

# Recovery TALK

Sponsored by



Quarterly Newsletter - MAY 2020

## COVID-19 and the Impact Felt by the Recovery Community

Friends of Recovery - New York (FOR-NY) is pleased to present this special edition of our quarterly newsletter, *Recovery Talk*, themed: **“The Pandemic & The Epidemic, The Collective Impact of COVID-19 on the Recovery Community; In Our Own Voices.”** The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) infiltrated every aspect of our lives and forced us to make some pretty drastic changes to mitigate the devastating force of the virus. We watched as every community in New York (and especially communities of color) were spared no mercy to the far-reaching, ever-growing touch of this virus.

In March 2020, the New York State Government started to take formal measures to stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The Recovery Community took in the information as it came and, like the rest of the public, expressed uncertainty and fear, but also immediate resilience. FOR-NY saw an opportunity to collect timely data on the Recovery Community’s response to the COVID-19 crisis and to use that data to shape our advocacy position moving forward in order to maintain the progress we have made as a community, and to better support not only our community, but the state as a whole.

In this newsletter, we will present the data highlighted from two online self-reported surveys: COVID-19 Impact on Recovery Community Organizations; and COVID-19 Impact on the Peer Workforce. Along with the data summation from the RCO survey, FOR-NY has formalized a list of recommendations. The Peer Workforce data summation calls for more discussions to be had, more formalized discussions that could yield specific considerations, which could be integrated into the already existing Best Practice Trainers Learning Collaboratives. In addition to the data summation, there is commentary on how the transition to a “virtual recovery training environment” has forever changed the education and training of the Recovery Community. There is also a “youth-oriented perspective” presented by the Youth Voice Matters team. Lastly, but certainly not least, a closing call for continued critical conversations as it relates to the ongoing inequalities within communities of color, especially during this most ravaging time. We must not forget that an injustice to one of us, is an injustice to ALL of us. We must be diligent and brave enough to have critical dialogue around this issue.

issue.

So, my friends, it is my hope that this newsletter reaches you, teaches you, and shows you that your voice continues to matter and be needed on this journey, “Where we envision a world that celebrates recovery for all.”

Enjoy,

Dr. Angelia Smith-Wilson, Executive Director  
Friends of Recovery - New York



# Our Voices...

As mentioned in the opening of this newsletter, FOR-NY began to gather information through surveys pertaining to the impact of COVID-19 on the Recovery Community throughout the state. We hope to utilize and integrate this information as we move forward with policy, advocacy and education.

## Peer Survey

# IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON PEER WORKFORCE

by **Angelia Smith-Wilson**  
FOR-NY Executive Director

*Peer support workers bring their own personal knowledge of what it is like to live and thrive with mental health conditions and substance use disorders. They support people's progress towards recovery and self-determined lives by sharing vital experiential information and real examples of the power of recovery. The sense of mutuality created through thoughtful sharing of experience is influential in modeling recovery and offering hope (Davidson, Bellamy, Guy, & Miller, 2012)*

In March 2020, the New York State Government started to take formal measures to stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The New York State recovery community, inclusive of peers in the workforce, along with the entire treatment world would undoubtedly be impacted. Friends of Recovery - New York (FOR-NY) saw an opportunity to collect timely data in response to the COVID-19 crisis and to use that data to shape the pandemic direction of the peer workforce, in order to maintain the peer professional progress.

FOR-NY distributed an online self-report survey across New York State with the intent on capturing exactly how the peer workforce (and those identified as peer professionals) was impacted by COVID-19 and statewide government mandated restrictions.

FOR-NY received a total of 342 responses with 92% of the responses being individuals reporting as being currently employed or volunteering as a peer professional:

- 74% Certified Recovery Peer Advocate and/or Certified Peer Advocate- Provisional (CRPA, CRPA-P)
- 4% Certified Addiction Recovery Coach (CARC)
- 4% Certified Alcohol and Substance Abuse Counselor (CASAC)
- And 11% reported as being non-certified

The data represented peers in the workforce from across the state with New York City area having the largest participation rate of 27% with the next top 3 areas being:

- Western New York- 14%
- Fingers Lakes and the Capital region- both at 13%

The demographic sample presented an almost even split between those who identified as male; 47% and those who identified as female; 48% respectively.

As discussed previously, FOR-NY carried the assumption that undoubtedly the peer workforce would be impacted by the pandemic and thereby saw an opportunity to gather the peer workforce voice with hopes of providing a "collective call to action" to mitigate any workforce

issues or concerns. The data revealed that 49% of those surveyed, did not feel the pandemic (social distancing as the main element) had an impact on the overall work of the peer workforce, while interestingly enough 45%, felt their work had been impacted. The following highlights some of the things the peer workforce felt are going well in the following areas; the impact of technology training, the use of virtual technology and closing with post pandemic thoughts.

