# Focus 2.0

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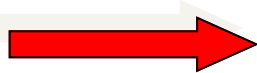
# Your Vote Matters!

The US general election is set for Tuesday, November 5th. Are you ready to vote?

Voting is an essential part of participating in public life for everyone. It's the most direct way to influence the direction of the country, and to make your voice heard in deciding the direction of public policy.

For people with mental health, behavioral health, or other types of disabilities, voting is especially important, because their lives are often directly impacted by the priorities and decisions of elected leaders. The policies set forth on issues like health insurance, public health, behavioral health parity, the unhoused population, and law enforcement, to name only a few areas, can shape the day-to-day experience of voters with behavioral health issues on a practical level. Additionally, the way elected officials talk about people with behavioral health disabilities can strongly influence public attitudes toward them, and determine whether society will be inclusive and supportive, or tend toward stigma and exclusion.

Unfortunately, voters with behavioral health conditions whose lives can be so deeply impacted by elected officials do not participate in elections at the same rate as typical voters. According to voter turnout information from Rutgers University (see www.eac.gov/sites/default/files/document_library/files/Fact_sheet_on_disability_and_voter_turnout_in_2020_0.pdf), although the voter turnout gap between people with and without disabilities decreased slightly between the 2016 general election and 2020, from 6.3 to 5.7 points, the fact remains that "If people with disabilities voted at the same rate as people without disabilities who have the same demographic characteristics, there would be about

1.75 million more voters." That's a lot of votes!

The first step in closing that gap is making sure every qualified voter is registered. In order to vote, each voter must first register. With the election a little more than a month away, voter registration deadlines are fast approaching. The most important thing to know about voter registration is that the process and deadline is different in every US state and territory. A great place to start figuring out how registration works where you live is the national website at vote.gov. Just select your state or territory, and the site will connect you with the right place to get registered. Remember, even if you think you're already registered, it's always a good idea to double check to confirm your registration status!

Getting registered is the first step; casting a vote comes next. That part of the process can be challenging for people with behavioral health conditions, but the good news is that there are a number of things in place to help voters with all types of disabilities, both visible and hidden, make their voices heard at the ballot box. Many states offer vote-by-mail, which allows a voter to complete their ballot at home and mail it to their Supervisor of Elections. Many states also offer early voting for a period of days or weeks before in-person voting takes place. That allows voters to visit special early voting sites in their community and cast their ballot while avoiding the crowds and long lines that can be found at some polling sites on election day. Whether a voter chooses to vote on election day or at an early voting site, it's a legal requirement that voting be accessible to people with all types of disability. Learn about the requirements and different types of accommodations at vote.gov/guide-to-voting/disability, and contact your local Supervisor of Elections to talk about your individual needs. Remember, voting is for everyone!

When we talk about mental health recovery, we often talk about how important it is for people to find purpose, and a meaningful life in the community. That's usually taken to mean things like employment, a supportive social network, and a sense of independence. One thing that comes to mind less often is participation in public life, but the fact is that it matters. It's a central part of people with mental health conditions living fully realized lives. So embrace your recovery and take advantage of the chance you have to use your voice and contribute to decisions being made about the direction of your community, your state or territory, and your country this November!

# CAFÉ TAC Celebrates Recovery Month
# at the SAMHSA STAR Awards



CAFÉ TAC was fortunate to be on hand to celebrate recovery at the SAMHSA STAR Awards this September 24th in Washington, DC. The SAMHSA Trailblazers in Advancing Recovery (STAR) Awards honor leaders in recovery with lived experience of mental health and/or substance use conditions, including youth and family members whose lives have also been affected. They also recognize organizations for exceptional efforts to promote recovery and elevate diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. In keeping with the recovery theme, the event was organized by the Office of Recovery's SAMHSA Program to Advance Recovery Knowledge (SPARK) technical assistance center, which exists "to advance recovery-oriented systems of care across the nation for people with mental health and/or substance use conditions."

The awards featured winners across multiple categories, including Equity Champion of the Year, Young Adult Leader of the Year, Peer Support Worker of the Year, Advocate of the Year, Family Leader of the Year, Wellness Champion of the Year, and Innovator of the Year. The event also included an award for Ally of the Year, which was given posthumously to former First Lady Rosalynn Carter in recognition of her lifelong work in mental health. The Equity Champion of the Year was a familiar name, Helen "Skip" Skipper, Executive Director of the NYC Justice Peer Initiative, who joined us in our Innovative Peer Practices Series as a guest speaker on the webinar "Experts by Experience: Paving the Way for Forensic Peer Support," which you can find on our website at https://cafetacenter.net/wisdom-from-the-streets-unhoused-criminalized-and-hospitalized/.

Information about all of the awardees can be found at https://www.samhsa.gov/spark/star-awards/honorees. Their amazing work and advocacy can serve as inspiration for everyone working toward building a recovery-oriented future for everyone.

# Join CAFÉ TAC's "Navigating the Workplace" Series

CAFÉ TAC is excited to be offering a new series focused on fostering the development of recovery-friendly workplaces and supporting people with mental health conditions to thrive in the workforce in "Navigating the Workplace: A Four-Part "Case Scenario" Series."

