

Focus 2.0

A Publication of The CAFÉ TA Center

Issue 7

What is the Focus 2.0?

The *Focus 2.0* newsletter highlights important issues in mental health, providing timely information on recovery, peer support, and the value of including people with lived experience in the mental health system of care.

Have a suggestion for a topic? Let us know!



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What's Your Plan to Vote?

Is exercising your right to vote part of your recovery plan? That might seem like a weird question at first, but think of it this way. **Recovery is about identifying your core values and strengths, figuring out who you are, and living your truth. And isn't that what voting is about too?** By casting your vote you are saying "I have a voice, this is what I believe in, and I deserve to be heard." That sounds like the voice of mental health recovery!



One important aspect of mental health recovery is that it includes the idea of a meaningful life in the community. In thinking about a life in the community, we often think of employment, education, social connections, and other parts of day-to-day life that make a person self-sufficient, engaged, and mentally healthy. Another part of life in the community that gets less attention is civic engagement. That means being involved in the public conversation about the policymaking process that shapes communities. Part of a life in the community is shaping what that community looks like by making your voice heard through your vote! So why not include voting in your personal recovery plan?

While voting can be an important part of personal recovery and a key component of civic engagement for people with mental health diagnoses, the voting process itself can be complicated and challenging. Here are a few basic principles to begin the journey to the voting booth.

The first thing to know, and always keep in mind, is that **voting is a right**. All people, including those with mental health conditions, have the right to vote.

That includes people in all types of living situations, including those in hospitals, in-patient facilities, or transitional housing. It also includes people with all diagnoses. While some states have laws about “voter competence” guidelines, the bottom line is that an individual cannot be prevented from voting because of a mental health diagnosis. (Find more info on voting rights for people with mental health conditions at [http://www.bazelon.org/our-work/voting/.](http://www.bazelon.org/our-work/voting/))

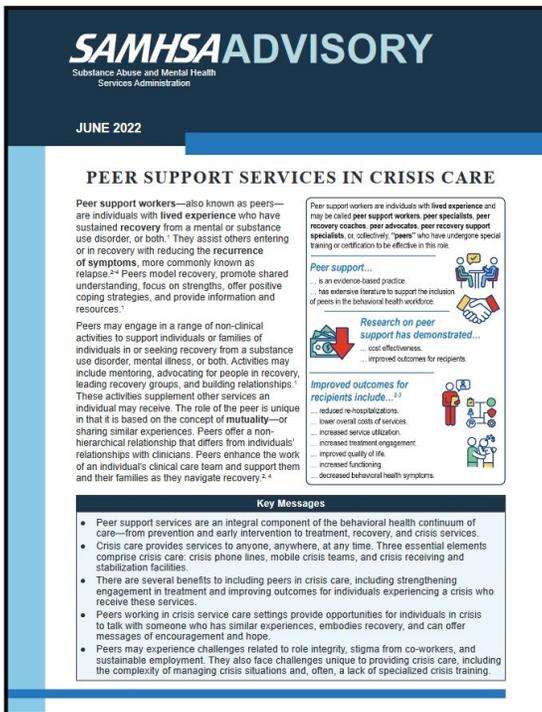
The next thing to remember is that a mental health condition is a type of disability, and **voters with mental health conditions are protected by the same laws that protect all voters with disabilities**, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act and The Voting Rights Act (see https://www.ada.gov/ada_voting/ada_voting_ta.htm). These laws are in place to make sure voting rights are respected by ensuring access to voting for everyone. While most people probably think about access to polling places, large-print ballots, or other physical accommodations when they think of voting accessibility, people with mental health related disabilities have the right to access accommodations too, such as voting by absentee ballot, or voting with the assistance of another person. If you need an accommodation, don't be afraid to ask for it! (You can read more about voting accommodations on the National Disability Rights Network website at [https://www.ndrn.org/resource/voting-accommodations-for-people-with-mental-disabilities/.](https://www.ndrn.org/resource/voting-accommodations-for-people-with-mental-disabilities/))

One other important thing to remember about voting is that there's more to it than just showing up on Election Day. **The first step is getting registered to vote!** Some states let people register on voting day, while others have voter registration deadlines weeks before an election. No matter where you live, a great voter registration resource is <https://www.usa.gov/register-to-vote>. If you start there, the site will direct you to the right place to register once you enter your address. Once you're registered, you will know who's in charge of your local elections, and who to contact if you have questions or need specific accommodations.