When asked, "Are things going well, are you feeling supported by your organization and/or agency" – 174 answered "yes" and do feel supported.

- *We are all supporting each other at this critical time in our field*
- *Yes, but I think these are unprecedented times and everyone is scrambling to figure it out so they are providing the best support they can. I think it would be helpful to have clear guidelines on privacy, best practices, expectations of ourselves and others, and models that have thrived working from home in other fields*
- *Yes, organization, weekly groups and peer led support group*
- *Supervision and good communication/supportive of peers*
- *We have started some online Peer Support groups which are being run on the Zoom Platform. So far, they are going well. Additionally, as noted before, management is choosing a phone system that will provide 12 hour rotating phone support, with hours allocated across staff to maintain at least 12 hour per day phone support during the crisis*

Although over 50% of the peer workforce felt supported by the organization/agency, 49% reported, "feeling unsupported" and "experiencing concerns with (their) needs not being met"

- *I am not being given clear directions on how to gather demographics. Especially when my job depends on getting the numbers in*
- *No not really. Our organization is placing a huge emphasis on us focusing on making productive and has restricted our ability*

# Our Voices...

to do any other RC work aside from a billable service (that's a continuation from before COVID-19)

- Not at all. My direct supervisor offers zero support. Zero supervision. It'd be nice if we could have our own Peer Support group once a week
- Self-care is important/ Needing support on a personal level/ could use a- check -in
- Feeling a lot of stress
- Masks/sanitizer would help/adequate equipment and safety precautions
- Should be entitled to hazard pay
- Having regular supervision would be helpful/more supervision
- Peers being told to do non-peer work/additional work
- Not enough peers to provide support, peers are not able to fulfill their roles and are being placed into different hospital departments for work with no training, lack of crisis support for peers-many peers are returning to use, not enough conference and clarity on future employment, peers being laid off, new peer orientation

In regards to clients the peer workforce supports, there were overall concerns for the clients:

- Lack of access and information as to what hospitals and institutions are open and closed as far as shelter, detox, inpatient, residential tx, Lack of communication about resources still available during this time, the media isn't helping to connect

people to still available resources, clients are unaware of the virtual services being offered, treatment on demand, treatment beds being filled up, more outreach to provide services

- Clients slipping through the cracks, lack of contact with those who are actively using
- Lack of Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) access and support
- Lack of assistance being provided for women and single mothers
- Increase in overdoses and re-occurrences

One area of concern in particular that pertained to unmet needs (respondents were asked to describe any unmet need), was the "lack of training around technology" - in light of the in-person services being impacted, peers in the workforce, reported the following as it related to receiving training for telecommunications and their perceived effectiveness of being able to deliver telecommunications services:

- Over 50% of the workforce peers reported having received some form of technology training
- Of that 50% of those trained, 31% reported having specifically received Zoom\* training

When asked if "telecommunications peer workforce services were effective":

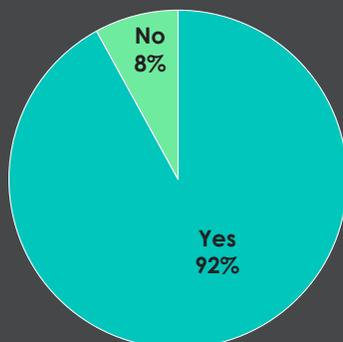
- 46% reported telecommunications delivered peer support services were effective
- 38% reported in-person peer support services were more effective than telecommunications

## SURVEY RESULTS:

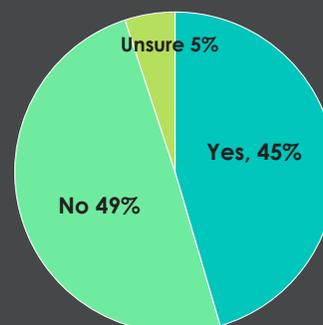
FRIENDS OF  
RECOVERY  
New York

ONE COMMUNITY  
ONE VOICE

Are you currently employed or volunteering as a Peer Professional?



Have your hours been impacted by physical distancing and other COVID related guidance?



FOR-NY Peer Recovery Survey April 2020

# Our Voices...

A small percentage of workforce peers reported wanting for peer telecommunication services to remain in place after the pandemic ends. Overall, telecommunications are perceived as being “better than nothing” as many peers in the workforce were pleased to still be employed during the pandemic.

