**"Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?" Asked Alice.**

**"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat.**

**"I don't much care where," said Alice.**

**"Then it doesn't matter which way you go," replied the Cat.**

Personal growth continues to happen to each of us, each and every day. How we perceive our growth depends on our own self perceptions.

Scenario: Alice is part of a larger group project. She has a particular area she must produce by a specific date. Alice feels confident she will do a great job! As the deadline grows closer for her work to be turned in, Alice begins to grow anxious. She realizes she must stop her activities and complete the project. She calls her peer, saying "I just can't seem to put this together. I have a massive headache, it's the holidays, and the timing of this project is really bad. I have a family member to take to the doctor, and I also have my own doctor visit to attend. I'll just throw this together, and give my excuses, they'll have to understand." Alice completes her project, yet believes she's failed her group and now sees herself as a failure. 'I should never have taken this one, it's such a mess and they'll know I'm a failure.' She again talks to her peer, who reminds her that she has the skills to complete the tasks, to step back, take a breath, and think this through.

Personal growth requires setting goals. "One of the most frustrating challenges for individuals in recovery from mental illness and substance abuse is setting goals. But without goals, there is no sense of progress or forward motion."

To accomplish her goal, Alice first looked at the CPIEM's first Module, 'Who Am I.' Considering the skills Alice has learned, she looked at 'Catch It, Check It, Change It.' Taken from the WHAM (Whole Health Action Management course, Center for Integrated Health Solutions), this approach follows these steps: First 'Catch the Negative Thought.' Second, 'Check it' against the facts. Is the thought factual, have I failed completely, or have I had some success after all? Lastly, 'Change it.' If it doesn't add up factually, change the thoughts to a more factual and productive thought.

Looking at Module 2, Alice considered her ‘Tiers of Competency.’ She had the skills to do the actual work, yet had felt it was not her best work. Alice certainly had the training to complete the task. She had good communication skills and was able to effectively research the topic.

Module 3 points out the need for ‘Engagement Opportunities’. Alice had several venues where she could find what she needed for her part in the project.

Module 4 points to ‘Preparing Myself and Participating’. Here Alice found her answer—she had not prepared in advance. Regardless of the skills Alice has, it is apparent time management is a skill she needs to further improve. Giving herself the proper amount of time would have possibly helped her to produce her work to her own satisfaction. Alice’s goal is now to learn to develop a time management plan. Remembering her friends advice yet once again, Alice chose to do a SMART Goals worksheet.

## SMART Goals

*SMART Goal Setting Guide Sheet (UCSD.edu)*

Following are components of an effective goal – one that describes performance standards that will “tell us what good behavior looks like.” The SMART acronym can help us remember these components.

<b>Specific:</b>	The goal should identify a specific action or event that will take place.
<b>Measurable:</b>	The goal and its benefits should be quantifiable.
<b>Achievable:</b>	The goal should be attainable given available resources.
<b>Realistic:</b>	The goal should require you to stretch some, but allow the likelihood of success.
<b>Timely:</b>	The goal should state the time period in which it will be accomplished.

Here are some tips that can help you set effective goals:

1. Develop several goals. A list of five to seven items gives you several things to work on over a period of time.
2. State goals as declarations of intention, not items on a wish list. “I want to apply to three schools” lacks power. “I will apply to three schools” is intentional and powerful.
3. Attach a date to each goal. State what you intend to accomplish and by when. A good list should include some short-term and some long-term goals. You may want a few goals for the year, and some for two- or three-month intervals.
4. Be specific. “To find a job” is too general; “to find and research five job openings before the end of the month” is better. Sometimes a more general goal can become the long-term aim, and you can identify some more specific goals to take you there.
5. Share your goals with someone who cares if you reach them. Sharing your intentions with your parents, your best friend, or your teacher will help ensure success.
6. Write down your goals and put them where you will see them. The more often you read your list, the more results you get.
7. Review and revise your list. Experiment with different ways of stating your goals. Goal setting improves with practice, so play around with it.

Writing an Effective Goal Statement: Rules for writing goal statements...

1. Use clear, specific language.
2. Start your goal statement with TO + a VERB
3. Write your goal statement using SMART Goal Criteria
4. Avoid using negative language. Think positive!

An example of a goal statement:

- To run the mini marathon in May and complete the 10-mile race in under 1 hour to beat my personal best time.

Notice how the above example begins with the word “To,” includes the verb “run,” and tells what (the marathon), why (to beat personal best time) and when (May).

Activity: Use this worksheet to identify the specific SMART criteria you will use to write your goal statement.

1. What is your basic goal?

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2. Is it **Specific?** (Who? What? Where? When? Why?)

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3. Is it **Measurable?** (How will I measure progress? How many? How much?)

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4. Is it **Attainable?** (Can this really happen? Attainable with enough effort? What steps are involved?)

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5. Is it **Realistic?** (What knowledge, skills, and abilities are necessary to reach this goal?)

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6. Is it **Time-bound?** (Can I set fixed deadlines? What are the deadlines?)

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My Goal Statement: Use the SMART worksheet you just completed and the guidance above for writing a goal statement. This should be a goal that you would like to achieve in 12 months or less. Repeat this exercise as needed to write other goal statements.

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In 'Reviewing her Growth' in Module 5, Alice has learned that she's not a failure; however she does see the need to develop further skills in Time Management. She now considers what she's learned, and how to move forward.

## Appendix 1: Motivational Quotes

YOU'VE SEEN A LOT OF INFORMATION PRESENTED IN THE 5 MODULES. SOME OF IT REALLY SPOKE TO YOU, LIKE IT DID FOR ME AND THOSE WHO PROVIDED TESTIMONIES. SOME OF IT WAS SO-SO, AND NOT THE RIGHT TIME TO TAKE IN. THE SAME IS TRUE FOR THIS SECTION. WE'VE GATHERED A BUNCH OF QUOTES AND RESOURCES TO HELP PROVIDE MOTIVATION AND INSPIRATION.

WE THOUGHT ABOUT PLACING THESE THROUGHOUT THE DOCUMENT... BUT THEN THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN TRYING TO MAKE WHAT MOTIVATED US BE THE SAME FOR YOU. INSTEAD, WE HOPE YOU REVIEW THESE, CONSIDER WHICH ONES RESONATE WITH YOU, AND USE THEM. ATTACH THEM TO YOUR OWN MODULE EXPERIENCES. COME UP WITH NEW ONES AND SEND THEM IN. LET'S BUILD THIS LIST SO SOMEONE COULD BE LOST FOR A DAY JUST READING AND PONDERING THEM, GETTING FILLED WITH GOOD VIBES.

AS A MATTER OF FACT, MY CHALLENGE TO YOU IS TO FIND AT LEAST TWO QUOTES IN THE LIST BELOW, AND COPY THEM DOWN SOMEWHERE, OR PRINT THEM AND CUT THEM OUT, AND KEEP THEM WITH YOU. USE THEM. FIND THE TWO THAT REALLY SPEAK TO YOU, AND MAKE THEM A USEFUL PART OF YOUR RECOVERY. CHOOSE YOUR MANTRA, AND GO FORTH!

YOU'LL FIND THAT THESE QUOTES COVER SEVERAL KEY THEMES, SO YOU CAN THINK ABOUT A THEME THAT FITS WITH YOUR NEEDS, AND SEARCH FOR A QUOTE THAT WAY. OR, JUST DIVE INTO THE QUOTES AND SEE WHAT YOU LIKE.



