



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

Characteristic	Counselor	Recovery Coach	Sponsor
<i>Foundational Knowledge</i>	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
<i>Organizational Context</i>	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
<i>Service/Support Framework</i>	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
<i>Service/Support Relationship</i>	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
<i>Style of Helping</i>	Formal, personally guarded & strategic	Variable by organizational setting but generally personal & informal	Informal, open & spontaneous
<i>Use of Self</i>	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
<i>Temporal Orientation</i>	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
<i>Duration of Service/Support Relationship</i>	Brief & ever briefer	Measured in months or years (Via sustained recovery checkups)	Variable but can span years
<i>Role of Community in Recovery</i>	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
<i>Documentation</i>	Extensive & burdensome	Minimal but growing	None
<i>Compensation</i>	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