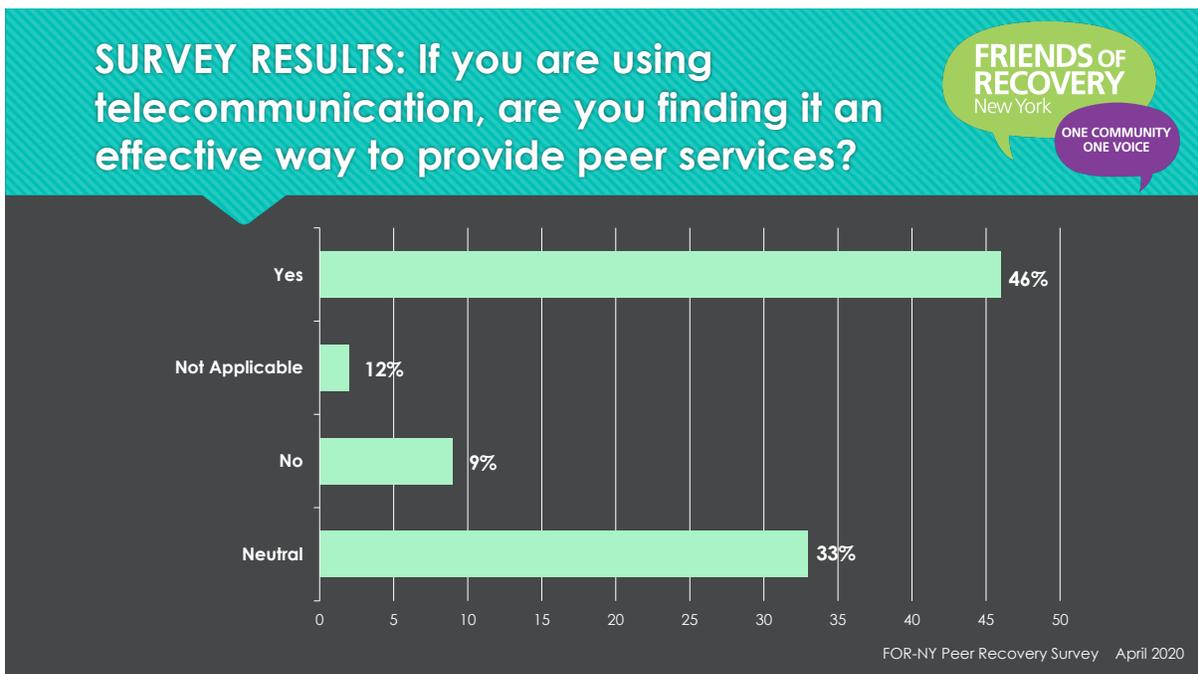
But even in light of being employed, there were concerns in regards to the uncertainty of future implications and impact of the prolonged pandemic and continued restrictive nature of work:

- *People's mental well-being is being negatively impacted, working remotely has heightened mental health symptoms, lack of co-occurring disorder services*
- *Virtual issues, Lack of Zoom participation. Availability and access to online meetings, Limited technology access-can't provide the proper care to clients, virtual services not being as effective as in-person services, lack of access to technology to utilize virtual services, Zoomed-out*
- *Limited access to resources and services people need and little help to get them, Community resources that are available for individuals that are suffering from AUD/SUD & Co-occurring Disorder are not properly coordinated, not enough resources are being provided to keep people engaged to obtain services*
- *Peer workers being pushed to the max & some aren't able to work remotely, being overworked, unable to provide coaching, peer workers aren't being provided with enough support, burn out, uncertainty about their position as a peer now, not enough peer coaches over the age of 50, peers lacking self-care which is much needed during this time*

In conclusion, when asked what can FOR-NY specifically do on behalf of the peer workforce, the following was proposed:

- *Provide more trainings, provide virtual social events and conferences, provide access to online educational tools to help us learn to better serve our community during this time, smaller and more interactive online trainings, Providing the best of the best so we know what works. Exposing us to new ideas in quick ways so we don't have to attend long meetings, or long screen time trainings, provide peer specific online trainings, focus on financial relief information and technical support, beyond just the standard "how to use zoom." Provide workshops or events where Peers can gather and share their experiences and update their skills and tools kits*
- *Provide resources on topics that are pressing, share resources, continue providing relevant information, information on working with homeless youth*
- *Continue outreach, continue support, provide family support*
- *Provide access to a mapped network of who is who and what their area of expertise and specialties are in order to refer appropriate assessments, keeping a growing network of care*

It is clear that the peer workforce across New York is an integral part of the addiction journey, and the support of the workforce is needed, **now more than ever**. Friends of Recovery - New York has always supported the peer workforce by offering trainings, scholarship funding, and continued support through the Best Practice Trainer Learning Collaboratives. It is clear more is needed and FOR-NY will be working with New York State Office of Addiction Services and Supports to create an infrastructure that will continue to support the expansion of the peer workforce, which will undoubtedly enhance the individuals and families in treatment and recovery, beyond the pandemic.