### Themes:

- Recovery and resiliency
- Recovery pathways
- Overcoming failure
- Wellness tools and self-care
- Social self-care
- Emotional self-care
- Physical self-care
- Motivation to keep going
- Overcoming crisis

### Motivational, Inspirational, and Generally Thought-Provoking Quotes

1. "Failures are finger posts on the road to achievements." — C. S. Lewis
2. "I can accept failure, everyone fails at something. But I can't accept not trying." — Michael Jordan
3. "Failure is simply the opportunity to begin again, this time more intelligently." — Unknown
4. "Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new." — Unknown
5. "Remember that failure is an event, not a person." — Zig Ziglar
6. "Our greatest glory is not in falling, but in rising every time we fall." — Confucius
7. "Failure is success if we learn from it." — Malcolm Forbes



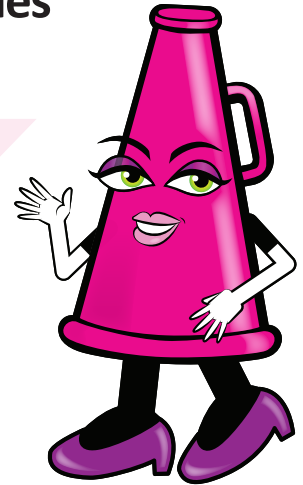
8. "Failure is a detour, not a dead-end street." — Zig Ziglar
9. "Just when the caterpillar thought the world was ending. He turned into a butterfly." — Proverb
10. "One's best success come after his greatest disappointments." — Henry Ward Beecher
11. "When you are down on your back, if you look up, you can get up." — Les Brown
12. "In order to succeed, you must first be willing to fail." — Unknown
13. "Your failures won't hurt you until you start blaming them on others." — Unknown
14. "There are no failures only feedback." — R. Bandler
15. "When we tackle obstacles, we find hidden reserves of courage and resilience we did not know we had. And it is only when we are faced with failure do we realize that these resources were always there within us. We only need to find them and move on with our lives." — A. P. J. Abdul Kalam
16. "My recovery must come first so that everything I love in life doesn't have to come last." — Anonymous
17. "When we give ourselves permission to fail, we, at the same time, give ourselves permission to excel."  
— Eloise Ristad
18. "Nurturing yourself is not selfish – it's essential to your well-being." —Renee Peterson Tredeau
19. "Emotional self-defense. Those who care so much, maybe too much, know that it takes wisdom and courage to sometimes say "no" to others." —Steve Maraboli
20. "Physical fitness is not only one of the most important keys to a healthy body, it is the basis of dynamic and creative intellectual activity." — John F. Kennedy
21. "The motivation is in my heart to work toward my goals and my dreams." — Nonito Donaire
22. "I understand that it's hard for everyone, but one cannot give in to emotions . . . we'll have to draw lessons from the current crisis and now we'll have to work on overcoming it." — Boris Yeltsin
23. "So often times it happens that we live our lives in chains and we never even know we have the key." — The Eagles
24. "Life is very interesting...in the end, some of your greatest pains, become your greatest strengths."  
— Drew Barrymore
25. "If at first an idea isn't absurd there is no hope for it." — Albert Einstein
26. "In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity." — Albert Einstein
27. "Imagination is more important than knowledge." — Albert Einstein
28. "Reputation is what folks think you are. Personality is what you seem to be. Character is what you really are."  
—Armand Montapert
29. "You must pay the price if you wish to secure the blessings." — Andrew Jackson
30. "Your altitude is determined by your attitude." — Unknown
31. "What you become is more important that what you accomplish." — Unknown

32. "Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life, as by the obstacles one has overcome trying to succeed." — Booker T. Washington
33. "We are what we think." — Buddha
34. "It's the constant and determined effort that breaks down all resistance, sweeps away all obstacles."  
— Claude M. Bristol
35. "Remember, today is the tomorrow you worried about yesterday." — Dale Carnegie
36. "Recovery from addiction requires hard work, a proper attitude and learning skills to stay sober, not drinking alcohol or using other drugs. Successful drug recovery or alcohol recovery involves changing attitudes, acquiring knowledge, and developing skills to meet the many challenges of sobriety." — Dennis Daley, PhD
37. "There are two kinds of failures: those who thought and never did, and those who did and never thought."  
— Dr. Laurence J. Peter
38. "It is never too late to be what you might have been." — George Eliot
39. "Face your deficiencies and acknowledge them; but do not let them master you. Let them teach you patience, sweetness, insight." — Helen Keller
40. "The difference between perseverance and obstinacy is that one often comes from a strong will, and the other from a strong won't." — Henry Ward Beecher
41. "You may have to fight a battle more than once to win it." — Margaret Thatcher
42. "Nothing worthwhile ever happens quickly and easily. You achieve only as you are determined to achieve... and as you keep at it until you have achieved." — Robert H. Lauer
43. "What does it mean to succeed? Most people see success as being rich and famous or powerful and influential. Others see it as being at the top of their profession and standing out from the rest. The wise see success in a more personal way; they see it as achieving the goals they have set for themselves, and then feeling pride and satisfaction in their accomplishments. True success is felt in the heart, not measured by money and power. So be true to yourself and achieve the goals you set. For success is reaching those goals and feeling proud of what you have accomplished." — Timothy Tweedie
44. "All we need to do is to decide what to do with the time that is given us." — Gandalf the Grey
45. "Don't count the days, make the days count." — Muhammad Ali
46. "I really think a champion is defined not by their wins but by how they can recover when they fall."  
— Serena Williams
47. "When everything seems to be going against you, remember that the airplane takes off against the wind, not with it." — Henry Ford

## Appendix 2: Resource Catalog of Diverse Tools, Resources, and Professional Opportunities

**WE HAVE ALL MADE USE OF VARIOUS RESOURCES, TOOLS, AND SERVICES—MY HOPE IS THAT YOU WILL SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES WITH US SO THAT MORE AND MORE PEOPLE WILL BENEFIT. I SAID IT BEFORE—WE ARE BUILDING A COLLECTIVE VOICE. DON'T BE SHY—YOU CAN ASK TO BE ANONYMOUS WHEN YOU SHARE YOUR TESTIMONY AND STORY.**

**SAY IT WITH ME:  
*I... CAN... DO... IT!***



Introduction by Ekoko Onema

One of the things that I would like to share is that initially when beginning my personal recovery journey, hope was my foundation and this still holds true today. I had many questions and concerns. I was afraid of the unknown, potential barriers, and unexpected setbacks along the way. I also had a lot of excitement and curiosity. I asked a lot of questions, involved myself in various activities, read books, watched webinars, and always kept in mind that my recovery is my responsibility.

What this means to me is that we will get out of it what we put into it. For me coming to this realization has been empowering. I allowed myself to become inspired by those who have gone before me and the peers I see in the present. When I saw others in recovery working, raising their families, advocating, staying clean and sober, improving their mental health, attending college, presenting at conferences, and making a difference in their communities I then had hope that I could too if I choose.

My recovery journey has afforded me countless opportunities which include continuing to learn, grow, and be of service to others. I consider myself to be a life-long learner. It is extremely important for me to remain open-minded, willing to step outside my comfort zone, and to collaborate with others. Today I have supporters and accountability partners, people who know me well, and support me. I also support others and serve as an accountability partner and supporter for them. This helps me to maintain balance.

