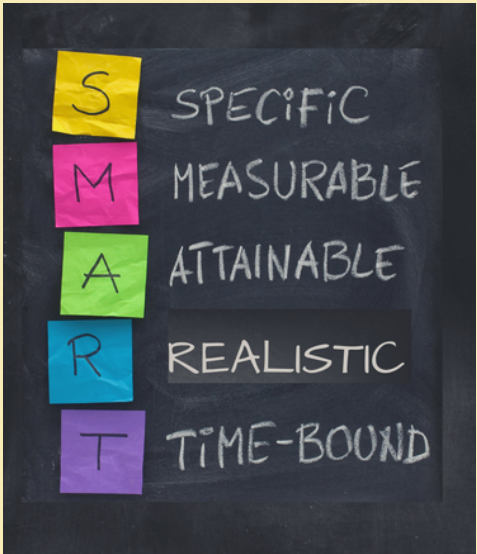


# RECOVERY

*The official newsletter of the  
Fletcher Group Rural Center Of Excellence*



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## A NEW PARTNER AND A SPECIAL OFFER

*By Founder and Chief Medical Officer Dr. Ernie Fletcher*

The Fletcher Group RCOE works with a wide range of partners to improve the quality and capacity of rural recovery services. Our most recent is SMART Recovery whose science-based methods have the power to dramatically improve the lives of recovery home residents.

We hope this issue of our monthly newsletter will help you and others decide to participate in an exciting new offer: a 12-week training program provided at no cost to the first 100 recovery homes that apply and meet HRSA's rural criteria for participation.

SMART doesn't compete with AA, 12-Step, and other programs. On the contrary, it works smoothly side-by-side to build the life skills needed to overcome addiction and lead balanced, fulfilling lives.

Please sign up today—and urge others to do the same—at [fletchergroup.org/smart-recovery](http://fletchergroup.org/smart-recovery). This is a rare opportunity to create transformative change at no cost to recovery home operators.

# A DYNAMIC NEW PARTNERSHIP

The Fletcher Group's exciting new partnership seeks to implement SMART Recovery's evidence-based methods at 100 rural recovery homes within the next six months.

## Numerous Benefits

The homes will receive free access to SMART's Successful Life Skills program; free materials including the *Successful Life Skills* handbook; the use of tablet computers if needed; and a SMART Certificate awarded to co-facilitators that can be used to extend program benefits even farther afield.

## Cost? No Problem!

The new initiative addresses two huge hurdles to recovery home residents in need of life skills: cost and accessibility. Many homes, whether commercial or non-profit, are on tight budgets and can't afford professional in-house training. The new initiative solves that problem by providing guidance and materials free of charge, plus a \$1,200 stipend for implementing the program and participating in a follow-up evaluation.



## Access? No Problem!

Many rural recovery homes don't offer professionally conducted in-house support meetings, even though they may be required of residents by parole agreements or the home itself. But travel can be a challenge if a driver's license has been lost during incarceration or if public transportation is inadequate, as is often the case in rural areas.

Even if the home is so remote that SMART personnel cannot appear in person, life skills can still be effectively taught through online meetings supervised by veteran facilitators—something SMART has been excelling at for years.

## The Easy Way To “Pay It Forward”

The certificate awarded to staff members or residents who volunteer to serve as co-facilitators in SMART meetings qualifies them to oversee future meetings with the same group or others. This can be of enormous value to those who wish to "pay it forward" but don't have the time or money to complete a college degree in social work.

## The Next Step: Awareness and Buy-In

Despite its proven success around the world (see next page), SMART Recovery is not as well-known in rural areas as traditional AA and 12-Step programs. “That means we have a lot of education to do,” says Project Coordinator Brad Glaser. A key role will be played by Fletcher Group Outreach and Engagement Specialists who are already at work in rural communities from coast to coast.

“It's not unusual for us to exchange 15 emails a day with the Fletcher Group,” says Glaser, who works just as closely with state-level NARR administrators and peer support specialists across the country. “The importance of this program can't be overstated. We have to do everything we can for the simple reason that, for many, this might well mean the difference between life and death.”



# A PROVEN PROGRAM

“SMART Recovery isn’t a test balloon,” says Project Coordinator Brad Glaser. “Its success has been documented for decades.”

“I’m living proof that it works,” says SMART Recovery’s Mike Hooper, referencing his own 20-year journey of recovery.