# Our Voices...

## RCO Survey

# RESULTS & RECOMMENDATIONS ON COVID-19 IMPACT

by Allison Weingarten  
FOR-NY Director of Policy

The Recovery Community contributes vastly to the at large community by way of gainful employment, civic engagement and raising healthy families. It is vastly important to continue to provide the evidence-based life-saving programs that are already instituted in the state to continue lifting communities up and supporting those who are currently struggling with addiction, if perhaps in new, innovative ways given the COVID-19 situation. This summary report will highlight the findings from the survey – data taken directly from the recovery community – and will offer recommendations on how to move forward into our new normal without leaving our progress behind.

The Survey of the COVID-19 Impact on Recovery Community Organizations was distributed by way of mass email to an audience of approximately 8000 subscribers on April 2, 2020. On April 7, 2020, FOR-NY distributed to the survey to target groups of known recovery advocates and administrators of recovery community organization, recovery community outreach centers and youth clubhouses from each of the 10 Regional Economic Development Councils throughout the state. By Monday April 13, 113 people had responded to the survey representing all 10 Regional Economic Development Councils of the state and FOR-NY began to analyze the data.

All Regional Economic Development Councils were represented with New York City representing the highest percentage of respondents (29%). Fifty-six percent of respondents reported as being affiliated with a recovery community organization and there was a nearly even breakdown of respondents from Urban (38%); Suburban (31%) and Rural (34%) communities. Sixty-nine percent of respondents identified as “white;” 20% Black or African American; 8% Hispanic or Latinx; 1% Native American and 1% other. Ninety percent of respondents were ages 30 and older and 52% of respondents identified as male and 45% as female and 3% as prefer not to say or prefer to self -describe. Eighty-six percent of respondents identified themselves as either a person in recovery (70%) or a family member in recovery (16%) or a combination of the two, which shows these survey results give a credible description of the recovery community as a whole.

The top current concerns listed for recovery programs were as follows:

- 1) Concerns for recovery population (*fear of recurrence or overdose; concern for those still struggling or in early recovery; lack of access to Narcan; concern for those in crisis needing immediate help; Concern for denied services; Lack of hope or depression; heightened risk of those with addiction contracting COVID-19; financial struggle*)
- 2) Concerns with technology (*lack of access; lack of trust to online meeting format*)
- 3) Concerns over isolation of recovery community
- 4) Recovery Center Specific Concerns (*loss of volunteers/participants; concerns over evaluation of services, fundraising and*

*maintaining or finding new grants; concerns of closing spaces and concerns about ability to provide protective equipment to staff*)

- 5) Post Pandemic (*respondents also shared concerns about returning to “new normal” following the pandemic and a stigma around COVID-19 survivor*)

The top long-term concerns were as follows:

- 1) Returning to a new normal (*getting volunteers, groups and programs back up and relevant again; will people return?*)
- 2) Finances (*lack of financial capital in local communities; concerns with ability to fundraise; concern that OASAS may not be able to continue funding; will funders understand limitations?*)
- 3) RCO Operations (*keeping staff safe and well; getting the RCO back up and running; planning for future events; more people in need of supports in light of crisis but fewer staff to help; challenges with outreach; meeting mission with a virtual platform; data collection and again will funders understand limitations?*)
- 4) Concerns for Recovery Population (*concerns about recurrences and overdoses; COVID delaying personal goals for those seeking recovery; inability to access services; digression in physical health*)

## SURVEY QUESTION:

***Would you be willing to offer any support or guidance in an online forum to other programs around the state? For example, if you are having a lot of success leading all recovery meetings via Zoom, would you share the “how to” in an online forum?***

**42% said YES!**

# Our Voices...

*“How do we educate and adapt? How do we process and grieve? How do we then heal and return to a new normal?”*

In spite of navigating the multitude of concerns and challenges that RCO's are currently facing, many reported that they are still offering services, while others report a loss of participants.

Eleven percent of respondents reported “gaining participants,” 43% of respondents reported maintaining participants and 46% of respondents reported losing participants amidst the COVID-19 crisis.

Of those who gained or maintained participants, respondents believe this increase or maintenance is due to providing online meeting space, an increase in outreach, and once closed individuals are now reconnecting. Some individuals are now able to attend who before could not make appointments.

Of those who reported maintaining or losing participants, respondents believe this is due to new challenges with outreach (when job is to go into the community and now cannot do this); challenges with technology – whether access or ability; and other priorities getting in the way of attending recovery services.