Everyone's recovery journey is unique. This means that it is specific to each person's needs, hopes, goals and aspirations. The one thing we all have in common is the journey itself. I encourage you to make it as beautiful as possible because it can be. I removed "I can't" from my vocabulary. Peer Support led me to my purpose which is to be of service to others and to give them the same hope and support that has been given to me.

I would like to share with you SAMHSA's working definition of recovery. "A process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential" [www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov). This is a great way to summarize the journey. SAMHSA is the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and one of my favorite resources for information.

The following resource guide is designed to be inspiring, motivational, and informative. These are just a few options, I encourage you to consider and explore the options that you feel can be helpful as well as to do some exploration on your own or in groups with your fellow peers and or supporters.

## 1. Certified Peer Support Specialist Training Modules

This is an example using the peer support designations available in Mississippi. Not all states offer the same ones.

- Adult/Recovery
- Forensic
- Parent/Caregiver
- Peer Bridger
- Recovery
- Young Adult

### What is Peer Support?

Peer support is the act of people who have had similar experiences with mental illness and/or substance use giving each other encouragement, hope, assistance, guidance, and understanding that aids in recovery.

**The Peer Support Training** is an intensive 21-36 hour competencies-based course followed by a written exam. The training is designed to equip peers with the tools to effectively and compassionately draw from their lived experiences to help others encountering similar lived experiences.

The Certified Peer Support Specialist (CPSS) training is a training offered by the MS Department of Mental Health for individuals who self-identify as a person or family member of someone who is seeking or has sought services for mental health or substance use related illnesses. The training usually lasts about four days and is based on materials from Appalachian Consulting Group peer specialists training. This training includes an array of topics including sharing one's story, power conflict and integrity in the workplace, shared-decision making, facilitating recovery dialogues, trauma, and problem-solving skills, and the stages of recovery.

Stephanie Stout provided a summary of her experience with CPS training and certification.

I took the training in 2012 when it was offered by the MS Department of Mental Health. I remember when the information came to the agency I was working for. I begged to go and be a part of it. I spent a week in Jackson and not only learned so much from the training, but also developed many lasting friendships with others in my class. We began this process of working as peer specialists. It was new and exciting and I absolutely love the fact that it is becoming so well received. Being a peer specialist gives me the opportunity to share my experience, strength and hope with others. It allows me the benefit of sharing the trials and struggles I have been through, to hopefully offer hope and inspire others, to try a different way of life. I am able to help others realize that there is life after the impact of illness, they are so much more than a diagnosis and that life can and does get better.

I became a trainer for other peer specialists a few months after taking the class. I couldn't wait to show others that it is ok to have struggled with mental illness and substance use disorder because we are still people. We are good people who sometimes made bad choices but it doesn't define us. Once I stepped outside of the life is limited stage, I began to live and not just exist. I can share that experience with someone in that stage of life now. I can use my experiences to help another person. I actually have a job BECAUSE I have a mental illness. It's amazing and I love everyday of it.

Different states have different Peer Support Certified Designations. Here are some examples:

**Adult/Recovery Designation:** This training is for individuals who are willing to self-disclose that they are a person with a mental illness and/or substance use disorder. Individuals can demonstrate their own efforts at self-directed recovery and expertise including knowledge of approaches to support others in recovery. This training includes the five foundational beliefs of Peer Support and key elements needed to provide effective peer support services to others. Training topics include problem solving skills, how to change negative beliefs about themselves and the mental health system, how to use their dissatisfaction as an avenue for change, five stages in the recovery process and much more.

**Parent/Caregiver Designation:** This designation is for a biological parent, adoptive parent, or relative caregiver with permanent legal custody who is raising or has raised a child with an emotional, social, behavioral, and /or substance use disability. The peer support specialist will provide support and guidance to parents/caregivers in navigating the child service system and advocating with them to help their child/youth.

**Young Adult Designation:** This designation is for a person between the ages of 18-26 with personal lived experience with mental illness and/or substance use disorder as a youth. This training is held in conjunction with the Adult/Recovery designation and will be in the same group several days to learn key skills in working as a Peer Support Specialist.

**Peer Bridger Designation:** This designation is for an individual who has taken the CPSS Adult or CPSS Adult/Recovery Designation and will be working with individuals departing a program to bridge them to the community while accessing natural resources. This peer specialist will be responsible for linking the peer to resources including outpatient peer support, appointments with a therapist, housing, transportation and assisting them while they continue their recovery journey outside of the primary treatment arena.

**Recovery Designation:** Peer Support Specialists trained in this designation will be skilled to offer support to individuals to help reduce the negative effects of addiction, and if necessary, refer to treatment if relapse occurs. This module gives a brief history of the Disease of Addiction along with the formation of 12-step self-help groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous. Individuals are taught aspects of Trauma Informed Care and how to work with individuals while keeping their clients and themselves in a safe space. Only Peer Support Specialists previously trained in the Adult Designation meet the criteria to be trained in the Recovery designation.

**Forensic Peer Recovery Designation:** This is the newest designation for peer support specialists. It is a stand-alone designation, meaning that key elements from the Adult Designation is included in this training meaning it is not necessary to take the Adult designation prior to this designation. Peer Support Specialist with this designation will be providing services to individuals living with behavioral health disorders within the criminal justice system. This training will include the Sequential Intercept Module along with the following domains: Criminal Justice Mentoring & Education, Criminal Justice Recovery/Wellness, Criminal Justice Advocacy, and Criminal Justice Ethical Responsibilities.

## 2. (WRAP) Wellness Recovery Action Plan

As mentioned earlier, WRAP can serve as an asset on your recovery journey. It is individualized, person-centered, and created when you are well. You can create a WRAP Plan for anything you choose related to your recovery and wellness. For example, for your mental health, or substance use disorder. WRAP is available for individuals, families, veterans, adolescents, or kids to name a few.

Ekoko Onema says, “I attended my first WRAP training a few years ago and it helped me strengthen my recovery and wellness tremendously. It was fun to create, and it helped to learn more about myself and continues to help me stay well. It has helped me as a person in general and as a professional. I also had an awesome time learning and collaborating with my classmates and trainers. Today, I am a WRAP facilitator, which means I can help others create their WRAP Plans and can conduct WRAP Support Groups with other trained WRAP facilitators.” WRAP is an evidenced based practice created by Mary Ellen Copeland Ph. D. For detailed information please go to

<https://www.wellnessrecoveryactionplan.com/what-is-wrap/>

- **Seminar I: *Developing Your Own WRAP*** This workshop is co-facilitated by WRAP® Facilitators in a variety of formats and agendas, including 8-12-week WRAP groups or 2-day workshops. Participants in these workshops will learn how to develop their WRAP® as a personalized system to achieve/maintain their own wellness. These workshops are for anyone and can apply to any self-directed wellness goals.
- **Seminar II: *WRAP Facilitator Training*** This certificate course is co-facilitated by Certified Advanced Level WRAP® Facilitators using the Copeland Center’s standard five-day agenda. Participants in this certificate course are provided with Dr. Mary Ellen Copeland’s WRAP® Facilitator manual and learn how to use this manual to facilitate WRAP workshops using techniques that support a core set of values and ethics. This workshop is for anyone who has completed a Seminar I WRAP® workshop and who can illustrate WRAP® through personal examples of using WRAP® in their life.

