Guidance for substance misuse treatment providers

Delivering choice in mutual aid and improving successful treatment completions with SMART Recovery

www.smartrecovery.org.uk

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document provides only an overview of the SMART Recovery partnership and is primarily for providers who have some understanding of the evidence base for mutual aid and familiarity with how this fits with current commissioning priorities. For more detail, please see: “Improving treatment outcomes with SMART Recovery” http://cdn.smartrecovery.org.uk/doc/improving-treatment.pdf

SMART Recovery is an abstinence oriented recovery organisation, primarily focussed on peer led mutual aid meetings.

SMART Recovery is based on secular and evidence based methods that are consistent with the psychotherapeutic approach of most UK treatment services.

SMART Recovery is 100% consistent with the new drugs strategy and is an ideal vehicle to improve the recovery orientation of treatment, due to its acceptability to providers and service users, coherence and evidence base.

With more than 98% of existing UK mutual aid being based on the 12 step model, there is an urgent need for alternatives. SMART Recovery is the only national network of none 12 step mutual aid meetings that is available now and growing rapidly.

Our Partnership approach trains Champions (equivalent to Therapeutic Recovery Champions within the drugs strategy) within treatment services using our cost effective and scalable on-line training platform.

These Champions introduce SMART Recovery within their services and kick-start meetings. Over time they identify service users to undertake the facilitator training course and in turn spread meetings across the area.

Partnership sites are also able to make use of SMART Recovery tools and materials to enhance the psychotherapeutic aspects of their treatment programme.

The partnership scheme is based on a positively evaluated DoH Pilot scheme.

Our rapidly increasing network of free-standing meetings is becoming a cornerstone of the mutual aid / peer support and recovery movement – and also serves as after-care capacity for the treatment sector.

SMART Recovery co-exists comfortably with the existing 12 step fellowships and many people attend meetings from both traditions.
OVERVIEW

What is SMART Recovery?

Our aim is to help individuals gain control over their addictive behaviours, achieve recovery, a balanced lifestyle and lead meaningful and satisfying lives. The tools and techniques of SMART Recovery are derived from Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and Motivation Enhancement Therapy.

The programme evolves as the evidence for psychological interventions develops, through partnership between people in recovery and psychologists. Our international advisory board includes such leading figures as Aaron Beck, William White and Carlo DiClemente. The SMART Recovery programme therefore uses some of the most evidence based methods available.

What makes SMART Recovery different from treatment is the focus on mutual aid and peer led meetings. To put it in simple terms, SMART Recovery is a secular and science based alternative to the 12 step fellowships.

Why SMART Recovery

Engagement with mutual aid improves the long term prognosis for addictive disorders, though 12 step approaches are neither appealing nor acceptable to everyone who may benefit.

SMART Recovery uses psychotherapeutic techniques that are similar to those used in the majority of treatment services in the UK. 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 Recovery offers the benefit of mutual aid, but can be actively encouraged or supported by treatment providers and commissioners via a partnership model, based on a positively evaluated DoH funded pilot1.

Through this partnership model, partners can extend access to mutual aid alongside existing treatment interventions including OST and harm reduction. The network of peer led SMART Recovery meetings provides a through-care / after-care option for the long term support after treatment completion, reinforcing and sustaining treatment gains.

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INCREASING CHOICE IN MUTUAL AID

One way for SMART Recovery to spread is the ‘organic growth’ of meeting members training as facilitators and then starting their own meetings. Our Partnership scheme compliments this approach and makes sure that service users are exposed to SMART Recovery during their treatment journey.

Become a SMART Recovery Partner

- Two members of staff per site (more at a small additional cost) train as ‘SMART Recovery Champions’, using our innovative 20 hour on-line learning programme. Additional members of staff undertake the first half of the training ‘Getting SMART’ to help embed understanding of SMART into your service.

- Champions can then kick-start SMART Recovery meetings within the service, seeking to identify service users to co-facilitate and in time train up as Facilitators themselves. These peer facilitators are then encouraged to set up new meetings in the local community.

- The site can then use SMART Recovery materials and manuals within your programmes, including sessions that are not peer led SMART Recovery meetings. This includes for example using the handouts and tools within one to one counselling sessions. We hope soon to launch the ‘SMART Recovery Seminar Programme’ a high quality group work programme based on SMART Recovery, which emphasise long term engagement with mutual aid. This will be available to partners.

- With agreement of SRUK, display the ‘SMART Recovery Partner’ logo on their website or other promotional materials. SRUK will list your organisation as a partner on our own website.

- Organisations may also include mention of your status as a SMART Recovery Partner within funding applications using standard wording supplied by or otherwise agreed with SRUK.

- The partner agency must actively promote free standing, peer-led meetings in the local area, sign a written agreement and pay an annual fee of £500 per site including two Champions, plus £100 per head for optional additional Champions.

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.
**SERVICE EXAMPLES**

**Community drug and alcohol service**
Many community services will see a wide range of client needs, with some service users progressing quickly to abstinence and others requiring 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. Partner agencies could integrate Champion run meetings within their services and help service users train as facilitators and link to wider recovery communities. 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 does not wait until treatment completion before suggesting mutual aid – and there is no reason why the benefits of SMART Recovery should not be available to people on opiate substitution. Although SMART is abstinence oriented it is for the participant to define what this means to them. Many people on prescriptions use SMART to help them stop using on top of their prescription or achieve a more stable lifestyle that may in time open the door to reducing or stopping the script. Champions can run meetings or the Seminar programme as part of the psycho-social interventions package within these services.