Top reported programs and services still being offered during COVID-19 Pandemic:

- Peer Recovery Support including group work with peers and recovery coaching, family supports
- Referrals- to Treatment; Mental and Physical Health Providers; housing, food, assurance wireless program
- Mutual Aid meetings including but not limited to 12 Step/Mutual Aid/One Recovery/Harm Reduction/SMART Recovery, Support/Loss Group; Bible Study via Zoom
- Recreational activities including but not limited to; Zoom chats; Facebook Live check-ins; coffee and chat; Jackbox and Zoom; movie night; visual art, meditation, book discussions, wellness activities, yoga; Snapchat and Whatsap with youth; and more
- Peer Network/Support Group

In spite of it all, RCO's are still resilient and still willing to offer help to ensure Recovery Community Organizations remain a mainstay.

Forty-two percent of survey respondents were willing to offer their time and talents to support the rest of the recovery community during this crisis, particularly regarding offering online supports. When asked how can FOR-NY continue to support the Recovery Community through the COVID-19 crisis the top 3 responses were

- 1) *Doing a good job; people are happy that we are still available*
- 2) *Continue sharing resources and providing training*
- 3) *Continue advocacy (now more than ever!)*

We agree, more advocacy is needed now more than ever to further our journey in mitigating the overdose epidemic as well as ensuring “recovery-oriented systems of care” during and post COVID-19 pandemic.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

*Based on the information collected FOR-NY is offering the following seven recommendations:*

- 1) The need for continued advocacy in the Recovery Community: A top concern for respondents to the survey was that services including housing, treatment, recovery wrap-around services and transportation will be cut due to “higher priority issues receiving those limited funds.” Recovery advocates must be vigilant to not give up the life saving, evidence based programming that we have fought so hard to build. Additionally, we should continue advocating for more services as these services are needed more now than ever, especially considering the mental health and substance use disorder ramifications from the orders to isolate and heightened stress from the COVID-19 crisis.
- 2) Continue to make telehealth accessible and covered by insurance carriers.
- 3) Increase implementation of self-care strategies for Recovery Workforce: The recovery workforce is already under stress. It is time now for self-care to be mandatory in the workforce to promote health and wellness and prevent burnout recurrence, self-harm, or worst of all, suicide.
- 4) Provide funding needs to continue to provide online forums for recovery support services. Recovery services are still being provided through online formats including peer supports, referrals and recreational activities. Continue to support these services.
- 5) Provide funding for recovery support services hotline in each county. One program that was effective before the crisis and is continuing to be effective during the crisis are hotlines to connect individuals and families with treatment and recovery wrap around services. These services are safe during the COVID-19 crisis and should be modeled after programs that already exist in Long Island, Columbia County and Rensselaer County
- 6) Provide funding to create and implement “return to work” plans for recovery centers and youth clubhouses. Organizations are going to need support in order to keep their staff and participants safe when programming starts to return to normal. Experts should be convened in order to create plans which programs may weigh in on, but not be expected to carry the load of creating such plans all on their own.
- 7) Treatment and Recovery Wraparound services must not be eliminated. Patient advocacy – particularly that provided by the NYS Ombuds program-is necessary in order to ensure those who need services are still able to access those services.

# Our Actions...

Like everyone else across the state and nation, FOR-NY quickly adapted to telecommuting and re-imagining programs and activities by developing virtual trainings and events to help continue meeting the needs of the Recovery Community. This next section will give you a summary of how we rose to the challenge and continue to be dedicated to the mission and vision to demonstrate the power and promise of recovery for all.