## 3. Faith-Based Group/Approach

When drugs and alcohol have become a problem in your life or that of a loved one, finding a way to return to health and wellbeing becomes the most important thing in the world. So many people of different backgrounds have found what they need in order to get back on track through faith-based recovery. This approach is centered on the belief that every person can heal, no matter how far down the path of addiction they have gone, because every single person deserves forgiveness and a fresh start.

A faith-based approach to recovery is for anyone searching for a method of support with a spiritual foundation. This form of recovery has served many people of all different walks of life, as it focuses not on the religion, but on the universal principal of love, faith, forgiveness and healing. Unconditional love stands at the cornerstone of a Christian faith-based group.

## **4. Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)**

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) is an international fellowship of men and women who have had a drinking problem. It is nonprofessional, self-supporting, multiracial, apolitical, and available almost everywhere. There is no age or educational requirement. Membership is open to anyone who wants to do something about his or her drinking problem.

AA had its beginnings in 1935 at Akron, Ohio, as the outcome of a meeting between Bill W., a New York Stockbroker, and Dr. Bob S., an Akron surgeon. Both had been hopeless alcoholics. Prior to that time, Bill and Dr. Bob had each been in contact with the Oxford Group, a mostly nonalcoholic fellowship that emphasized universal spiritual values in daily living.

Early in 1939, the Fellowship published its basic textbook, Alcoholics Anonymous. The text, written by Bill, explained AA's philosophy and methods, the core of which was then the well-known Twelve Steps of recovery.

## **5. Narcotics Anonymous (NA)**

Most of us know that Narcotics Anonymous was formed in 1953. But where did it come from? Who was Jimmy K. and why do people have bumper stickers saying he is their friend? Unfortunately, there are no books about our history like some other fellowships have.

AA was the first 12-step program, and through it many with drug and drinking problems found sobriety. The 4th Tradition gives each AA group the autonomy to include or exclude non-alcoholic addicts from closed meetings – where only those with an expressed desire to quit drinking may attend. At open AA meetings non-alcoholics were welcome.

Narcotics Anonymous sprang from the Alcoholics Anonymous Program of the late 1940's and was cofounded by Jimmy Kinnon. Meetings first emerged in the Los Angeles area of California, USA, in the early fifties. The NA program was officially founded in 1953.

In 1953 Narcotics Anonymous, originally called AA/NA, was founded in California by Jimmy Kinnon and others. Differing from its predecessors, NA formed a fellowship of mutually supporting groups. Founding members, most of whom were from AA, debated and established bylaws of the organization. On September 14, 1953, AA authorized NA the use of AA's steps and traditions on the condition that they stopped using the AA name, resulting in the organization simply being called Narcotics Anonymous.



The following is a testimony submitted by Kervin Johnson regarding his experience with AA/NA

## *Taking Control of My Life*

After several years of being homeless and living in the streets, I felt that life couldn't get any worse than this. Drugs and alcohol have taken a toll on my life. My every waking moment was the thought of where I can get money from to stay high and drunk.

Years ago, I was just starting high school and I felt that in order to be someone, you had to do what everyone else was doing: drugs. At first, I didn't know if I was high or not, but after a while I began to feel the effects of the drugs. I felt on top of the world and in control of my destiny. I became popular and thought I had everything.

I carried those thoughts to college where I spent more time partying than studying. I thought that I had everything. I was voted "most likely to succeed" in high school. Eventually I graduated and by then, I was a full-blown addict but didn't know it.

I had many jobs but couldn't keep them because of my addiction. My friends were successful and started avoiding me because I didn't look like the person that I was when I was in high school. I blamed everything on bad luck. I was hurting inside but couldn't explain the way I felt to my friends.

It took three hospital visits and the doctors telling me that I would be dead within two years if I kept living like I was. It was then that I decided I needed help. My cousin saw me one day and told me to come to a meeting. That was the turning point in my life.

Many meetings and suggestions have made my life worth living. Gone was the urge to use and I'm able to smile again. I now have a great job and am gaining the respect of my friends and peers. Life is wonderful without using. I do know that getting clean and attending meetings saved my life. Thank GOD for NA.

The program has taught me that I can recover from addiction, despite my other ailments. I suffer chronic pain and must accept that hospitals, doctors, and medication are part of my "right now" if I want to stay in NA and out of denial. In the past, I listened to people who told me I wasn't clean and could not join NA because I had to take medication.

I allowed others to run me out of the only place I've found relief – the rooms of NA. I've been back for almost two years now, and I'm so grateful that I have the ability to work the program, just like everyone else. I have a sponsor and work the steps. I do service and attend meetings regularly. Meditation and prayer help reduce my pain. I've been able to stay in NA only because I was willing to accept myself. I'm not leaving this time.

Using the Questions to Prompt Learning from Module 1, Kervin provided the following answers:

1. How does your response to this situation tell you about yourself?  
You have to be objective to this question. There are some in NA that believes that taking medication on a daily basis does not mean you are clean.
2. How do you know this?  
I was one of those that believed that taking medication/drugs daily, you were considered using.
3. What could you do differently?  
You should believe the word of the person. "To thy own self be true."
4. What is positive about this situation?  
You can still find recovery even if you are on medication. You just have to use the medication as prescribed.
5. What is the simplest thing you could do?  
Accept the person in recovery for who they are and give them help if needed.
6. What is the relationship between how things are now and how you want them to be?  
Medication is being used to help individuals seeking recovery, especially from opioids. Not long ago, in order to recover, no drugs were used. All you had was the desire to not use again. Now, if a person can find recovery with medication, that is all that matters.

The following is another testimony in support of the 12-step approach, by Stephanie Stout

Twelve step meetings are support group meetings which are built around the twelve steps and twelve traditions of a substance use disorder. Worldwide 12 step meetings are available through Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous. Meetings such as these help individuals form a common bond and work recovery together with the support of others. Step one states "We admitted we were powerless over alcohol (or drugs depending on which 12-step meeting) and that our lives had become unmanageable." Based on that step alone, meeting topics could include powerlessness, the extent of being powerless, what it feels like to be powerless and ways we had tried to limit or control our use of alcohol or drugs in the past and been unsuccessful. Another topic could include how the work was unmanageable. Not only was I unable to manage my own life but to further discuss how my finances, relationships, spirituality and employment were unmanageable.

Twelve step meetings are support groups for individuals in recovery to help them see the reality of the disease of addiction and to keep in the forefront of their minds where their life can return if they take that first drug or drink. They are also beneficial to form a common bond with others. Too many times we feel we are alone, and no one understands how we feel or why we do what we do. Being a part of a 12-step meeting can help one process thoughts and find a new way of life. Most importantly, they can find they aren't alone. One of the best aspects of 12-step meetings is that no matter where you go, you can always attend a meeting and feel like you are at a family reunion. I remember the first meeting I attended, I had several people hugging me and telling me to keep coming back. One person said "hey, let us love you until you learn to love yourself." That stood out to me because I wondered how they knew. How did this stranger know I didn't love myself? I realized after many more times of going back, that I was that person, and that person was me. They once needed someone to love them until they could learn to love their self. The love and common bond felt in a twelve-step meeting is amazing. I recommend it to anyone suffering from alcohol or drug addiction.

