

Professionals Packet - Getting Started

Recovery International's self-help program is an excellent adjunct to professional care. The structured 4-Step Method uses cognitive behavioral tools to help patients deal with avoidance behaviors and manage the little things in daily life, which allows time for you to process and explore primary triggers and deeper issues during your sessions. Participants are expected to follow the advice of their health professionals regarding diagnoses, treatment and medication.

This "newcomer" packet will cover main concepts, the 4-Step Method, and provides a sample of tools or "spots" that participants use in the program.

RI meetings are led by trained volunteers and provide a structured process. It is objective and succinct, not confessional in nature. Leaders are trained in guiding participants through the Four-Step Example, and eliciting input from others using specific tools we call "spots." Meetings allow for:

- a safe place to practice
- reassurance of peers who have recovered or are recovering
- encouragement to keep trying.

We invite you to join a meeting. We especially recommend a "Welcome Meeting" for newcomers so you can learn the concepts and Method with others.

We hope to see you again. If you have questions, comments or concerns, please contact [**professionals@recoveryinternational.org**](mailto:professionals@recoveryinternational.org)

What To Expect at Recovery International Meetings

- Meetings will start and end on time.
- Please turn off your cell phone or other communication device.
- Meetings are facilitated by volunteer leaders trained to demonstrate the Recovery International Method.
- A Recovery International meeting is a safe place to share. All personal information disclosed during meetings is held in strict confidence.
- All Recovery International meetings follow a standard, structured format.
- Written information will be distributed to help you understand and participate during the meeting. Additional RI literature, membership information and materials will also be available.
- You may take notes on RI tools and principles during any portion of the meeting EXCEPT during the giving of an example.
- We encourage you to sit with the group and to participate. Until you are ready to participate, simply say “I pass”.
- We listen quietly and respectfully when others are reading and speaking.
- We do not use offensive language.
- We don’t offer advice, criticize, judge, analyze or make negative comments.
- We keep comments and spotting tools brief in order to have time for all to participate.
- You will have an opportunity to ask questions or make comments.
- We don’t discuss politics, sex, religion, or legal issues in our meetings.
- We are not mental health experts or trained professionals. We are people who practice the RI self-help techniques. We don’t diagnose, comment or advise on diagnoses, treatment plans or your medications.
- Drinking non-alcoholic beverages is permitted during a meeting but eating is restricted to the Mutual Aid portion of the meeting.

How a Recovery International Example Should be Constructed

The major portion of each RI meeting is the presentation of very structured examples by the group members. These examples illustrate our use of the RI Method and tools to deal with temperamental reactions to trivialities in our daily lives.

The presentation of each example consists of the steps outlined below. Each example presentation should last **no more than five minutes**.

OUTLINE

Step 1. Report a single situation or event that occurred - an everyday event when you began to work yourself up. Focus on a **brief description** of what happened: specifically, what triggered temper and symptoms.

Step 2. Report the **symptoms you experienced** - both physical and mental. (*For instance, angry and fearful thoughts, confusion, palpitations, disturbing impulses, tightness in your chest, lowered feelings, sweaty palms, and so on.*)

Step 3. Report your spotting of fearful and angry temper, the **Recovery International tools** you used to help yourself, and your **self-endorsement for your effort**.

Step 4. Begin with **“Before I had my Recovery training,”** and describe the temperamental reaction and symptoms you would have experienced in former days. What would have happened then versus what happened now? (*This will help you to note the progress you have made.*)

RI Method is simple and can be used immediately. With consistent practice, people learn to:

- Report a situation concisely only using facts
- Identify the symptoms that were triggered
- Retrain maladapted behaviors to adapted behaviors
- Reflect on progress and self-endorse for effort.

A Sampling of Tools

The purpose for using a Tool List is to enable newcomers to more easily and rapidly participate in a Recovery meeting. We encourage you to use this list when you initially attend our meetings, until you feel comfortable without it. Your Group Leader may have other guidelines for you regarding the use of this list in meetings. We are glad that you are here, and encourage you to participate and endorse for your participation!

These tools are quoted or adapted from Dr. Low's books: *Mental Health Through Will Training* (MH), *Selections from Dr. Low's Works* (SEL) and *Manage Your Fears, Manage Your Anger* (MYF). Citations to Dr. Low's books are listed for each tool. Many other tools can be found in these books.