## Education and Training

### 2020 SPRING UPDATES & VIRTUAL PIVOTS

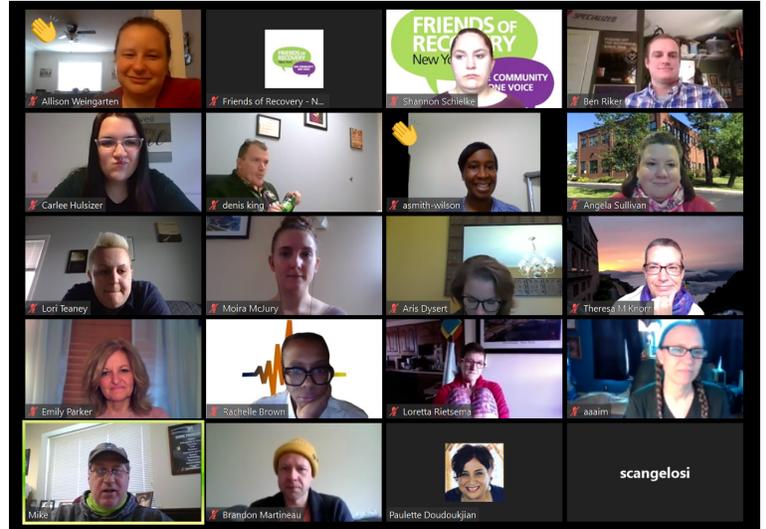
by Theresa Knorr

FOR-NY Director of Recovery Education & Training

#### VIRTUAL VOYAGES FOR FOR-NY TRAININGS:

All three of our flagship trainings, *Our Stories Have Power*, *The Science of Addiction and Recovery*, and *Peer Professional Supervision*, took their maiden virtual voyages this spring. It was smooth sailing with co-trainers Ben Riker of Youth Voices Matter (Peer Supervision) and Donna Potter (SOAR) and Timothy Bax (OSHP) of In His Name Outreach. All hands-on deck helped navigate the uncharted waters with special technical assistance from first mate Shannon Schielke. All three vessels docked successfully, carrying 65 passengers to the continents of greater skills, knowledge, and awareness.

Captain Deb Rhoades also navigated through a virtual version of Opioid and Suicide Loss in the Behavioral Health Workplace, ferrying 19 travelers through these choppy seas.



#### UPCOMING TRAINING:

Science of Addiction and Recovery – Train the Trainer  
*speak scientifically about Addiction and Recovery*  
6 CRPA/CARC/CASAC/CPB/CPS re-certification credits - \$50  
Next training: Wednesdays, May 27 and June 3  
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM - VIRTUAL  
Sponsored by In His Name Outreach  
Trainers: Donna Potter and Timothy Bax  
REGISTER: <https://app.donorview.com/zAZrO>

#### UPCOMING TRAINING:

Overdose/Suicide Loss in Behavioral Health Settings  
*revised to include peer professionals*  
\$150/\$175  
Next training: Thursdays & Fridays June 11, 12, 18 & 19  
1:00 PM – 4:00 PM – VIRTUAL  
Sponsored by: Seaway Valley Prevention Council  
Trainer: Deb Rhoades  
REGISTER: <https://app.donorview.com/DRGRr>



#### CRPA TRAINING SCHOLARSHIPS ARE AVAILABLE:

We received funding again from OASAS for a small number of scholarships for training to become a Certified Recovery Peer (CRPA) Advocate in 2020. Many of the [Best Practice Trainers](#) have also pivoted to Virtual Training. For more information and [to apply go here](#) or email [Shannon Schielke](#), Education, Training & Support Coordinator.

**The anchor is symbolic of hope. When lifted up from the water of a port, it represents a new adventure, a new voyage. Yet the anchor also holds us in spite of the storm.**

# Our Actions...

## Communications & Events

### WEBSITE PAGES, WEBINARS & SPECIAL EMAILS

by Paulette Doudoukjian  
FOR-NY Development & Communications Manager

Love it or hate it, technology has kept us together while apart over the past two months. As telecommuting began for non-essential workplaces, we quickly embraced the Internet to provide the Recovery Community with up-to-date COVID-19 resources through a [special page created on the FOR-NY website](#). We also provided easy-to-follow webinars on how to navigate the Zoom virtual platform for upcoming trainings and events while providing tips on how to set up your home office to achieve success.

Most importantly, we know that isolation, combined with the long holiday weekends, are especially challenging for many. This is why we sent regularly emails throughout April reminding people that they are not alone during this time and beyond as help is only a phone call away. Our email, filled with emergency resources, was received well and will continue on a monthly basis. [For now, you can view the email here.](#)

We had to move our planned Meet & Greet in Ithaca and Plattsburgh to Zoom, combining the two areas for a friendly, FOR-NY informational gathering. We also held our planned Volunteer Day virtually, encouraging outreach and voter registration. A webinar on how to improve your credit during these economically challenging times was also added to our Zoom line-up, with more informational webinars on the way! Finally, we are continuing to re-imagine our community events for the remainder of the year with the safety of all in mind...so please stay posted for more details.

Here at FOR-NY, we all continue to work hard to keep you connected with us and with one another throughout the state. We encourage you to follow us on our social media platforms ([Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#)) and engage in our programs, trainings and activities as we remember and celebrate, "Nothing about us without us!"

**YOU ARE NOT ALONE**

*Your friends are here for you....*

**FRIENDS OF RECOVERY**  
New York

ONE COMMUNITY  
ONE VOICE

**YOU ARE NOT ALONE**  
*Your Friends Are Here*

For the past month, Friends of Recovery - New York has offered these weekly resources of immediate and regional assistance during this challenging time. We hope it has been of some help and service to you. It is our way of showing you that there is always help and there is always hope... you are never alone. So please take advantage of these resources as needed and remember, your friends are here for you.