## 6. Mental Health First Aid

Another valuable professional resource opportunity is attending the Mental Health First Aid Training in Mississippi. Go to <https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/take-a-course/find-a-course/>

**Mental Health First Aid** is an 8-hour **course** that teaches you how to help someone who may be experiencing a mental health or substance use challenge. The **training** helps you identify, understand and respond to signs of addictions and mental illnesses. Find a **Mental Health First Aid course** near you using the search tool: [One Mind Pledge](#) · [Certification Process](#) · [Online Re-Certification](#) · [Be the Difference](#)

Stephanie Stout provided a testimony regarding her experience with Mental Health First Aid.

Just as first aid classes are beneficial to assist someone having a heart attack or choking, Mental Health First Aid can assist when someone is having a mental health or substance use related crisis. More and more do we hear that mental health crises happen. Not too many years ago, it was considered a taboo subject.

The Mental Health First Aid course teaches risk factors and warning signs of topics such as depression and mood disorders, anxiety disorders, trauma, psychosis and substance use disorders. The course teaches how to recognize these warning signs and what to do as well as where to turn for help. It is the initial help offered to a person experience mental health issues. ALGEE is a koala bear that is the mascot for MHFA. His name is ALGEE which is the acronym used for the action plan for MHFA. Assess for risk of suicide or harm, Listen nonjudgmentally, Give reassurance and information, Encourage appropriate professional help and Encourage self help and support strategies.

I took the courses for Adult and Youth Mental Health First Aid a few years ago and became a trainer. I learned so much about what to do in a mental health crisis. Probably the most important thing I learned was that it was ok to ask someone if they were wanting to kill or injure themselves. We had to practice with others in the class. It's hard to ask that question aloud to another. We were given a pre-test to determine our knowledge about mental health crisis before and after the training. I, like others, had been taught that asking "do you want to kill yourself" could somehow put that thought in the mind of someone or like I was suggesting it. After the training, I realized it is beneficial to ask that question.

One of the best things about the training was the manual that is provided to participants. It is a detailed manual of the topics including warning signs and risk factors (recap of what was taught in training) as well as pages of contact information for professional and support group help. The manual includes a national suicide prevention hotline phone number and places to go for help. It was one of the best, most informative trainings I have attended. I was glad when the MS Department of Mental Health listed this training as a core training. Anyone could benefit from taking this training whether they work in the mental health field or not. Anyone could have a mental health crisis while shopping, exercising or sitting at home. This training has many new aspects including law enforcement and other professionals.

## 7. Emotional CPR (eCPR)

Emotional CPR (eCPR) is an educational program designed to teach people to assist others through an emotional crisis by three simple steps: C = Connecting; P = empowering; and R = Revitalizing.

The Connecting process of eCPR involves deepening listening skills, practicing presence, and creating a sense of safety for the person experiencing a crisis. The emPowering process helps people better understand how to feel empowered themselves as well as to assist others to feel more hopeful and engaged in life. In the Revitalizing process, people re-engage in relationships with their loved ones or their support system, and they resume or begin routines that support health and wellness which reinforces the person's sense of mastery and accomplishment, further energizing the healing process.

eCPR is based on the principles found to be shared by a number of support approaches: trauma-informed care, counseling after disasters, peer support to avoid continuing emotional despair, emotional intelligence, suicide prevention, and cultural attunement. It was developed with input from a diverse cadre of recognized leaders from across the U.S., who themselves have learned how to recover and grow from emotional crises. They have wisdom by the grace of first-hand experience.

Learn more at <https://emotional-cpr.org/index.htm>.

One peer that participated in an eCPR training said ““I loved the eCPR training because it teaches us to connect with others as individuals, not a diagnosis, and not using a pre-determined method. This training, unlike other trainings I have attended, teaches us to honor the individual and their unique experience/crisis.”

Additional testimonials are at <https://emotional-cpr.org/testimonials.htm>.

## 8. NAMI Groups & Membership

NAMI stands for the National Alliance on Mental Illness. They are a national organization and have offices in each state. They provide a wealth of information as well as various trainings, programs and advocacy opportunities available throughout the state. Information on the organization, trainings, membership, support groups, advocacy opportunities, conferences and contact information can be found on their website at <https://nami.org/Home>, which also links to chapters in states and communities across the country.

## 9. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is the agency within the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services that leads public health efforts to advance the behavioral health of the nation. It's mission is to lead public health and service delivery efforts that promote mental health, prevent substance misuse, and provide treatments and supports to foster recovery while ensuring equitable access and better outcomes. In order to achieve its mission, SAMHSA has identified five priority areas to better meet the behavioral health care needs of individuals, communities, and service providers. The five priority areas are:

- Preventing Overdose
- Enhancing Access to Suicide Prevention and Crisis Care
- Promoting Resilience and Emotional Health for Children, Youth and Families
- Integrating Behavioral and Physical Health Care
- Strengthening the Behavioral Health Workforce

SAMHSA's work is guided by four core principles that are being infused throughout the Agency's activities. The four core principles are:

- Equity
- Trauma-Informed Approaches
- Recovery
- Commitment to Data and Evidence

SAMHSA is involved in the nation's behavioral health system at every level, with programming and grants related to every aspect of mental health and substance use. That work includes promoting mental health recovery and peer support services. Among its many funding priorities, SAMHSA funds multiple statewide consumer-run organizations through its Statewide Consumer Network grant program.

You can learn more about SAMHSA, its programs and priorities, and available grant funding by visiting <https://www.samhsa.gov/>.

## 10. NCMHR

The National Coalition for Mental Health Recovery exists to ensure that consumer/survivors have a major voice in the development and implementation of health care, mental health, and social policies at the state and national levels, empowering people to recover and lead a full life in the community. It is founded on the principle that mental health consumers/survivors are leading the transformation of the mental health field through their authentic voice and vision for self-directed recovery. NCMHR's vision of recovery goes far beyond treatment, because it is about all the elements that go into good lives—housing, education, jobs, social relationships, and full participation in the community.

This national coalition of organizations representing people who are recovering or have recovered proposes a new consensus for the mental health field:

- **Recovery:** Recovery is real and possible for everyone. To recover, we need services and supports that treat us with dignity, respect our rights, allow us to make choices, and provide assistance with our real-life, self-defined needs. This range of services must include consumer-run and operated programs.
- **Self-Determination:** Self-determination is essential for recovery to occur. We need to be in control of our own lives.
- **Holistic Choices:** We need choices that meet our self-defined needs. We need a wide range of recovery-oriented services and supports to assist us in achieving our goals. These include assistance with housing, education, and career development, all of which can be consumer-run. We need these opportunities to achieve full integration into the community.
- **Voice:** We must have a voice in our recovery and in the policies facilitating our recovery. We are the most authentic voice in the mental health system, since mental health decisions affect every aspect of our lives. We bring our lived experience, therefore, we must be central in any dialogues and decisions about mental health issues at all levels. This is empowerment.
- **Personhood:** We are whole human beings and will campaign to remove stigma and discrimination. We have the same dreams as all members of the community and the ability to make our own decisions. A barrier-free community is one free from discrimination and stigma.

NCMHR is online at <https://www.ncmhr.org/>.

