

Professionals Packet - Getting Started

Recovery International's peer-led self-help program is an excellent adjunct to professional care. The structured 4-Step Method teaches cognitive behavioral tools to help clients manage the stressors of daily life. That allows time for you to explore deeper issues during your sessions.

Participants are expected to follow the advice of their health care professionals regarding diagnoses and medication. There is no need to worry about your clients encountering information which conflicts with your work with them. We do not deal with the "larger issues" in our groups. Meetings are focused on learning to apply the 4-Step Method, developed by neuropsychiatrist Abraham Low, M.D., to the everyday situations which "work us up."

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

RI meetings are led by trained volunteers in a structured meeting process. It is objective and succinct, not confessional in nature. Leaders are trained in guiding participants through the 4-Step example, and eliciting input from others using specific tools we call "spots." Meetings allow for:

- a safe place to practice;
- a non-judgmental environment;
- the reassurance of peers;
- hope and the encouragement to keep trying.

We have meetings available by phone and Zoom 7 days a week. We also have in-person meetings available in some locations. If your client is having a hard day, they can attend a meeting. Additional resources we offer include: 1) a 24-hour recorded Spot Line, which offers recorded tools to help reassure and calm clients; 2) a private Facebook group, where members of RI can offer 4-Step examples and help spot on examples others have left; 3) an AI helper on our website, Spot Help, that walks people through a 4-Step example; 4) 5-minute phone calls for regular meeting participants so they can give an example with someone in person in-between their regular weekly meetings.

Our groups focus on managing the "small stuff" that allows clients to practice the tools which can eventually help manage larger issues. Our meetings do not allow most examples related to politics, religion, legal issues, sex, medication or diagnoses.

As a 501(c)(3) non-profit, we welcome everyone. While we ask for small donations at our meetings, we do not turn anyone away who cannot contribute. We do not accept insurance. Having this additional support system available to your clients can be very helpful to them.

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.

If you have questions, comments or concerns, please contact professionals@recoveryinternational.org or phone us at 312-337-5661.

What To Expect at Recovery International Meetings

- Meetings 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/PDFs will be distributed/available to help you understand and participate during the meeting. Additional RI literature, membership information and materials are also available on our website.
- 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 be present with the group and to participate. Until you are ready to participate, simply say “I pass” if they ask you to participate.
- We listen quietly and respectfully when others are reading and speaking.
- We do not use offensive or judgmental 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, legal issues, medications or diagnoses 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, treatments or 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, 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 verses what happened now? (*This will help you to note the progress you have made.*)

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

- Report a situation concisely using facts;
- Identify the symptoms that were triggered;
- Retrain thinking/mindset, replacing unproductive behaviors with productive behaviors;
- Reflect on progress and self-endorse for effort.

A Sampling of Tools

This Sample Tool List is designed for newcomers to easily and quickly join Recovery meetings. We encourage you to participate and endorse you for your participation. These tools are quoted or adapted from Dr. Low's books: ***Mental Health Through Will Training*** Fifth Edition (MH), ***Selections from Dr. Low's Works*** (SEL), and ***Manage Your Fears Manage Your Anger*** (MYF). The page numbers where these spots may be found are listed for each tool. Please read the whole chapter so you understand the context of the spot. You will find many more tools within Dr. Low's works.

- **Treat your mental health as a business, not a game. MH 156**
- **Temper is our worst enemy, humor our best friend. MH 54**
- **If we can't change a situation, we can change our attitude toward it. MH 10, SEL 31-32**
- **Be self-led, not symptom-led. MH 24, MYF 114-118, 280-283**
- **Sensations are distressing but not dangerous. MH 62, 68, 69, 70, 126**
- **Have the will to bear discomfort. MH 89, 91, 92**
- **Comfort is a want, not a need. MH 93**
- **Temper produces temper. Calm produces calm. MH 112**
- **When we laugh at ourselves, we choose humility, common sense and averageness. MH 61**
- **Be group-minded, not self-minded. MH 16**
- **Feelings call for expression, temper for suppression. MH 115**
- **Helplessness is not hopelessness. MH 47, MYF 184**
- **Temper creates tenseness, and tenseness creates symptoms. MH 152**
- **Do tasks in part acts. MH 178, 181**
- **Endorse your successes and refrain from condemning your failures. SEL 45-47, 132**
- **Try, fail, try, fail, try – succeed. MH 69**
- **Practice the courage to make mistakes. MH 183, MYF 60-61, SEL 108**
- **Feelings are not facts. MH 62, 67, MYF 77-80**
- **Command your muscles to do what you fear to do, as long as there is no danger. MH 248**
- **Every act of self-control produces a sense of self-respect. MH 105**
- **Decide, plan, initiate and act. MH 3**
- **When you can't decide, any decision will steady you. MH 3, MYF 5**
- **If you can't anticipate securely, don't anticipate. MH 62**
- **Replace an insecure thought with a secure thought. MH 62, MYF 2-3**
- **A thought of security can modify or eliminate a thought of danger. MH 68**
- **Sometimes people do things *that* annoy us, not necessarily *to* annoy us. MH 296**
- **Excuse, don't *accuse*, yourself or others. MH 16, 146**
- **Mere acceptance of a view is easy, but practicing it means sustained application. MH 257**
- **Tempers are frequently uncontrolled but never uncontrollable. MH 296**
- **Control of inner environment is more important than control of external environment. MH 61**
- **Endorse yourself for the effort, not only for the outcome. MH 196**