This series is designed to help bring people with mental health conditions into the workforce more smoothly by discussing real-life workplace scenarios related to mental health. It features four webinars where we break down key ideas, demonstrate them through role-playing, and have open Q&A sessions. Participants are welcome to share and talk about their own experiences, and each webinar comes with a one-page guide that sums up the key points.

The series kicked off on September 18 and runs through October 16. Attendees are welcome to join in at any point in the series, and recordings of each meeting and accompanying resources can be found on the CAFÉ TAC website.

Whether you're an employee trying to figure out how to talk about your mental health at work, or a leader trying to create a supportive workplace culture, this is the conversation for you!

Join us! Find the registration link and more details at https://cafetacenter.net/navigating-the-workplace-a-four-part-case-scenario-series/.

# Family Mental Health Resources

When it comes to mental health recovery, relationships between individuals with mental health conditions and their families or caregivers can be complicated and challenging. It can be hard for family members and caregivers that desperately want to help those that they care for to give loved ones the space they need to find their own self-directed recovery path at their own pace, and the result is too often conflict and misunderstanding.

CAFÉ TAC is working to provide resources that can help family members and caregivers create better conditions for recovery in their homes and families while also taking care of their own wellness. In May, CAFÉ TAC hosted "Embracing Your Own Path and Recovery While Supporting Family Members in Theirs," where we discussed how each family member can support others while recognizing where they are in their own individual recovery journey. Find the recording of that webinar at https://cafetacenter.net/embracing-your-own-path-and-recovery-while-supporting-family-members-in-theirs/. Then, in August, we hosted "Supporting Young

Adults and Ourselves: Understanding and Supporting Adult Children in Transition," where we talked about supporting a young person in recovery in the transition to work, trade school, or higher education. That can be found at https://cafetacenter.net/supporting-young-adults-and-ourselves-understanding-and-supporting-adult-children-in-transition/. This year-long series will continue with webinars in November and February, so stay tuned for details about how you can join our ongoing conversation on family mental health!

And remember, CAFÉ TAC has an entire online training suite on family mental health available, our "Supports for Families Workshop Series." This interactive workshop series has been designed to help family members and caregivers of people with serious mental health conditions support their family member by promoting recovery and taking a strengths-based approach to encouraging resiliency and self-direction. It includes both a series of videos and a corresponding workbook, with five modules in the series. Find the Supports for Families Workshop Series on our website at https://cafetacenter.net/supports-for-families-workshop-series/.

# 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 column's topic is **How to Create a Work Plan for Your Project or Initiative.***

So you've got your Mission and Vision figured out (see the previous article) and it's time to actually do what it is that you've decided to do. Or maybe your organization has been around a while, and you've run into a difficult challenge of undertaking a project or initiative that is complicated and has a lot of moving parts. No matter the situation, creating a Work Plan (WP) is always a good idea because a WP is a tool to guide your efforts so that you increase your chance of success.

If you are a talented Project Manager (and perhaps even have a PM Certification), then your skills might be beyond this article. But for the rest of us who are kind of organized but get intimidated by complex situations, the simple how-to of building a WP described below will probably be helpful.

Let's start with any project or initiative and identify the key variables (these are the things that your WP will account for). Those key variables include Goals, Action Items, People who do the Action Items, the Order of Action Items, Timelines and Deadlines, and Critical Factors. In a sentence, it goes like this: In order to achieve our Goal, these People need to do these Action Items in this Order by these Deadlines, and we need to keep in mind these Critical Factors. That's it. Easy-peasy.

The process of creating the WP is just as easy. It involves the following basic steps: 1) Define the Goal; 2) Brainstorm about what all needs to happen (the Action Items) to achieve that Goal; 3) Put the brainstorm results in Order; 4) Assign the right Person to do each Action Item; 5) Create a timeline and deadlines for the Action Items; 6) Identify any Critical Factors that need to be taken into account; and 7) Put this information

into some type of format so everyone can view it, discuss it, and use it to manage the project to success.

Now we'll do a quick example. The project is to create a new brochure that explains the new program that your organization is going to offer. Consider the following process steps:

| 1) Define the Goal | We need to have a really nicely printed, full-color brochure that is a tri-fold style, and we need 1000 of them. We need them delivered from the printer within 45 days. |
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| 2) Brainstorm about what needs to happen (the Action Items) to achieve that Goal | (The following list is what a brainstorm session might generate, with statements from different people)<br>1. We have to identify a printer<br>2. How much will it cost?<br>3. Do we have photos?<br>4. Who is writing the content?<br>5. Can you get an estimate for printing?<br>6. What do our other brochures look like?<br>7. Maybe we can use a template we already have.<br>8. This is a lot—can we divide up and do things at the same time?<br>9. The Board needs to approve the brochure, right?<br>10. Maybe we can use a template we already have.<br>11. This is a lot—can we divide up and do things at the same time?<br>12. The Board needs to approve the brochure, right? |
| 3) Put the brain-storm results in Order | Putting the results of a brainstorming session into order can sometimes be confusing. Keep in mind the following tips:<br>• Each statement from the brainstorming needs to be stated as an Action Item.<br>• Action Items can occur simultaneously, or concurrently.<br>• Some Action Items must occur before others (or after others)<br>• Each Action Item might actually break down into several Action Items.<br><br>Keeping the above tips in mind, let's rearrange the results of the brainstorming, and the new order looks like this:<br><br>1. These two points are part of the process, so we will make note of these, but they don't become Action Items in the Work Plan:<br>    • Divvy up the work and make a schedule (this was "This is a lot—can we divide up and do things at the same time?")<br>    • Jodi is good at writing, so she'll write the content (this was, "Who is writing the content?")<br>2. Get estimates from 2 printing companies (this was "How much will it cost?")—we have to know the proposed cost before we can choose the printer. This task breaks down into defining the details of the brochure for which an estimate will be sought: glossy magazine paper, full-color, two-sided, folded in tri-fold, bleeds on all four sides on both sides, packaged and shipped, etc. Usually, the printer will talk you through the variables.<br>3. Get estimates from 2 printing companies (this was "Can you get an estimate for printing?")—this was similar and grouped into the same Action Item. |

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| | | 4. Identify the printer to be used (this was "We have to identify a printer.") | | |

4. Identify the printer to be used (this was "We have to identify a printer.")
5. Find existing photos, and/or take new ones that match what our brochure is saying (this was "Do we have photos?")
6. Gather and examine existing brochures (this was "What do our other brochures look like?")
7. Search for a brochure template, or create one based on existing brochures (this was "Maybe we can use a template we already have.")
8. Create the draft brochure (this is new, because no one thought to actually name it out in the brainstorming)
9. Seek Board feedback and approval (this was "The Board needs to approve the brochure, right?")
10. Make corrections based on Board feedback (this is new because we recognize we need to do it)
11. Send to the selected printer in the proper PDF format (this is new because we recognize we need to do it)

Look at the above list of Action Items, some can occur concurrently, and others need to wait for other Action Items to be completed before they can be completed. Consider this order:

| | Printer | Creation | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Step 1 | #2+#3 go | #5 | #6 | #7 |
| Step 2 | #4 | #8 | | |
| Step 3 | | #9 | | |
| Step 4 | | #10 | | |
| Step 5 | #11 | | | |

You now have a high-level order of Action Items! It's time to assign people and the timeline and deadlines.

| 4) Assign the right Person to do each Action Item | David will handle the printer: #'s 2,3, 4, and 11<br>Jodi is in charge of #'s, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10<br>Shawnda takes a lot of photos, so she is in charge of #5<br>The Board is involved with #9 |
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| 5) Create a timeline and deadlines for the Action Items | Start with the deadline. You need the brochures in hand in 45 days at the absolute latest, so that you can take them the next day to your conference. It's always best to give yourself time for error, if you can. So, let's set the due date at 30 days from now. Then, work backwards. (The following example does NOT account for weekends, so be sure to do that in your scheduling.)<br><br>• In 30 days we want to receive the finished brochure from the printer.<br>• Shipping takes 3 days, so we're back to day 27 (30-3).<br>• The printer needs 5 days, so we are back to day 22 (27 -5).<br>• We need 1 day to make corrections from the Board, so we're back to day 21. |

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| 5) Create a time-line and deadlines for the Action Items | Start with the deadline. You need the brochures in hand in 45 days at the absolute latest, so that you can take them the next day to your conference. It's always best to give yourself time for error, if you can. So, let's set the due date at 30 days from now. Then, work backwards. (The following example does NOT account for weekends, so be sure to do that in your scheduling.)<br><br>• In 30 days we want to receive the finished brochure from the printer.<br>• Shipping takes 3 days, so we're back to day 27 (30-3).<br>• The printer needs 5 days, so we are back to day 22 (27 -5).<br>• We need 1 day to make corrections from the Board, so we're back to day 21.<br>• The Board needs 5 days to review, discuss and provide feedback, so we're back to day 16.<br>• Jodi needs 5 days to assemble photos in the template, write the content, etc., so we're back to day 11.<br>• That means that in the first 11 days, David must complete all of his Action Items with the printer, and Shawnda needs to complete her search for and creation of photos, and Jodi needs to find other brochures and possibly a template.<br><br>We can do this! |
| 6) Identify any Critical Factors that need to be taken into account | The critical factors that might affect this project include (but are not limited to):<br>1. What other projects are people working on? This might affect how much time they need to complete their task. What if Jodi is swamped?<br>2. The Board will need a heads up that it will need to review the brochure with a quick turnaround.<br>3. We are assuming we have a budget to print the brochure. Do we need permission? |

And there you have it! In order to receive the completed brochure from the printer on time, David, Jodi and Shawnda have specific tasks to do in a certain order by a certain time, keeping in mind their current workload, the budget, and the Board's schedule. 1

If you follow the above steps, you can work-plan anything and create a Work Plan that positions you to be successful.

*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!)*

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

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