## **11. National Consumer/Consumer Supporter TA Centers**

The CAFÉ TA Center is one of five National Consumer/Consumer Supporter TA Centers (NTAC) funded by SAMHSA. All five of these centers are operated by individuals with serious mental health conditions and/or people supporting them and serve that same group. They share a recognition of the value of lived experience, the importance of recovery-based, person-centered approaches to care, and the power of peer support in shaping the national approach to mental health.

As a group, the NTAC's offer a wide array of resources, training, and technical assistance for individuals with mental health conditions and the organizations that serve them. They are all committed to the values of recovery and peer support, and share a belief in the value of the voice of lived experience.

You can find the NTAC's online:

- The CAFÉ TA Center – <https://cafetacenter.net/>
- The Doors to Wellbeing TA National Consumer TA Center – <http://www.doorstowellbeing.org/>
- National Empowerment Center – <http://www.power2u.org/index.html>
- The Peer Support Coalition of Florida Peer Experience NTAC – <https://www.peersupportfl.org/pentac/>
- The YouthMOVE National Peer Center – <https://youthmovepeercenter.org/>

## 12. The National Council on Mental Wellbeing

The National Council on Mental Wellbeing is a nationwide nonprofit that exists to unite the voice of organizations that deliver mental health and substance use services in America. It is a membership organization that drives policy and social change on behalf of over 3,100 mental health and substance use treatment organizations and the more than 10 million children, adults and families they serve. It advocates for policies to ensure equitable access to high-quality services, builds the capacity of mental health and substance use treatment organizations, and promotes greater understanding of mental wellbeing as a core component of comprehensive health and health care.

The National Council provides a wide array of resources and offers frequent learning opportunities related to behavioral health and specific issues in the system of care.

Find The National Council online at <https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/>.

## 13. Mental Health America

Founded in 1909 by Clifford W. Beers, Mental Health America (MHA) is the nation's leading community-based nonprofit dedicated to addressing the needs of those living with mental illness and promoting the overall mental health of all. During his stays in public and private institutions, Beers witnessed and was subjected to horrible abuse. From these experiences, Beers set into motion a reform movement that took shape and is known today as Mental Health America.

MHA's programs and initiatives fulfill its mission of promoting mental health and preventing mental illness through advocacy, education, research and services. MHA's national office and its 200+ affiliates and associates around the country work every day to protect the rights and dignity of individuals with lived experience and ensure that peers and their voices are integrated into all areas of the organization.

MHA provides a range of resources and learning opportunities. Find MHA online at <https://www.mhanational.org/>.

## 14. NASMHPD

The National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD) is the only member organization representing state executives responsible for the public mental health service delivery system serving millions of people annually in all 50 states, 6 territories and pacific jurisdictions, and the District of Columbia. Its mission is to work with states, federal partners, and stakeholders to promote wellness, recovery, and resiliency for individuals with mental health conditions or co-occurring mental health and substance related disorders across all ages and cultural groups, including youth, older persons, veterans and their families, and people under the jurisdiction of the court.

NASMHPD is an excellent resource for information about public policy in mental health, and offers frequent webinars, technical assistance, policy information, and training.

NASMHPD is online at <https://www.nasmhpd.org/>.



## **Appendix 3: An Example of “My Recovery Project”, provided by Monica Wolters**

**My Recovery Project by Monica Wolters**

GOD MAKES FLOWERS OUT OF DIRT PILES...

Dedication: For Shane and my peers

Summer 2001 – 1st Psychotic Break – Caught between Heaven & Hell

The mind is a place of its own, it can make a heaven out of hell or a hell out of heaven. – Milton, Paradise Lost

It's amazing that the delusions did seem to eventually come to fruition. In the beginning I still had a choice...or did I? As he stared down at me with fear in his eyes, my mind was racing at near light speeds. She sat in a chair picking her nails. What did my eyes say to them? Did they see me as an empty shell lost forever? If you have ever heard the phrase "It may look like I'm doing nothing, but in my head I'm really busy," well I was seriously busy fighting a battle to save the world! It all came down to a choice would you believe. I had to choose whether to explore all the multiverses saving worlds with my husband or stay here watching TV with my Mom and Grandmother, for like forever. You would think that exploring worlds with your husband would be a clear choice, but I couldn't choose and it was agonizing. The pressure was exhausting because as much as I wanted to go with my husband, I just couldn't trust him. Da Vinci's Vitruvian Man image on his T-shirt reminded me of weapons and war and I was terribly afraid of "the Trick." Time was dreamlike and the last thing I remember was being held down by hospital staff. Next came the injections of powerful antipsychotics; I thought they were euthanizing me. I thought the "Mothership" would arrive to save me...but they never came.

### ***Stumbling Toward Madness***

The knowledge is primitive  
Anger dwells deep  
Beauty becomes untouchable  
Only Honesty is her probe,  
Alone I glimpse Her  
The glow of Scarlet pierces me  
Your Love becomes the Trick  
Then Madness prevails  
And Rage consumes my Heavenly fires.

### ***The Trick***

Anger becomes my Love  
And Beauty is for another,  
The sky is green  
The grass is blue  
As the vireo sings for the other,  
Your world becomes the delusion,  
My world is now your illusion  
Change is Nature's trick –  
Her poles have switched  
Chaos abounds  
So who is the one that has become bewitched?

**How could the mental health system promote a RECOVERY oriented direction of care after receiving a client first experiencing psychotic symptoms and acquiring a serious mental health diagnosis?**

**If you are a PSS, how could/did peer support services help you?**

**How can peer support act on its own and/or assist traditional services?**

June 3, 2003/3: 00pm – A Time of Death

## **Job**

For the next several years I found myself trying to blindly navigate a complex cave. The cave was my own identity, because the psychotic break blasted down years of defense mechanisms and left me raw and exposed. I had to rebuild who I was. Although confused and with a severely damaged ego, I still managed to maintain a great job and graduate with honors. Nevertheless, my husband didn't understand my depression and neither did I. Little did I know that my life was about to be turned upside down when my husband, my biggest supporter, died suddenly from unknown causes. Reason and science got me this far, but now God would force me on a great spiritual journey to discover my faith and true identity. This would eventually lead me on a path of recovery that would be years in the making and still continues to evolve.

I had everything I wanted – Graduation with honors, a new job offer, and a wonderful husband, but I still longed for death. I had no idea why I felt the way I did. Maybe because I had been working toward my goal of acquiring a biology degree for so long that I was depressed I was actually finally graduating. A bright future for us both was beginning, but it all came to a screeching halt suddenly and with massive shock. Just a few weeks after my graduation and the day I started my new research job, my husband dropped dead in a parking lot. Even more devastating was never learning why since the autopsy findings could find nothing wrong with his young, seemingly healthy body. I had only been living with a serious mental health diagnosis for a couple of years and my husband was my everything. For the first time in my life, I truly wept. My whole mind, body, and soul wept.

It was when I experienced this great loss that my path to enlightenment and recovery would begin. At the time I was struggling with my religion and spirituality, but now I was forced to try and find a God that I had been trying to deny. I began writing poetry; I began reading scripture; I began to really explore who I was, and the fact that I needed something more powerful than myself. At one point I swallowed pills, but it was a cry for help because I could not cope with the overwhelming feelings of loss. I was a control freak, and there was nothing more debilitating to me than the loss of control that comes with death.