Maybe you're already registered to vote, and you're engaged in the process. If so, that's great! Or maybe you've never really thought about what voting means for your recovery, and how making your voice heard and engaging in the civic space can bring you a sense of empowerment. That's ok too. People with mental health conditions lead complex lives, and voting isn't always the first consideration. Just remember that you do have a voice, and a right to have that voice heard through your vote!



Peer Support in Crisis Care



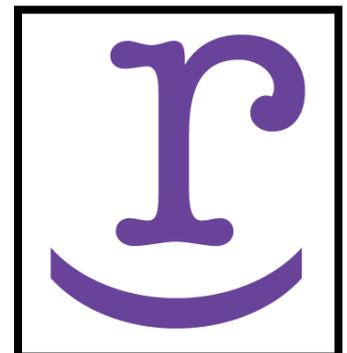
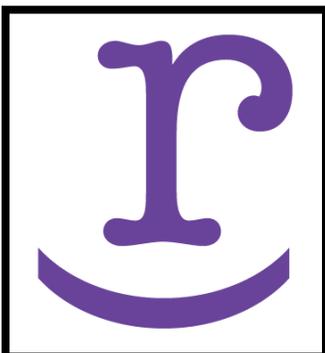
Recently, CAFÉ TAC concluded its series on peer-run crisis alternatives. Over the course of multiple webinars, our facilitator Cherene Caraco led a conversation about how peer- and recovery-based interventions provide alternatives that can help people maintain their recovery, avoid hospitalization or clinical intervention, and find the support they need to thrive in the community. The series addressed peer-run crisis alternative strategies including warm lines, peer respites, wellness centers, community response teams, and psychiatric advance directives. Recordings of all six sessions are available on the CAFÉ TAC website at <https://cafetacenter.net/a-webinar-and-learning-community-series-on-peer-run-crisis-alternatives/>.

Just as CAFÉ TAC was hosting its “Peer-Run Crisis Alternatives” series, SAMHSA published a SAMHSA Advisory also addressing the role for peer support in crisis services, “Peer Support Services in Crisis Care.”

This Advisory reinforces the value that peer support specialists bring to crisis services through their trauma-informed, strengths-based approach, and documents the positive outcomes that result from making peer support central to crisis response. If you’re looking to make the case for peer-operated crisis alternatives or peer roles in crisis response in your community, this SAMHSA Advisory is a great resource. Find it online at https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/SAMHSA_Digital_Download/PEP22-06-04-001.pdf.

September is Recovery Month

September is Recovery Month, an occasion that gives us a chance to celebrate our own recovery and build solidarity between recovery communities in mental health, substance use, and beyond. Learn more about the 2022 Recovery Month, hear messages of encouragement from SAMHSA leadership, and read the White House Proclamation on National Recovery Month at <https://www.samhsa.gov/recovery-month>.



Capacity Corner: A Column about Capacity-Building for Your Peer-Run Organization

CAFÉ TAC is pleased to share this feature, a column from CAFÉ TAC Training Coordinator John Ferrone on leadership challenges within peer-run organizations, where many advocates with lived experience direct their efforts to promote recovery and inspire change.

This time the focus is on **When You're Stuck: Return to Basic Planning**

When it comes down to it, running an organization is challenging. No matter if you've figured out how to engage your Board members (Issue 2), or if you've mastered fundraising (Issue 3), or if you've established effective Committees (Issue 4), or if your Board and ED have figured out how to work well together (Issue 5), or if you've figured out how to build programs from your ideas (Issue 6)—there will always be moments when you just don't know if you've got the right focus, if you're doing things the best way possible, or if your organization is making the difference you hoped it would.

