Champions Guidance

Creating choice in mutual aid and improving treatment outcomes with SMART Recovery®

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ABOUT SMART RECOVERY

What is SMART Recovery?

Our aim is to help individuals gain control over their addictive behaviours, achieve recovery, live a balanced lifestyle and lead meaningful and satisfying lives.

Our core activity is a network of peer led mutual aid meetings.

The tools and techniques of SMART Recovery are science based, drawing from Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and Motivation Enhancement Therapy. Our meetings create choice in mutual aid rather than seeking to replace the 12 step fellowships; many people attend both.

We also run an innovative partnership scheme with care and treatment providers.

Why SMART Recovery

Engagement with mutual aid improves the long-term prognosis for addictive disorders, though the widely available 12 step fellowships are neither appealing nor acceptable to everyone who might benefit.

SMART Recovery uses psycho-social techniques similar to those used in most UK addiction treatment services. This similarity helps SMART Recovery meetings sit comfortably alongside the treatment system and makes the transition from being a ‘client’ to mutual aid participant a natural and coherent step.

SMART can be directly encouraged or supported by treatment providers and commissioners via a partnership model, based on a positively evaluated DoH funded pilot.¹

The partnership model enables access to mutual aid during and after existing treatment interventions and can work closely with opiate substitution therapy and harm reduction services as well as those focussed more directly on abstinence.

The growing network of peer led SMART Recovery meetings in the community provides a valuable through-care and after-care capacity to sustain treatment gains.

THE PARTNERSHIP SCHEME

How does the scheme work?

Peer led SMART Recovery will grow organically, though slowly, through meeting participants starting new meetings. Care, treatment and criminal justice providers can become Partners and support faster and more sustainable growth – as well as strengthen their own services.

The approach is for members of staff to be trained as SMART Recovery Champions, kick start meetings within the partnered site and encourage service users to become involved. Some service users will in time train as facilitators and start their own meetings as part of the network of peer-led mutual-aid meetings run by SMART Recovery. The close links between these meetings and your services will help improve treatment outcomes.

Intended outcomes

- A vibrant and sustainable network of peer led SMART Recovery meetings in the local community.
- Improved rates of sustained recovery for people with addictions by increasing early engagement with mutual aid, strengthening the psycho-social interventions and recovery focus of your service and after-care capacity.

The ‘Partnership Agreement’

Your organisation has chosen to become a Partner of SMART Recovery UK and has signed a detailed legal agreement. If you carefully read and stick to the guidelines in this ‘Champions Guidance’, you will be doing your bit to make sure the partnership works as agreed.

Why become a SMART Recovery Champion

- You will learn new skills and deepen your understanding of recovery.
- You will help your service become more recovery focused.
- You will offer something new and special to your service users.
- You will be a key link between professional treatment and mutual aid.

Be a part of our community of learning

Our on-line forums provide space to discuss SMART tools, share ideas for making the partnership model work and hear about new resources to help with your work.

Use the Champions Manual

When you complete the training you will be sent the Champions Manual. Please read it! We also produce a ‘Champions Facilitation Quick Reference’ that is useful to actually take into meetings.
ROLE OF THE CHAMPION

In nearly all services, the role of SMART Recovery Champion will be an adjustment to an existing role, rather than a dedicated post. It is important to stress that a Partnership with SMART Recovery should not inhibit the agency from also promoting other forms of self-help, mutual aid and recovery. You may wish to extend or adjust the role description to reflect this.

Promoting SMART Recovery as an option for clients

- Run SMART Recovery meetings within the service, aiming to involve service users as co-facilitators and eventually Facilitators where realistic.
- Raise the profile of mutual aid and SMART Recovery, for example by putting up posters and ensuring all service users get information about local meetings.
- Show colleagues how to promote engagement with SMART Recovery, for example in aftercare planning and by introducing SMART tools during one-to-one counselling.