**Life After Addiction**  
SMART Recovery’s program is based on a simple principle—that abstinence and lasting recovery start with a clear understanding of one’s own thoughts, feelings, and inner dialogue.

**Science-Based**  
SMART has a scientific, rather than spiritual, foundation. It encourages self-reliance, rather than powerlessness. Participants talk *with*, rather than *to*, one another. There are no sponsors and no lifetime commitments.

27

Years in existence

26

Countries use it

2M

U.S. participants

2nd

Largest in the world



**How It Works**  
Though carefully orchestrated by trained facilitators, SMART meetings eagerly adapt to any group or setting. Participants design and implement their own recovery plan based on an enhanced understanding of their own weaknesses and strengths gained through the Successful Life Skills curriculum. “It complements whatever recovery pathway you’re on,” says Glaser, “no matter who you are or what your situation.”

**Bottom Up, Not Top Down**  
The ultimate authority on recovery is the person going through it. “Our work is driven by the participant’s unique needs and challenges,” says Hooper. “We’re there simply to help them complete their plan.”

“White-knuckling your way through a program directed by others doesn’t work for everyone,” says Glaser. “We cater to the individual rather than the other way around. We’ve found that self-knowledge is what makes life worth living without addiction.”

**Four-Point Focus**  
As a means to that end, SMART Recovery’s Successful Life Skills program focuses on four key objectives: building and maintaining motivation; coping with urges; managing thoughts, feelings, and behaviors; and leading a balanced life.

**Meeting A Real Need**  
“I believe in it not only because it saved my life,” says Hooper, “I have testimonies and written accounts from countless participants describing how SMART Recovery has transformed their lives.”

“That’s why we’re so excited about this initiative,” says Glaser. “We know personally, as well as through the people we work with, how important it is and how much it’s needed. That’s why we work so hard and so closely with everyone we can. We know the difference it can make because we’ve seen the lives it’s changed and saved.”

# COLLABORATOR, NOT COMPETITOR

“If you’re a faith-based organization using spirituality in your recovery, there's no reason you can’t use our tools to complement what you’re doing,” says SMART Recovery’s Mike Hooper. The most recent proof of that can be seen at Beneath the Shade, a Dover, Ohio recovery home where Board Member Traci Buzzeo helped implement the SMART program.

Hooper initiated the training but turned it over to Buzzeo about halfway through the 12-week program. “Mike’s guidance was absolutely critical as I got my feet wet,” says Buzzeo. “He showed me how it all works, the same way someone would train you for a new job.”

## No Conflict With Religion

SMART Recovery is based on science rather than religion, but that didn't bother anyone at Buzzeo’s faith-based operation. “We do plenty of religious training,” says Buzzeo. “We've got that covered, but residents were still having a hard time getting to the root of their addiction. That’s where SMART Recovery really made a difference. The self-confidence of our residents has skyrocketed. For the first time, they feel like they can get to the root of things and take control of their own recovery. It’s had a massive impact.”

## Another Tool In the Toolset

Buzzeo is now recommending SMART to one and all. “Most people think they have what they need. You hear them say, ‘We already have a 12-Step Program. What's the problem?’ But then you look at the relapse rates and you think: If we really had what we needed, why would we have so many emergency room visits and funerals? In terms of challenges and goals, we're all in this together. So if something works and doesn’t hurt anything, why not use it?”

“Everyone that goes through the program says our tools and techniques enhance what they doing,” says Hooper. “Our real value is helping people understand themselves—where they are, where they aren't, and where they want to be.”

## The Gift Of Hope

Buzzeo used a portion of the \$1,200 stipend to buy five-dollar gift cards that were then handed out at celebratory dinners every four weeks.

“It may not seem like a lot, but the residents loved knowing that someone genuinely cared about them and wanted them to succeed.”



TRACI BUZZEO

The program's been so popular that non-residents participated, including an employee and a volunteer. And it hasn't stopped. Residents decided on their own to continue the meetings because they get so much from them. “I’m sure we’ll see the same thing at all the other homes,” says Hooper.

## Astounding Success

“It's been worth it in so many ways,” says Buzzeo, “SMART's not just about addiction. It works on any behavior, from an eating disorder to a mental disorder. And it's so uplifting to see what happens when people finally have the tools they need. It’s like giving them a key that unlocks their own recovery. It's so amazing and empowering. I have nothing but good things to say about SMART Recovery.”