That's when it's time to re-ground your team via a simple planning process as explained below in 6 easy steps. First, let's review why we plan. There are three basic reasons:

1. To **understand** *what* we're supposed to do, and *why*.
2. To **determine** *who* will do what we're supposed to do, as well as *how*, *when*, and *where* we're supposed to do it—basically, the details of getting it done.
3. To ensure that we can **lead** ourselves into the future *in the direction we desire*.

In short, we understand, then determine, then lead. This is the basic context for planning and it will help you as you execute the following **6 steps**.

First, refresh yourself about what your **Mission** or purpose is. Your Mission is very likely related to the core needs at the root of your effort.

Second, pop up the periscope and take a good look around, and understand your situation (**SWOT**). Who is involved? What has happened in the past, and recently? What is going to happen in the future? What's the overall situation?

Third, take time to characterize your future **Vision** if you accomplish your Mission. Remember, the Mission is just a simple statement of your core purpose—but if you achieve that purpose, what will things look like? What are the markers of success? How would you characterize the future if you have lived up to your Mission?

Mission

- ❖ What is our core purpose?
- ❖ What needs are we addressing?
- ❖ What do we hope to accomplish?

SWOT

- ❖ Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
- ❖ What is the situation in which we are attempting to accomplish our Mission?

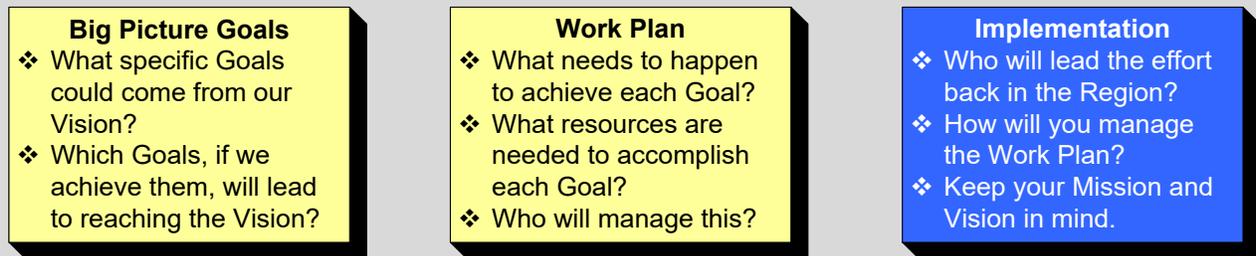
Vision

- ❖ If we achieve our Mission, what will the future look like?
- ❖ What are the characteristics of success?

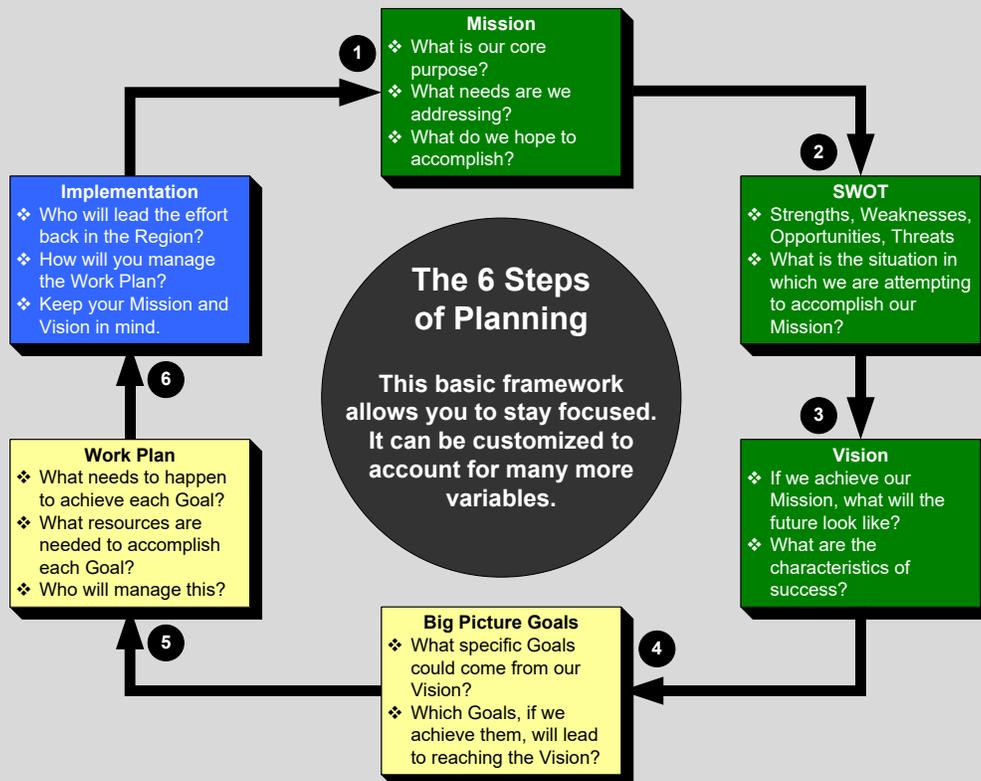
Fourth, write some **Big Picture Goals** that, once accomplished, will lead to the Vision.

