

RECOVERY

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



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UNIVERSAL YET PERSONAL

by Founder and Chief Medical Officer Dr. Ernie Fletcher

"No one size fits all" is especially apt when it comes to recovery.

Although the Fletcher Group works hard to develop best practices that benefit everyone, we make sure our technical assistance is carefully attuned to each person and each rural community we serve.

And because we can't do it alone, we work with partners like SMART Recovery, a proven program that shares our evidence-based but person-centric approach to recovery.

Thanks to HRSA and the Elevance Health Foundation, we're delighted now to offer SMART's services free of charge to recovery homes across the country.

We hope you'll help us spread the word about this "smart choice" so that as many people as possible can benefit.

HOW SMART WORKS

Approaching its 30th year, SMART Recovery uses evidence-based methods to help people find within themselves the power to change. Proven effective in schools, prisons, treatment centers, re-entry programs, hospitals and military facilities, SMART each week conducts non-judgmental, stigma-free meetings around the world, including over 1,400 in the United States.

Using easy-to-understand language and user-friendly tools, SMART meets people wherever they are in their path to recovery. It welcomes those dealing with any form of negative behavior, including substance use, gambling and compulsive buying disorders.

In-Person Or Virtual

SMART meetings, whether held in person or virtually, are led by facilitators who complete a rigorous 20-hour training course, or by hosts who undergo less rigorous training and lead simpler meetings. Instead of chronological steps, SMART focuses on four main points that can be revisited whenever necessary:

- Building and maintaining motivation
- Coping with urges
- Managing thoughts, feelings, and behaviors
- Achieving a more balanced lifestyle

No Conflict With Other Programs

SMART complements other programs and requires no unlearning of other doctrines or recovery principles. In fact, nearly 40 percent of SMART participants attend 12-Step meetings and there's evidence that parallel attendance can be particularly effective. Individuals who use medication-assisted treatments or behavioral health medications are also welcome as long as the drugs are prescribed by medical professionals.

The Successful Life Skills Handbook

Useful both during and between meetings, SMART's handbook lays out a flexible, person-centric 12-week program. Based on scientific research revealing the most effective ways of changing behavior, it contains discussion questions, cross-talk prompts, motivational interviewing techniques, and self-directed exercises that can be written directly into the book. Taken together, they impart the skills needed to assume responsibility; cope with anger, frustration, and anxiety; and make healthy decisions that lead to a more balanced life.



The Fletcher Group's May webinar was hosted by SMART Recovery Assistant Executive director Christi Alicea, Volunteer Support Coordinator Alena Kuplinski, and Project Coordinator Brad Glaser. To watch the Webinar, simply click the button below.



So Many Benefits
Attendance at SMART meetings can also satisfy court and probation requirements.

Online tools include a SMART Recovery Meeting Finder and a SMART Toolbox of downloadable pdfs.

There's also a user-friendly phone app that allows the same scientifically-based tools to be accessed anytime from anywhere—particularly helpful in rural communities where professional services may be lacking.

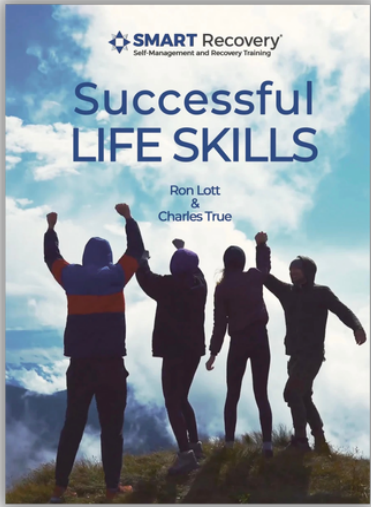
SMART IN YOUR RECOVERY HOME

Two new Fletcher Group partnerships hope to implement the 12-session SMART *Successful Life Skills* curriculum at 250 recovery homes across America. One hundred will be in rural counties as defined by the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). A separate partnership funded by the Elevance Health Foundation will focus on 150 non-rural recovery homes in California, Georgia, Indiana, New York, Ohio, and Virginia. Both programs cover all costs, including books, materials, and technology. Those rural recovery homes qualifying for the HRSA program may also be entitled to a \$1,200 stipend.

In both programs, a trained facilitator oversees as many as 15 participants, either in-person or virtually. (The latter can be particularly helpful in remote rural areas where trained facilitators may not be available.) One or two residential staff trained during the initial course can then "pay it forward" by hosting their own meetings for others.

A Significant Research Component

A big part of both programs is studying SMART benefits and barriers in a recovery house setting. Participants are asked to complete a brief anonymous survey at the beginning and end of the course as well as half-way through and three months later. The results are tabulated by researchers at the University of Kentucky. Those who feel uncomfortable participating in the survey are still welcome to attend meetings and complete the program.



