



# Recovery TALK

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Quarterly Newsletter - AUGUST 2020

## OUR ADVOCACY IS ALL OF OUR ADVOCACY

Our stories have different names and different elements that make up our experiences, but the underlying connection is - we all can agree that MORE is needed to appropriately combat the challenges that individuals face on their addiction journey. The work that we all do is so important as it demonstrates how we move from case advocacy to cause advocacy... and this is the foundation of the recovery movement. Each member of the Recovery Community has a role in the progression of our individual advocacy, which grows our cause advocacy. We are all invested in this process and we all have to understand our role to be effective in advocating. Each individual story (basis for case advocacy) is needed to grow the overall Recovery Community (basis for cause advocacy) message. So, if you are not a part of the advocacy efforts, then you and the movement are missing out!

This issue, my friends, is dedicated to understanding and strengthening all of our advocacy power. It is critical to become familiar with how to advocate and the "WHY" we advocate, keeping in mind our "WHY" is blended. In this issue, we will discuss many things that have been accomplished as a result of the past advocacy efforts, how to stay connected, and future advocacy campaigns.

We do not take it lightly that you all have allowed Friends of Recovery - New York (FOR-NY) to gather that voice and bring that message to legislators and across the state, but we are a small team and you are needed. You are needed to tell your story and to gather stories in your local community to ensure that "Nothing about us, without us," is truly carried out.

Friends of Recovery - New York is committed to ensuring social justice is at the basis of all of our recovery efforts and that we be deliberate about being an anti-racism force to ensure we address racial inequities.

So, I am hoping you learn something new from this newsletter, or strengthen something you have already known, but let me be clear, YOU are needed to continue to advocate!

Thank you for partnering with FOR-NY to continue advocating for the Recovery Community.

Best,

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



*advocacy*  
to change "what is"  
into "what should be"

# Organize & Engage

## FOR-NY Policy Department...

### ADVOCACY & THE RECOVERY COMMUNITY

by Allison Weingarten  
FOR-NY Director of Policy

Welcome to a virtual tour of the policy division of FOR-NY!

In this special issue of our Recovery Talk Newsletter, we will be taking a deep dive into the policy arm of FOR-NY. Are you interested in advocacy? Great! We need your help now more than ever! Come along with me and enjoy the ride...

#### WHAT IS ADVOCACY?

Advocacy can come in many shapes and forms- which the Recovery Community is very familiar with, including but not limited to:

- To write, act, speak out in support of a cause
- A tenet of social justice campaigns for change Activism
- Engaging legislators: meetings, letters, calls
- Media activities: i.e. news conferences, editorial board visits, op-eds, letters to the editor.
- Grassroots activities such as rallies, vigils, walks
- Community Listening forums, town halls, call in days

#### DEVELOPING OUR ADVOCACY TOOLS

FOR-NY offers several trainings to support individuals and RCOs in becoming stronger advocates: These include The 45 Second Elevator Pitch; Building your RCO from the Ground Up and Community Asset Mapping

##### The 45 Second Elevator Pitch

An important tenant of advocating is developing a succinct message that clearly shares our mission and purpose, whether delivered verbally (rally, phone call, one-on-one conversation), through social media, or through interviews with the press.

Advocacy Tool: This is where our 45 Second Elevator Pitch training comes in handy.

##### About the 45 Second Elevator Pitch Training:

Whether you wish to talk with legislators, local public health officials or your next door neighbors, this training brings members of local Recovery Community organizations together to develop a consistent message. Developing an effective and consistent 45 second elevator pitch is an essential component of an effective advocacy campaign.

The 45 Second Elevator pitch has four essential components which we stress:

- (1) Personal Stories are Key. Introduce yourself and make your message personal: Whenever we are communicating

with legislators or their staff, they reiterate the importance of the personal story. Decision makers meet with special interest groups all day, every day. It is the personal story that grabs the representative's attention.

- (2) Data is essential! In addition to the personal story it is important to have data to back up your message. There is plenty of information available on the proven benefits of recovery oriented systems of care. This data really helps!
- (3) Read your audience - get a feel for how long the representative has to meet. Does this person have 5 minutes or an hour? This will determine how long you are able to talk. Read your audience and do not overstay your welcome!
- (4) Leave the representative with written material or an email to refer back to with contact information and key components from your visit. Always follow up the meeting with a thank you note or email!