**General Resources**

**COVID-19 INFORMATION**

Updates and general information to help the Recovery Community navigate the ever-changing situation pertaining to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

## CBRS & RCO Calls

### INFORMATION & ADVOCACY SHARED MONTHLY

On March 19th, we held our regularly-scheduled Community-Based Recovery Supports (CBRS) meeting, which normally occurs bi-monthly in several in-person group locations throughout the state all tele-conferencing together. This virtual gathering was so highly-successfully, it quickly became apparent that during this time of crisis, we needed to meet monthly to share support and valued information. It is also a source to inspire advocacy, which is needed now more than ever for recovery funding. [Learn more about CBRS on our website](#) and read meeting notes from past gatherings.

Our Recovery Community Organizations (RCOs) also continue to call-in monthly to share and cheer on one another in continuing to provide critical ongoing programs for their local Recovery Community. [Find an RCO](#) near you and become involved.

# Our Actions...

## Youth Voices Matter - New York

### KEEPING YOUNG ADULTS CREATIVELY CONNECTED

by Ben Riker

YVM-NY Youth Recovery Program Coordinator

In mid-March, news reports started to drip in regarding the spread of COVID 19 locally and a sense of unease began to spread inside our home office in Albany. Morning conversations shifted from, "How was your weekend?" to "Did you see that there's a case reported at the University of Albany?" - which is only blocks away.

As the smell of hand sanitizer became a fixture, wafting through our space, we found ourselves where everyone else has, asking big questions; Will we have to work from home? Should we cancel events and trainings? Is this for real?

Seemingly overnight, work-from-home protocols fell into place and we began to re-imagine our service delivery model. Addiction does not lock-down, and we know this. In fact, in times of upheaval, substance use-related issues seem to increase, however, the Recovery Community is resilient. We have always risen to challenges with unmatched creativity and motivation.

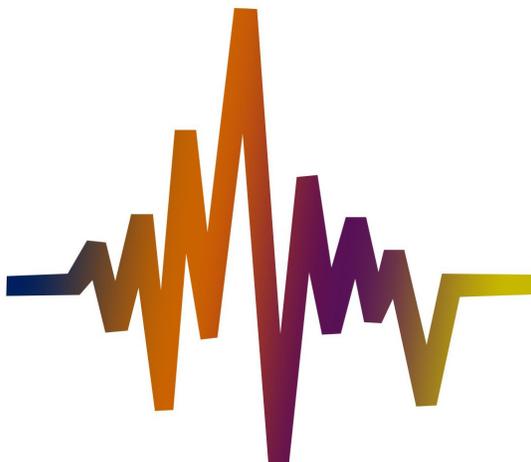
Youth Voices Matter, for its part, has very deliberately moved into a virtual networking and support role, bringing together OASAS Youth Clubhouse staff and members from across the state, every Friday, to share successes and struggles surrounding efforts for continued youth engagement.

Through the strategic use of weekly surveys, we have identified what social media platforms youth and young adults are using most widely, and how to successfully engage through those platforms. We have identified what resources are most in need, whether food insecurity, unemployment navigation, virtual recovery supports or financial advice. After carefully analyzing the data we have, and with the help of our amazing community partners, we hosted a well-received virtual resource fair and hosted "How Money Works," an interactive financial advice webinar. Currently, we are facilitating weekly SMART Recovery meetings and a recurring virtual peer-to-peer support meeting.

Additionally, YVM is currently facilitating both "Youth Stories Have Power" and "Building Your YRCO from the Ground Up" trainings weekly. Advocacy skill-building and organizational development does not have to take a break in this "new normal" and we would argue that it can't!

Continuing on into this new landscape of "social distancing" and "virtual" programming, the YVM Team hopes, like everyone else, that before long we will be able to again travel the state and spend time in the communities across New York that we serve. Until then, we will adapt and continue to adjust our attitudes; always looking for silver linings, identifying the strengths of our communities and our organizations, and do our very best to assist in building a network of Advocates and Youth Recovery Community Organizations upon those strengths and resilience.

For questions regarding Youth Voices Matter NY's programs, services or trainings, please don't hesitate to contact Ben Riker, Youth Recovery Program Coordinator, at [briker@for-ny.org](mailto:briker@for-ny.org).