As I write this, the feelings of grief from 13 years ago resurface, but now I can find great strength in the sorrow. The power of prayer saved me as so many lifted me up in my time of despair. I look back on the experience now and realize how blessed I am to have loved and lost so strongly. It was only after his death that I realized what marriage truly was and only a great God could cure my intense feelings of guilt. I was the one that wanted to die, but He took my husband instead. It was a long-lived battle to come to terms with the guilt and sorrow I felt, but I eventually did. I like to believe that my husband died so I could be saved, and now my husband is one of God's mighty angels. He didn't really die because his memory and the best part of him is incorporated within me now. I never would have gotten where I am today without this beautiful experience.

**And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. Romans 8: 28**

## ***Death***

If only Death would find me  
If only He would take me  
Far FarFar away –  
From this desolate, dreary place.

Because Nothing is far better –  
Than the thing I have become  
Than the existence I must live  
The endless morning I must face.

But here I must survive  
Knowing the strength I have not got –  
To live out what I feel –  
To say what I justly sense –  
And to bestow what is burning inside me.

If the World only knew  
That every touch can rightly heal  
That each smile is like a flower  
And every gesture that you do  
Could truly change this place.

For all I touch withers –  
Against the substance inside my soul  
Time creates monsters,  
And I create Time.

## **May 2003**

**How can the mental health system incorporate faith and spirituality, culture, background and belief into consideration and into therapeutic practices?**

**How can peer support assist?**

2009-2012 – Transformation – *Rebirth*

Ephesians 4: 22-24

In April of 2009 after returning from travel to Australia for my dream job, I was “laid off.” The economy was crashing so there was little money for bats and sea turtles. It was easy to let me go because the trip across the world and back tripped up my circadian and threw me into a severe depression. It was one of the most exciting trips, yet the most depressing of times for me . . . I missed my husband and it was not fair that everybody else got to travel with their spouse while experiencing this beautiful place. The job loss was yet another devastating blow to my identity. Loss of insurance, loss of income meant no medication. It had been almost 10 years since my last psychotic episode so maybe I didn’t need the medicine anymore and I would stay sane? I decided to borrow money again to go back to school, this time education. By the fall I had done enough to get my teaching license . . . I was also delusional.

Fortunately (or not, depending on how you look at it), this time when I lost touch with reality I had faith in Jesus, albeit my faith in its very infancy. My psychotic experience was very, very different compared to when I had nowhere or no one to put my faith into except myself. This time I was being guided by the angel Ariel, the Lion of God, and stopped by police roaming around the city of Clinton. Before being stopped by police, I narrowly avoided kidnapping a black kid from a local church, walking down the center line of I-20 Eastbound, and running away with a truck driver in an airbrushed rig. All the while keeping up with my little dog “Nico” (the dog was so I wouldn’t “scare” anybody . . . go figure). After I recovered from the psychotic symptoms, I found my long-lost best friend at the same church I had almost “saved” the child from. I would begin to strengthen my walk with the Lord, but I had also entered into the dangerous illusion that mania could be “fun” and possibly even controlled.

After this episode I also found NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness). I began my journey with NAMI at a Connection Support Group and met some fabulous friends and supports. I began to feed my thirst for knowledge in NAMI’s various education and training programs. NAMI and its free programs were a lifeline as I would sink into the lure of mania two more times before realizing I was really in a cyclic nightmare. By what would be my fifth psychotic break, I had gotten good at it. It could be semi-controlled, or at least slowed down and the experience enjoyed. The problem was I became dangerously close to killing myself by way of drinking too much water. My body was unable to regulate basic function such as sleep, digestion, body temperature, and even water balance. I could have died from my unquenchable thirst to “understand” and control.

During my last episode, I had gotten so bold as to end up psychotic while out to sea working onboard a hopper dredge as the turtle biologist. The poor crew had no idea what was wrong with me. I could “fake” sanity to a degree. I had always said that “a monkey could do this job.” I learned that a psychotic person cannot. I knew what I was supposed to do but when you’re psychotic, it’s impossible to keep up with time and also for me anything numerical. I was unable to record the data and the crew would not allow me to perform my physical duties of checking the equipment. This time the “trick” was either stay on the dredge by yourself for like forever (because everybody had disappeared), or jump overboard and be a teacher with Jesus. The latter was so tempting; the presence of another soul appearing partly saved my life when I was struggling with the dilemma.

So what do you do with a psychotic turtle biologist on a boat? How about drop her off at the nearest airport. Did I fake it that well? What did they think was wrong with me? Saying strange things, not bathing, and projectile vomiting? If anyone needs Mental Health First Aid Training it's also the airline staff. When the flight attendant refused me water, I thought she was trying to kill me (in hindsight she might have saved me). Only by the grace of God was I able to keep my cool and my mouth shut because I just 'knew' the plane was going to crash. Getting duct taped to the seat would not have been helpful for me.

To my horror, I had a five hour layover in Charlotte – way too much stimulation for a seriously psychotic person. Sorry to say, I did not make that plane (when EVERYTHING counted on it!). Also, no one seemed to notice the dirty, psychotic person (always wearing camo for some reason) lost in the airport and going through the check center over and over. This time in my delusion I was both the hero and villain trapped in the archetypes of my subconscious and unable to find any gate numbers (E9, I still remember the gate)! In my delusion I was a military weapon and so top secret I couldn't even know about myself . . . hmmm, sounds like Jason Bourne. I "recall" hitting another traveler (to see if she was real), but still unsure if I really did or it was "delusion?"

Thanks to the psychotic person approaching security and seeking help after I missed the plane, albeit in a less than sane way, I was committed by the state of North Carolina. Needless to say, I lost that job along with my pride. What goes up always comes down so the last depression I experienced in 2012 was so bad I finally decided that it was my last. Especially, when I begged my Lord to help me out of the "pit" I had made for myself (AKA "Prophet in Training"), and I got yanked out. Boom . . . that's me entering into a world of undeniable faith! Something changed in me in an instant during my darkest hour, and I have never been the same – that was the moment Jesus became my rock. Staying sane also means staying on my medicine (for now). I have no need any longer to control and "understand" as the Lord has shown me what I need to know. Now I also know that my delusions are not uncommon; delusions are certainly unique to the perceiver but for many they seem to hit on the same main themes such as good/evil and/or hero/villain.

In 2013, NAMI sent me to D. C. to learn to train others to tell their recovery story too. The trip in its entirety was a transforming experience spent with some amazing people, from being there during D-Day and witnessing the silent Marine Corps to getting lost trying to make our way to see the baby panda Bao at the National Zoo. NAMI has been a steppingstone for helping me to achieve my goals and offered support when there was no other. My goal of becoming a "Certified" Peer Support Specialist – the embodiment of recovery, would not be possible without NAMI. The training and education were critical to my growth and emotional development, and the relationships and networks I've made over the years have provided the social framework that is vital to all humans.

**How can the mental health system assist those they serve through their own individualized transformation process?**

**How can peer support assist?**

**In addition to the resources mentioned (i. e. , NAMI), what other resources are available? Are you familiar with all the resources NAMI has to offer?**

2015... – Goal Achieved – What’s next?