The surveys ask about level of engagement, effectiveness, barriers, how the courses might be improved, and long-term outcomes. To make sure all procedures are followed correctly, results are reviewed by the prestigious Western Copernicus Institutional Review Board.

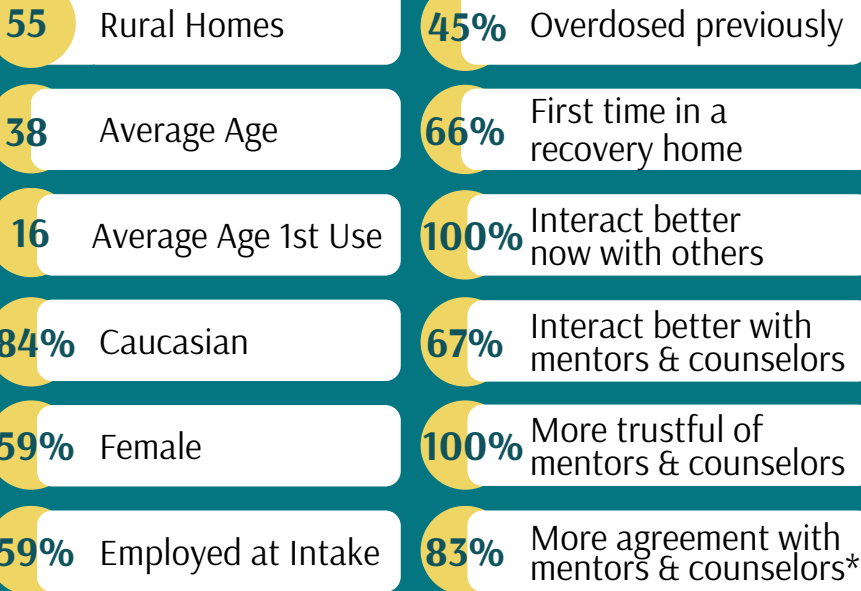
Are You Rural?

To find out,

[CLICK HERE](#)



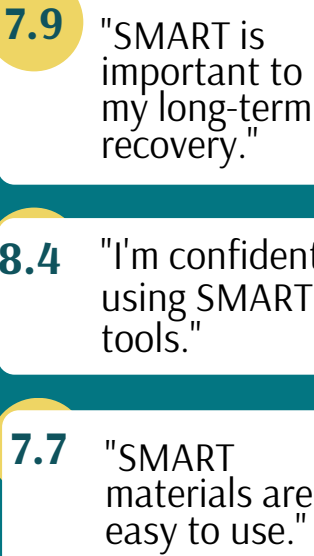
By The Numbers (so far)



• Regarding recovery goals

Agreement

On a scale of 1 to 10



LIVING SMART DAY-BY-DAY

Coping with urges may be the most important lesson gained from SMART, says Project Manager Brad Glaser. "I'm in long-term recovery myself, with SMART as my primary recovery pathway. So in meetings and classes, I'm talking about the same tools I use everyday."

Avoidance

Glaser attributes much of his success to SMART's first step in handling urges—the avoidance of situations, people, and sensations that trigger an urge. Of course, to do that you need to know your triggers. In SMART Recovery, that's done by writing down a personal *Urge Log*.

Escape

But what if you still find yourself in a triggering environment? "That's a big one for me," says Glaser. "The answer is get out." And the best way to do that? Make a plan beforehand. "If I'm going somewhere that's potentially triggering, I make sure I have my own car or other means of transportation. Relying on others can leave you stranded in a vulnerable situation."

Reach for Support

Another important tip: Always keep a list of contacts and phone numbers with you...and use them. "One thing I do and advise others to do is make those connections even when you're not having an urge. Text your accountability partners regularly so that when you're facing an urge, it's second nature to contact them. I have two friends I've kept on my list for years for exactly that purpose."

Stay Busy

Last but not least: Plan out each day to be as productive as possible. "That doesn't mean you have to be working on recovery every moment," says Glaser. "But limiting your aimless free time is essential." Being productive doesn't mean you can't have fun, either. "Taking a hike with a friend is fun, but scheduling it in advance means I know what I'm going to be doing, urge or not."

It's Personal

These may sound like hard, fast rules, but SMART is inherently flexible and person-centric. "We don't lecture or tell you how you do your recovery," says Glaser. "The most important thing is learning what works for you. I'd love it if everyone used every tool, but if you leave with just two or three, that's still a huge win."



BRAD GLASER

Always Accessible

Because its benefits are so powerful, Glaser does everything he can to make the program accessible.

"Research shows the biggest barriers are conflicting priorities and technology," says Glaser. "That's why we make our facilitators available any time of day and provide Zoom lessons as well as microphones, cameras, and wi-fi signal boosters. We want SMART to reach everyone, including people in more remote rural areas, because we know from experience—as in my own life—what a huge difference it can make."

SIGN UP NOW!

To find out if your Recovery Home qualifies for our free SMART Recovery program...

CLICK HERE