Fifth, once you have those Big Picture Goals you need to create a **Work Plan** to pursue them. Who, what, where, when, how . . . what resources are needed? All of these variables should be carefully determined and written down.

Sixth, it's time to **implement** your Work Plan.



Here is a model that shows how the 6 Steps flow. The green boxes represent the conceptual parts of the model; the yellow boxes are the planning for the actual implementation; and the blue box is the actual doing (and the project planning necessary to guide the doing).



Doing the work is the hard part! Here are **5 Tips that can help you follow through** on your plans:

1. Set a **regular meeting day and time** for every month (if not more frequently) **to communicate** about the plan so that you can . . .
 - a. Communicate effectively and stay on top of what's happening
 - b. Maintain the momentum
 - c. Review and refine priorities in a timely manner
 - d. Spend less time catching up on what you don't remember

2. Establish **leadership** with the parts of the plan so that you can . . .
 - a. Complement each other
 - b. Establish expectations of each other
 - c. Document your activity
 - d. Represent your movement effectively
 - e. Be accountable to your Work Plan

3. **Manage to the Work Plan** so that you can . . .
 - a. Easily explain to others what you're working on at any given point in time
 - b. Facilitate problem-solving when problems arise
 - c. Support each other to accomplish tasks
 - d. Demonstrate your progress
 - e. Be able to evaluate your progress as needed
 - f. Be able to say that you did what you said you were going to do
 - g. Have a story to tell about all that you've done
 - h. Know when to celebrate . . . and celebrate!

4. Build **relationships, champions, and allies** related to your plan so you can . . .
 - a. Become known and valued
 - b. Overcome obstacles with the help of champions and allies
 - c. Learn about opportunities that you can pursue
 - d. Network and be part of other initiatives

5. Make sure you have your **Mission and Vision** fully fleshed out. Don't skip these. Give them the time they deserve. When you have these, you'll be able to . . .
 - a. Clearly describe your purpose and direction so others can understand
 - b. Stay focused in your meetings
 - c. Ensure that your decisions are aligned with what's important
 - d. And draw the motivation you need when the going gets tough

If you practice the 6 Steps to Planning as well as the 5 Tips for successful follow-through for simple challenges, you'll become familiar with these patterns and be able to apply the key principles to the more complex endeavors your organization undertakes. Don't stay stuck. Plan and proceed!

Is there a leadership challenge you're facing in your peer-run organization or advocacy efforts? We want to hear about it! Reach out to us at cafetacenter@gmail.com with your question or comment. We will be happy to help, and your challenge might just be the subject of our next Capacity Corner column! (Anonymously and with your consent, of course!)

This newsletter was developed under grant number SM082668 from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The views, opinions, and content expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views, opinions, or policies of the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).



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