“You will be healed as you heal others”

It’s taken years to get to the degree of recovery I’m at now. I’ve been down long, winding roads and hit plenty of dead ends. I have endured peaks of wonderful times and valleys of loss and darkness. God has wasted no experience to teach me valuable lessons and continues to lead me on a glorious journey. There has been so much to learn from the road itself, sometimes I forget about the final destination. The privilege of being a role model to others as a Peer Support Specialist has taken my recovery to a whole new level that years ago I wouldn’t have believed achievable. I was literally completely broken and over time rebuilt and reshaped by my experience, and the Lord continues to fine tune me. I was blessed with a new perspective and the gift of empathy that could have only come about via the symptoms of a complex mood disorder. This included altered states that must have encompassed much of the human spectrum of emotion. When it came right down to it, like my original delusion, it came down to a choice...I could either see the experience as a curse (which I did plenty of), or view the experience as a blessing. God showed me the latter. All I do I owe to Him.

**What are your recovery goals?**

**What are your “after-recovery” goals?**



## Farewell from Mike and Meg

WOW! WE'RE DONE... WELL, AT LEAST FOR NOW.

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU, BUT I'M POOPED.

THIS WAS A TON OF INFORMATION. IF YOU READ IT COVER TO COVER, YOU'RE A BETTER PERSON THAN ME—I MEAN, YOU ALREADY ARE A BETTER PERSON BECAUSE I'M NOT AN ACTUAL PERSON. BUT YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.

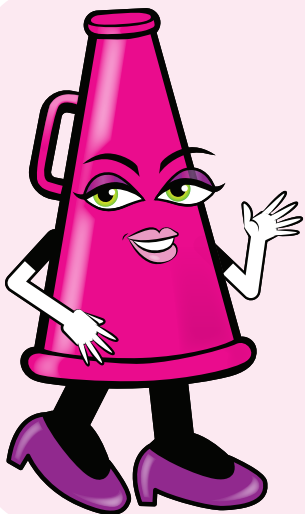
THIS DOCUMENT SHOULD SERVE YOU HOWEVER YOU NEED IT TO. IF YOU WANT TO REVISIT IT AND READ IT COVER TO COVER AND IMMERSE YOURSELF IN A FAMILIAR CONSUMER VOICE, THEN YOU GO FOR IT. THAT'S WHY IT'S HERE. THAT'S WHY SO MANY OF YOUR FELLOW CONSUMERS MADE AN EFFORT TO PUT SO MUCH TIME INTO CAPTURING THEIR VOICE AND SHARING IT WITH YOU.

WHEN IT COMES DOWN TO IT, YOU'RE GOING TO GRAB YOUR OWN MIC ONE DAY AND DO WHATEVER IT IS YOU DECIDE TO DO WITH YOUR VOICE. THERE ARE NO EXPECTATIONS THAT ANYONE HAS OF YOU. THERE'S A HOPE, THOUGH... A HOPE THAT YOU WILL BE ABLE TO USE THE RESOURCES, TOOLS, AND TESTIMONIES IN THIS DOCUMENT TO FIRST AND FOREMOST STRENGTHEN AND SUSTAIN YOUR RECOVERY. AND IF YOU FIND IT IN YOU TO SHARE A PART OF YOUR VOICE HERE AND THERE FOR THE BENEFIT OF OTHERS, AND FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE STATEWIDE CONSUMER VOICE IN YOUR STATE OR COMMUNITY, THEN I'LL BE WAITING FOR YOU . . . WHEREVER YOU NEED ME . . . PLUGGED IN AND READY TO HELP YOU AMPLIFY YOUR VOICE TO WHATEVER EXTENT YOU'D LIKE.

AND DON'T FORGET, TOO, THAT THIS DOCUMENT NEEDS TO CONTINUE TO GROW AND EXPAND WITH NEW INPUT FROM PEOPLE JUST LIKE YOU. THOSE WHO STARTED IT ARE JUST THE BEGINNING, AND THEY ARE VERY EXCITED TO RECEIVE MORE INPUT FROM EACH OF YOU SO THAT THIS PROJECT BECOMES SOMETHING THAT EVERYONE IN THE COUNTRY, PERHAPS THE WORLD, WILL LOOK TO WITH ENTHUSIASM.

TURN YOUR VOICE UP HIGH... OR KEEP IT SOFT AND DOWN LOW... BUT ALWAYS KEEP IT ALIVE AND VIBRANT ALONG YOUR RECOVERY JOURNEY.

I'M OUTTA HERE... SOMEBODY... *DROP ME!*



WHAT A *HAM!* HAHA, GET IT? *HAM* RADIO MIC?

ANYWAY, I *LOVED* BEING ON THIS JOURNEY WITH YOU. YOU'VE GOT YOUR OWN STYLE, AND MY LAST WORDS OF WISDOM THAT YOU DIDN'T ASK FOR BUT I'M GOING TO SHOUT IT AT YOU ANYWAY ARE: *FIND YOUR STYLE!*

I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO HEARING ALL ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCES. BE BRAVE. BE ADVENTUROUS. LEARN ABOUT YOUR UNIQUE IDENTITY AND STYLE, AND EMBRACE YOUR RECOVERY JOURNEY. THAT'S HOW WE GET THROUGH IT TOGETHER.

I'M *SO EXCITED!*

Most people don't like public speaking. And as Peers, we've got an extra challenge because we're often asked to represent the Voice of Peers, and talk about our lived experience in all kinds of settings. That experience can be rewarding, but it can also be difficult. This book has been designed to help! It's a tool to assist and support Peers with telling their story, and so much more. It's...

...a method that provides ongoing guidance,

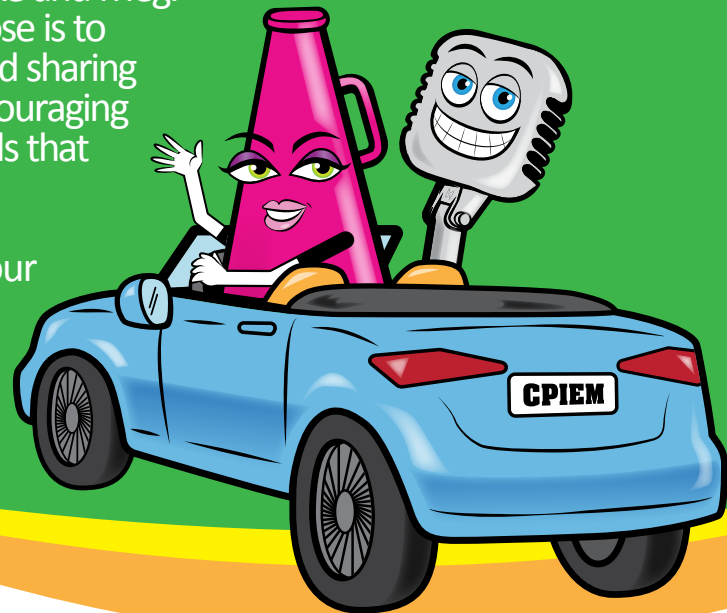
...a collection of tools to assist and empower you to know and share your Voice,

...a collection of personal testimonies from Peers who have applied the model and tools,

...a resource that creates a common language for Peers to communicate and support one another.

But it's not all serious. Along the way, you'll meet two new friends the provide advice and encouragement, Mike and Meg. They're a couple of real characters! And their purpose is to bring a little levity to the difficult task of defining and sharing your Voice, while at the same time guiding and encouraging you to engage with the CPIEM method and the tools that accompany it.

Good luck, have fun, and don't forget to buckle your seatbelt as you head out on this journey!



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