Some Basic RI Tools

- Treat mental health as a business and not as a game..... MH ch.25
- Humor is our best friend, temper is our worst enemy.....MH p.108
- If you can't change a situation you can change your attitude towards it....MYF p.108, Sel. p.31-32
- Be self-led, not symptom-led.....MYF p.114-118, 280-283
- Nervous symptoms and sensations are distressing but not dangerous.....SEL p.53, MH p.115, 119
- Comfort is a want, not a need.MH chs.13, 22
- There is no right or wrong in the trivialities of everyday life.....SEL p.39, MH p.157, 195-196
- Calm begets calm, temper begets temper.....MYF p.245, SEL p.31
- Helplessness is not hopelessness.....MH ch.7, MYF p.184
- Temper maintains and intensifies symptoms.....MH p. 219
- Do things in part acts.....MH p.246-249
- Have the courage to make a mistake.....MH p.203, ch.30, MYF p.60, SEL p.108
- Feelings are not facts.....MH ch.9, MYF Lecture 14
- Do the things you fear and hate to do.....MH p. 329-330, MYF p.197
- Fear is a belief — beliefs can be changed.....MYF p.266-269
- Every act of self-control leads to a sense of self-respect.....MH p.166
- Decide, plan and act.MH p.42
- Any decision will steady you.....MYF p.5
- Anticipation is often worse than realization.....MH p.114-115, 146
- Replace an insecure thought with a secure thought.....MYF Lecture 1
- People do things that annoy us, not necessarily to annoy us.....MH ch.48

Where to start?

1) Visit our website, or call us at 312-337-5661 to learn more.

2) Participants are encouraged to begin by attending **Newcomer Meetings**, held online via Zoom or by telephone, to learn the basics of the RI Method. Visit RecoveryInternational.org and click on *Getting Started* to learn more, or call us!

3) Check the **Meetings** page of the RI website for more information about the schedule of meetings.

Would you like brochures or rack cards for your office? We are happy to supply them at no charge. Just call us, or email info@RecoveryInternational.org.



Contact Us

Recovery International

1415 W. 22nd St. Tower Floor
Oak Brook, IL 60523

Phone: 312-337-5661

E-mail: info@RecoveryInternational.org

San Diego, CA Office: 619-383-2084



Spanish-language meetings also available.

- Español@RecoveryInternational.org
- *En Español: 619-383-2056*
- RecoveryInternational.org/spanish-materials/

24-hour recorded Dial-a-Spot Helpline

312-448-9387

www.RecoveryInternational.org

Recovery International

An Introduction For Professionals

Peer-led Support Groups for your Clients,
Teaching Cognitive Behavioral Tools
for Better Mental Health

Recovery International

Recovery International is often considered the best-kept secret in mental health services. We have served hundreds of thousands since our founding in Chicago in 1937. A 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, we depend on donations from our participants and supporters, and dedicated hours of service from our many volunteers, to provide our meetings and programs.



Since 1937

RecoveryInternational.org

About Recovery International

Everyone needs a variety of tools to manage their mental health, whether dealing with mental health struggles or everyday stress. Recovery International's educational peer-led self-help program provides structured cognitive behavioral techniques to help people lead more peaceful and satisfying lives. We offer peer-led support groups, available through Zoom, telephone, or in some locations, in-person. RI can be an important adjunct to professional care, or can be used on its own to help manage everyday stressors.

The 4-Step Method

In RI, participants learn a 4-Step Method to develop skills to better manage their internal environments — what we have control over. The Method distinguishes between the internal environment — what we can control, and the external environment — what we cannot control.

The 4-Step Method helps people manage their thoughts, impulses, and symptoms. With practice, the repeated use of the 4-Steps becomes habitual, a clear and effective approach to managing daily stressors. The Method allows you to:

- Report a situation, rather than complain about it;
- Describe symptoms, rather than interpret them;
- Practice simplicity, rather than complexity;
- See progress made!

The History of RI

Recovery International was founded in 1937 using the principles taught by Chicago neuropsychiatrist Dr. Abraham Low. RI offers hundreds of tools to deal with common life occurrences. The stress of everyday events can add up. Tasks that can seem easy to handle when life is going well can feel overwhelming when stress starts to accumulate. By learning to manage “the small stuff” using RI's cognitive behavioral techniques, the larger things can become easier to manage, too.



What We Offer Your Clients:

- ✓ A great adjunct to therapy, or can be stand-alone peer-led group work
- ✓ For adults ages 18 and up
- ✓ No insurance or referral needed. While voluntary donations are encouraged at meetings, everyone is welcome regardless of ability to contribute.
- ✓ Teaches your clients cognitive-behavioral tools they can apply to their lives every day.
- ✓ With meetings available by Zoom, telephone, or in-person in some locations, this program is accessible to almost anyone.
- ✓ Meetings are available 7 days a week, so if someone is having a challenging day, they can find a meeting.
- ✓ Professionals are welcome to check us out by attending a meeting to learn more, or contact us with your questions.