**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 two or three SMART Recovery groups per week as a part of your treatment programme and perhaps also deliver the SMART Recovery Seminar Programme. Over time, your residents should become familiar enough with the methods to co-facilitate meetings and some will complete the facilitator training whilst still in treatment. You would soon have ex-residents running SMART Recovery meetings in your local area and all your graduates familiar with SMART Recovery and able to make good use of meetings as part of their after-care package.

**Prisons and Probation**
The partnership approach is ideal for Drug Recovery Wings in prisons2 and to create a rehabilitation pathway to the community, via Probation partnerships.

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Additional licensing details

For treatment providers, the fee is payable per ‘operational site’ that is participating in the scheme. For example a provider might run two residential rehabs and a community counselling service. If they want all these services to benefit from the Partnership, the license fee would be payable for each of the three sites. With the wide range of service configurations possible, we need to confirm costs on a case by case basis.

There are no ‘volume discounts’. The license fee is only charged to organisations with paid employees, so some existing service user groups may become partners at no charge. The income covers central administration costs and enables us to further develop meeting materials, training and online support.

Partnership not for you?

If your organisation does not wish to become a Partner, you can still allow peer led meetings to use your premises. All we ask is that you do not:

- Allow your staff to run SMART Recovery meetings or use SMART Recovery materials within your own program
- Restrict any SMART Recovery meetings you host to clients of your own service.

Position of the NTA

“During the coming year the NTA will work with the field to facilitate better access to community resources and mutual aid support groups/organisations through greater publicity, supporting the continued development of local peer support groups and increasing the quality of the interface between drug treatment and community based services. SMART Recovery has engaged with the NTA on this work (alongside other mutual aid groups), and the NTA are supportive of the developments SMART Recovery are proposing.”

Extract of position statement supplied to SRUK by the NTA.

What next?

If you are interested in the ‘Partnership’ scheme, please see further information on the partnership section of the website. Then drop us an email and arrange a phone conversation. partnership@smartrecovery.org.uk

Finally, a quick reminder to subscribe to our email newsletter to keep in touch with developments, see signup form http://news.smartrecovery.org.uk
APPENDIX A - CHAMPION ROLE DESCRIPTION

A ‘SMART Recovery Champion’ is a member of staff at a site participating in the Partnership who takes a lead role in making SMART Recovery work for clients and the agency. The following is a tentative role description, it is envisaged that in most services this would be an additional responsibility for a member of staff rather than a dedicated post.

Agencies can adjust this to suit their particular needs, within the parameters of the Partnership agreement. 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.

In order to fulfil these responsibilities, Champions are expected to complete the on line training package equivalent to that offered to Facilitators. It is not necessary that they complete the training before starting to integrate SMART Recovery in the service.

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 possible.
- Make clients of the service aware of the importance of mutual aid and the option of SMART Recovery. This might include putting up posters.
- Run introductory sessions for clients to get to know SMART Recovery.
- Include SMART Recovery in aftercare planning
- Invite local SMART Recovery facilitators to do talks / introductory sessions at your service.

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 them to extend their knowledge and become facilitators.
- Support these facilitators to set up new meeting. If necessary help facilitate initially to get it off the ground. Please 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. Register the meeting with the Head Office.
- Sometimes, SMART Recovery meetings struggle or close, for example when a facilitator moves away. The Champion will 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. If so, migrate the service to the new materials and brief colleagues.
APPENDIX B – FAQ

What is the legal status of SMART Recovery?
SMART Recovery UK (SRUK) is a registered charity which has the exclusive UK permissions to promote and develop the programme in this country. We have a formal agreement with the USA based charity that owns and develops SMART Recovery worldwide.

Is SMART Recovery a treatment provider?
SMART Recovery UK is not and will not become a treatment service provider and will not accept a contract within which SRUK recruits staff to actually facilitate meetings. This is an important principle that will protect the movement from losing its core strength in mutual aid.

The aim is to have a small central staff team of two or three people and possibly a few regional coordinators, but maintain the voluntary focus of the network as a whole. Our relationship with partners is to offer training and license our technology and name.

Can’t we simply use CBT / REBT and skip this partnership thing?
Some people have argued that other than the name, SMART Recovery is in the public domain so providers could use it without any agreement from SRUK. These concerns have some truth to them, but are greatly over-stated. Almost all of the SMART Recovery materials are copyrighted, even if the underlying theories and principles are not.

Anyone can create a similar REBT / CBT based programme but it would take months or even years of work to build up an equivalent body of materials. Our program has been vetted by an Advisory Council of 17 eminent addiction specialists. In addition, SMART partnership links participants into the network of meetings and support structures that provide service users and ex-users an ongoing source of support.

What about clinical governance?
Where SMART Recovery is being used within the treatment programme of a Partner, the clinical responsibility rests entirely with that agency. Where meetings are not part of the treatment programme (even if the meeting space is being ‘donated’ by the provider) the responsibility rests with SRUK, which carries appropriate insurance and provides such oversight as is reasonable within the boundaries of a mutual aid / self help model.

Are meetings always peer led?
Facilitators are generally in recovery themselves and have learned about the SMART Recovery approach through participation in meetings and training. Champions may or may not be in recovery personally and there is no requirement for such disclosure.

How do peers become facilitators?
Since SMART Recovery meetings are based on CBT / REBT methods, there is a need for both underpinning knowledge and facilitation skills to run meetings. This is available through the training courses run by SRUK.