

## September: National Addiction Recovery Month

As the overdose epidemic continues to wreak havoc nationwide more interventions and solutions are needed to combat the number one healthcare crisis of our times.

Recovery is the best solution and nowadays has become increasingly more accessible thanks to a concerted effort by members of the recovery community to extend a “public” hand to those in need.

Faces and Voices of Recovery, a not for profit group based in Washington DC has been at the national advocacy forefront for over twenty years while encouraging individuals and families in recovery to go public with their victories over active addiction. Since its formation in 2001 the group has set out to organize the recovery community in a meaningful way in a call to action. The public campaign is also intended to let others know that recovery is possible and to help by providing access to a number of nontraditional pathways of recovery.

Traditional treatment options and twelve step programs like Alcoholics Anonymous while beneficial for some have not been effective for a large majority of individuals. Some argue that a contributing factor has been a lack of evidenced based practices being utilized in a majority of treatment programs.

As the epidemic has progressed so too has the emergence and spread of recovery coaches or peer advocates who are trained and certified and use their own lived experience as the basis to connect in a meaningful way with others battling active addiction. Recovery coaching and peer to peer telephone support are both evidenced based practices meaning they have proven effective in encouraging others to connect with and embrace peer to peer recovery support services and in assisting individuals to sustain recovery. The recognition that peer coaches are invaluable is supported by the edict issued by the NY State Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) that all of their outpatient treatment programs statewide (more than 435) had to hire at least one recovery coach.

In recent years the focus has shifted more to identifying nontraditional pathways of recovery that may attract those turned off by the perceived “religious” tones of AA or the abstinence is the only way clinical treatment approach. Harm reduction approaches have become increasingly more acceptable with the recognition that a primary goal of keeping people alive first might be a better approach then insisting on abstinence and driving folks back out there to play Russian roulette with illicit drugs that are likely to be tainted with deadly fentanyl.

New resources like recovery centers are multiplying rapidly across the country and here on Long Island there are three THRIVE Recovery Centers located in Islandia, Westbury and Westhampton Beach. The centers offer a variety of services including workshops, groups and other peer led support services including one on one recovery coaching. Recovery Coaches or Peer Advocates use their own lived experience as a mechanism to connect with others and guide them on their own recovery pathway.

Since the release of the documentary film “The Anonymous People” several years back thousands have been inspired to go public about their recovery. The film tells the moving story of the rapidly growing recovery movement aiming to spread hope across America. It is important to let those that are struggling with addiction know that there is a solution

Over the years celebratory recovery walks and public rallies have sprouted up during Recovery Month and have attracted thousands of attendees including 20,000 who walked over the historic Brooklyn Bridge here in New York dating back several years. Other National hub events have taken place in Philadelphia, PA, Detroit MI, Providence RI, Denver Co. and Louisville KY.

Recovery from addiction has tremendous economic and societal benefits according to a research poll conducted by Alexandre Laudet PhD. There are an estimated 23 million Americans in recovery from addiction and >20 plus million still in need of treatment for alcohol and other drug problems. In addition recovery is the best solution to the overdose epidemic. Recovery is possible and happening in communities everywhere.

Individuals in recovery become law abiding, tax paying, conscientious family members, contributing positively to society. Other findings demonstrate that recovery is beneficial in many ways: Those reporting having negative finances dropped from 70% to 38%, domestic violence fell from 41 to 9%, emergency room visits from 22% to 3% Volunteering in the community was up from 31% to 84%, people paying bills on time increased from 41% to 92%, those frequently missing school or work fell 61% to 4% and voting in elections increased 61% to 87%.

It makes sense to support recovery from addiction. This on Long Island there are a number of upcoming free events including the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual LI United Walk for Recovery at 10:30AM on September 25<sup>th</sup> at Massapequa Park Train Station and the Rock “N” Recovery XV celebration at St Peters in Huntington Station on September 29<sup>th</sup> at 7PM. LECSA has joined forces with many other local organizations to support these events.

More information on addiction and recovery can be obtained on these web sites.

[www.oasas.ny.gov](http://www.oasas.ny.gov) or [www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org](http://www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org) or [www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)

Information about the local THRIVE Recovery Centers can be found at [www.thrivelife.org](http://www.thrivelife.org)  
All of the services are free to the community.

For confidential assistance with an alcohol or drug related issue or to find out more about recovery coaching call us today.

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