Supporting the creation of new standalone meetings

- Mentor clients as co-facilitators of meetings run as part of your service. Encourage / enable access to the on-line training for some of them to extend their knowledge and become facilitators.
- Support these facilitators to set up new meeting when they are ready to take this step. If necessary help facilitate initially to get it off the ground. Pull back after a few weeks and allow the meeting to stand on its own feet. Continue to offer ‘long arm’ support and keep in touch with the meeting facilitator. Ask facilitator to register the meeting with the SMART Recovery Head Office.
- Sometimes, SMART Recovery meetings struggle or close, for example when a facilitator moves away. The Champion may support a meeting through such difficulties and help new facilitators get up to speed for a re-launch.

Enable agency to make best use of SMART Recovery materials

Review existing tools used in therapeutic contact with clients and consider whether SMART Recovery provided materials are better / more consistent.

Key responsibilities

1. Complete the training before starting your meeting.
2. Register your own meeting, so it is listed on our partner directory.
3. Encourage and support service users to become facilitators and start meetings.
ROAD MAP

The road-map provides a check-list so that you and your organisation can judge how far along the process you are toward realising the benefits of the Partnership work. See note on criminal justice and residential services for a slight variation to stage 9. From stage 4, the Champions may optionally begin integrating elements of SMART into the treatment service.

1) The organisation signs up as a Partner

There is some paperwork to be done, probably by your management team.

2) The Champions are identified and enrolled on the training

The champions need to create an account on our website where they will be enrolled onto the training.

3) The Champions complete the training

This can take up to 20 hours of self-directed learning.

4) The Champions begin running a meeting within the service

Service users may have trained at the same time as the Champions, though we find that progress is most sustainable if meetings are initially run by the champions.

5) The Champions involve the meeting participants in the running of the meeting

From the start, the locus of therapeutic activity is the ‘cross talk’ between meeting participants.

6) The Champions begin to share facilitation tasks with meeting participants

This might include a participant presenting a tool or running parts of the meeting.

7) The Champions share the running of the meeting with participant co-facilitator

The participant becomes a named co-facilitator and begins to learn more about SMART Recovery, perhaps by doing the Getting SMART course.

8) One or more Participants train as SMART Recovery Facilitators

The Champion helps them get onto the facilitators course, perhaps provides computer access or otherwise supports them through the learning process.

9) The new Facilitators start a new peer-led meeting

The Champion may optionally continue a meeting within the service as well.

10) Other service staff engage promote ‘SMART Recovery Engagement’

With peer led meetings in the local community, the wider staff team pro-actively encourage and facilitate engagement for service users as they leave treatment.
SERVICE EXAMPLES

Community drug and alcohol service
Community services may see a wide range of client needs, with some service users progressing quickly to abstinence and others needing longer-term support. The SMART Recovery partnership scheme can help strengthen the psycho-social component of such services, with a coherent tool-set and skills training to nudge service users toward long-term recovery. The SMART Recovery Seminar Programme could also be a useful part of the treatment package – creating a bridge from group-work to mutual-aid.

Opiate Substitution service
A recovery oriented treatment system should not wait until treatment completion before introducing mutual aid – and there is no reason why the benefits of SMART Recovery should not be available to people on opiate substitution. Many people on prescriptions use SMART to help them stop using on top of their prescription or achieve a more stable lifestyle. Recovery may or may not mean coming off the script.

Residential rehab
Residential rehabs have particular difficulty in providing aftercare, as their clients generally come from a geographically wide area. The SMART Recovery partnership model provides a way for rehabs to tap into the growing network of SMART Recovery meetings as after-care support. As a partner, you could run SMART meetings as a part of your treatment programme and perhaps also deliver the SMART Recovery Seminar Programme. Your residents may be in treatment long enough to do the facilitator training and start running meetings in-house. Some of your ex-residents will soon be running SMART Recovery meetings in the community and others will use these for aftercare.

Prisons and Probation
The partnership approach is ideal for Drug Recovery Wings in prisons and to create a rehabilitation pathway to the community, via Probation partnerships.

