

**Staying in Your Lane**

Roles of a Recovery Coach:

1. Motivator and Cheerleader;
2. Ally and Confidant;
3. Truth-Teller;
4. Role Model and Mentor;
5. Problem Solver;
6. Resource Broker;
7. Advocate; and
8. Community Organizer.

And what a recovery coach is NOT?

1. A counselor or a therapist;
2. A 12 step sponsor;
3. A doctor or a nurse; or
4. Clergy or a pastoral counselor.

Goals of a Recovery Coach:

1. To promote recovery;
2. To remove barriers;
3. To connect recoverees with recovery support services
4. To help build recovery capital; and
5. To encourage hope, optimism and healthy living.

Staying in your Lane

A Recovery Coach is not a:

Sponsor

*Are you moving beyond your role of a Recovery Coach if you:*

* + - * Perform AA/NA or other mutual aid group service work in your role?
      * Guide someone through the steps or principles of a particular recovery program?

Counselor

*Are you moving beyond your role of a Recovery Coach if you:*

* Diagnose?
* Provide counseling or refer to your activities as “counseling”?
* Focus on problems/“issues”/trauma as opposed to

recovery solutions?

Nurse/Doctor

*Are you moving beyond your role of a Recovery Coach if you:*

* Suggest or express disagreement with medical diagnoses (including psychiatric diagnoses)?
* Offer medical advice?
* Give your opinions about prescribed drugs beyond the boundaries of your training and experience?

Clergy Person

*Are you moving beyond your role of a Recovery Coach if you:*

* Promote a particular church or religion?
* Interpret religious doctrine?
* Offer absolution or forgiveness (other than forgiveness for harm done specifically to you)?

*What are the ethical considerations of straying from your lane?*

*What areas might prove to be more difficult when staying in your lane as a Recovery Coach?*

Distinguishing the Addiction Counselor, Recovery Coach & Sponsor

William White 2006 & 2009

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| **Characteristic** | **Counselor** | | **Recovery Coach** | **Sponsor** |
| *Foundational Knowledge* | Emphasis on formal education (theory & science);  Vetted by the profession | | Emphasis on experiential knowledge & training;  Vetted by the community | Emphasis on experiential knowledge;  Vetted by reputation within the community of recovery |
| *Organizational Context* | Works within organizational hierarchy of treatment organization & with direct supervision | | Organizational settings span  treatment organizations, allied service organizations & recovery community organizations;  Varied degree of supervision | Minimal hierarchy & no formal supervision |
| *Service/Support Framework* | Works within a particular organizational treatment philosophy | | Works across multiple frameworks of recovery via choices of those with whom they work | Works within beliefs & practices of a particular recovery fellowship |
| *Service/Support Relationship* | Significant power differential;  Extreme separation of helper/ helpee roles;  Explicit ethical guidelines  High external accountability | | Minimal power differential;  Ethical guidelines being developed;  Moderate external accountability | Minimal power differential;  Support is reciprocal;  Relationship governed by group conscience;  No external accountability |
| *Style of Helping* | Formal, personally guarded & strategic | | Variable by organizational setting but generally personal & informal | Informal, open & spontaneous |
| *Use of Self* | Self-disclosure discouraged or prohibited | | Strategic use of one’s own story;  Role model expectation | Strategic use of one’s own story;  Role model expectation |
| **Characteristic** | | **Counselor** | **Recovery Coach** | **Sponsor** |
| *Temporal Orientation* | | Considerable focus on past experience | Focus on present:  What can you do today to strengthen your recovery? | Variable by fellowship & stage of recovery of sponsee |
| *Duration of Service/Support Relationship* | | Brief & ever briefer | Measured in months or years  (Via sustained recovery checkups) | Variable but can span years |
| *Role of Community in Recovery* | | Intrapersonal & interpersonal focus;  Minimal focus on ecology of recovery  Minimal advocacy | Focus on linking to community resources & building community recovery capital;  Significant advocacy work | Intrapersonal & interpersonal focus;  Minimal focus on ecology of recovery;  Minimal advocacy |
| *Documentation* | | Extensive & burdensome | Minimal but growing | None |
| *Compensation* | | Works as a paid helper;  Client or third party pays for service | Works in paid or volunteer role;  Service may be paid for by person being coached or a third party | Provides support only as part of one’s own service work;  No fees paid to sponsor or recovery fellowship |