Learn more about the Youth Voices Matter team and movement throughout the state by visiting their website: [www.YouthVoicesMatterNY.org](http://www.YouthVoicesMatterNY.org)

Also follow them on social media:

 @YouthVoicesMatterNY

 youthvoicesmatterny



# Moving Forward...

## In Conclusion...

*PLEASE HELP US GROW! We all know people who have been impacted by addiction. Please help us spread the hopeful word that recovery is possible, sustainable and beautiful! Sign up three friends or colleagues, who may be interested in learning more about the Recovery Community, to join our mailing list or like and follow us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or LinkedIn.*

- **SUBSCRIBE:** <https://app.donorview.com/0JrN>
- **FACEBOOK:** <https://www.facebook.com/recoveryny/>
- **INSTAGRAM:** <https://www.instagram.com/friendsofrecoveryny/>
- **TWITTER:** [https://twitter.com/Recovery\\_NY](https://twitter.com/Recovery_NY)
- **LINKEDIN:** <https://www.linkedin.com/company/10145692/>

**We need your voice!**  
**We need you to advocate!**

*We have so much more to share and advocate for as a Recovery Community...let's make our collective voices heard loud and proud!*

## Share Your Story to Help #FundRecovery with PROJECT: FACE-OFF

In response to this risk of losing critical funding, we ask you to take part in PROJECT: FACE-OFF! Post a one-minute video to Facebook telling your pathway to recovery story...then tag three others to do the same as well as tagging your representatives. Please use the hashtag #FundRecovery. For those of you who may not have Facebook, please call your [Senator](#), [Assembly Member](#) and [Member of Congress](#) and leave a voice mail.



Whether you are posting a video or calling an office, please use the outline below:

- 1) **Who You are and Why Your Story Matters:** State your name, your recovery affiliation – whether you are a person in recovery, a family member or an ally, and how recovery support services helped you or a loved one find and sustain recovery. If you lost a loved one, then share about what services your loved one was missing and how those services that now exist are critical and need to be maintained.
- 2) **Recovery Saves Money:** Now more than ever, funding is the most critical issue to federal, state and local government – highlight how funding recovery SAVES MONEY! According to both the Faces and Voices of Recovery “Life in Recovery Survey Report” (national, 2012) and the Friends of Recovery – New York “Life in Recovery Survey Report” (NYS, 2017), people in recovery are more likely to be employed, pay for their own housing, pay bills on time, pay taxes, and stay out of the criminal justice system – and so much more! An investment in recovery supports is an investment in the New York State economy!
- 3) **Offer Your Support:** Let the public and our lawmakers know that the Recovery Community is a support for the whole community and we are here to help. Please do not turn back the hands of time and erase the groundbreaking work we have done together to make recovery possible.

**CHECK OUT CARLEE'S STORY [HERE!](#) SHARE [THIS FLYER!](#)**  
**We can't wait to see your videos and share to make sure we #fundrecovery!!!**



1529 Western Avenue  
Albany, New York 12203  
518-487-4395  
www.for-ny.org

Thank you to our 2020 Newsletter Sponsor

[www.AmmonLabs.com](http://www.AmmonLabs.com)

# "Nothing about us without us"

2nd Annual  
**Recovery Gems "Mask-erade"**  
A Shining Celebration  
of the Power & Promise of Recovery

**Thursday, July 30, 2020**  
5:30 - 7:30 pm  
DETAILS TO FOLLOW

**\$15 per person by July 23rd**

- ❖ Music
- ❖ Super Raffles
- ❖ Prize given for "Best Mask" during his newly-imagined "Mask-erade" gathering

All proceeds benefit the mission of Friends of Recovery-New York

RSVP at [www.FOR-NY.org](http://www.FOR-NY.org) by July 23rd  
~ or ~ Mail in your check, payable to Friends of Recovery-NY, with the full names of attendees, to:  
1529 Western Ave., Albany, NY 12203 also no later than July 23rd. Please indicate in memo: Recovery Gems

Jack Lamson, anchor for WRGB CBS 6 Albany and "Dose of Reality" segments, will be the Recovery Gem recipient honored this year for helping to advance the mission of the Recovery Community

*Re-Imagined*  
**Stay tuned**

More FOR-NY community events being re-imagined until year's end.  
Details coming soon!

**FRIENDS OF RECOVERY**  
New York  
ONE COMMUNITY ONE VOICE

# Arts Festival

Open to all Recovery Artists to submit, through a photograph or video via email, one original form of art in the following five categories:

- ⊗ Poetry
- ⊗ Drawing (graphite, pen & ink, colored pencil)
- ⊗ Painting (oil, acrylic, pastel, watercolor)
- ⊗ Photography
- ⊗ Mixed Media

All artwork will be judged in mid-September. Awards will be presented for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place as well as honorable mention in each category during our annual Recovery Conference, which is also being re-imagined this year. The esteemed OASAS Commissioner's Choice will be chosen from one of the categories, as well as an Executive Director and Staff Choice award.

"Art is a lie that makes us realize the truth." ~ Pablo Picasso