The model can work almost as described in this document, though it may not be possible to transition meetings in all criminal justice locations to become peer led. Champions will have fulfilled their responsibilities (and met the partnership agreement) if they make their meetings as true to the SMART Recovery ethos as they can and encourage participants to engage with peer SMART and consider training after release.

**CHAMPION QUESTIONS**

Where can we run the meeting?

Meetings run by Champions should be run *only* within the main service site that is listed in the partnership agreement. There are a few exceptions to this, but this must be agreed via SMART Recovery head office.

Can we advertise the meeting?

Meetings run by Champions are intended primarily for the service users of the partnership agency. Please do *not* advertise the meeting outside of your service, other than listing on the partnership directory of our website.

We do however encourage you to mention on your website that you are a SMART Recovery Partner and supply a logo for this purpose.

What about clinical governance?

Where SMART Recovery is being used as part of the treatment programme of a Partner, the clinical responsibility rests entirely with that agency. This is true even if the meeting is peer led, if it is only open to clients of your service.

Where meetings are not part of the treatment programme (even if the meeting space is being ‘donated’ by the provider) the responsibility rests with SMART Recovery UK, which provides oversight proportionate to mutual aid and insurance coverage.

It is therefore crucial that Champions and Facilitators are very clear when a meeting is a partnership meeting and when it is part of the network of peer run meetings.

What about confidentiality?

See clinical governance. When the meeting is *within* the partnership, it will take place under the confidentiality policy of the partner agency. For peer run meetings *outside* the partnership, the SMART Recovery confidentiality policy applies. The important thing is to be clear and up-front with meeting participants.

Shall we make it peer led from the start?

It is great that you want to see the growth of peer led meetings. So do we! What we have found however is that training up a group of service users to start their own meetings is usually unsuccessful. It works better if Champions kick start meetings, and support service users to create peer led meetings when they are ready.

Do we ‘pass the hat’?

You will *not* normally pass the hat in a Champion led meeting, since the basic costs of meeting space and refreshments will be covered by the Partnership agency.
ENCOURAGING FUTURE PEER FACILITATORS

A key long-term benefit of the partnership with SMART Recovery is to grow the network of peer led meetings in the community, which will become an invaluable after-care resource for your clients. You can help grow this network by encouraging active participation in your own meetings and promoting the benefits of participants moving towards the peer led meetings in the longer term.

Many participants of Champion led meetings will be early in their recovery journey and may not yet have established a stable lifestyle. Pressure for them to become facilitators too quickly is not a good idea and might risk their recovery.

The Champion should aim for a balanced approach; encouraging involvement and progressively extending the engagement of participants in the running of the meeting, without pressurising or overloading participants.

- Sharing the responsibilities for running the meeting is part of what makes it mutual-aid; participants can only help each other if they are given the chance.
- Making the meeting more of a shared venture reduces the power imbalance between champion and participants, easing tensions around authority.
- The best preparation to become a facilitator is to co-facilitate lots of meetings.

Creating a stepped approach to encouraging responsibility amongst the meeting participants will help build-up their confidence, competence and skills that will serve them well later.

The following sequence of responsibilities is a general suggestion of how participants can be encouraged to build up their involvement and responsibilities:

- Helping set up / tidy up the room.
- Reading the opening statement.
- Meeting and greeting the group members.
- Introducing a tool.

At some point, champions should suggest that an interested participant enroll onto the on-line training. A participant does not need to commit to becoming a facilitator to do the training and the first half of the course (‘Getting SMART’) is suitable for any meeting participant who wants to deepen their understanding of SMART Recovery.

- Progressively build up their experience of co-facilitating parts of the meeting. Discuss how this went after each meeting. And when they seem comfortable, suggest that they take the lead for facilitating a whole meeting while you take the co-facilitator role.
- When both the participant and the champion feel comfortable, the participant may be asked to facilitate a meeting on their own.

Thank you for becoming a Champion and helping make SMART a success!