During the 45 Second Elevator Pitch training, you have time to prepare your pitch with other members of your Recovery Community organization.

##### Recovery Community Organizing

Another essential tool in advocacy is strength in numbers! This is why Recovery Community Organizing is so essential.

We offer two trainings to support Recovery Community organizing:

##### Building your RCO from the Ground Up and Community Asset Mapping

In the three-hour Building your RCO from the Ground Up Training we get to know what a Recovery Community organization is and what value it brings to the community. Then we focus on several different components of developing a Recovery Community organization:

- We fill out the RCO Readiness Assessment Tool
- We discuss the components of a good versus a bad meeting
- We talk about how to organize the Recovery Community
- We discuss ways to develop Leadership

# Organize & Engage

- We brainstorm how to recruit and maintain members
- We discuss the Creation or Review of Mission Statement
- We briefly discuss development

Our Community Asset Mapping training takes a deeper dive into developing recovery capital both by identifying leadership abilities within our RCO and by assessing connections outside our RCO with formal and informal groups and institutions. This training can be modified between one hour to three hours.

We take part in other educational opportunities throughout the year including, but not limited to: One on one technical assistance opportunities; Advocacy training during the NYS Recovery Conference; Lunchtime chats on development; Advocacy 101 in order to prepare our community for Stand Up For Recovery Day; and we also include a guidance document on how to put together and execute a [Recovery Talks: Community Listening Forum](#).

## DATA COLLECTION

Another essential component of our policy department is collecting and disseminating information on the success of recovery, as well as the needs of the Recovery Community. Collection of information informs our [Policy Statement](#) as well as informed results from our [Recovery Needs Survey \(2016\)](#); [Life in Recovery Survey \(2017\)](#); [Peer Workforce Survey on COVID-19 Impact \(2020\)](#); and [RCO Survey COVID-19 Impact \(2020\)](#).

The information collected in these surveys is essential to determining our advocacy message. If you have an idea for data collection, please contact us!

## ADVOCACY IN ACTION

We take part in numerous actions to put our organizing and advocacy efforts into action. Our biggest action of the year is [Stand Up for Recovery Day](#) in which over 1000 people flood the NYS Capital to show the power and promise of recovery. That day we gather together and march upon the NYS Capitol, later dividing into groups to meet with local legislators and share our policy statement and advocacy needs. In 2020, as a community we met with more than 80 legislators!

We have ongoing letter writing and call in campaigns as important issues come up. In May 2020 we also conducted #ProjectFaceOff in which people in recovery, family members, friends and allies took to social media and shared their message of hope and the need for continued funding for recovery. Through these efforts, together we generated Facebook videos which garnered over 4000 views! That is a lot of people touched!

Additionally, this June, we took part in a federal day of action in which more than 50 recovery advocates from around the state met with three members of congress, three staff members from different congressional offices, including Senator Chuck Schumer and Senator Kirsten Gillibrand's offices, and one candidate for Congress. We discussed the need for the federal government to support state government during these turbulent times.

As a community, the Recovery Community Organizing network meets the second Wednesday of each month. We share updates from around the state and discuss ongoing advocacy efforts. During these meetings, we share challenges we are experiencing and offer suggestions in order to support one another. Also, we now conduct monthly [Community Based Recovery Supports](#) meetings.

During these two-hour meetings, OASAS gives important updates that impact the Recovery Community. During the second part of the meeting, we meet with allies in the state legislature, as well as Congress to develop effective advocacy campaigns. We also host FOR-NY "Meet & Greets", which is an opportunity to learn more about who we are and what we offer to the Recovery Community statewide. Finally, we are also pushing multiple voter registration drives, particularly prior to the upcoming election cycle. As we say as the Recovery Community, "We are in Recovery, and We Vote!"

In an ongoing effort to build partnerships with ally organizations, FOR-NY also builds relationships and attends programs and conferences with other



*FOR-NY Board President, Chacku Mathai, addressing media and legislators during the 2019 Stand Up for Recovery Day in Albany.*

# Organize & Engage

organizations for which we could potentially work together on advocacy campaigns in which we have common interest. This includes organizations that advocate on behalf of treatment and prevention; mental and physical health care; legal services; housing; transportation; employment/union; K-12, as well as college education; social services and more!

## ADVOCACY RESULTS

Our Organizing and Advocacy campaigns have shown results, particularly in recent years. Below are some major victories we have seen in the past several years thanks to advocacy campaigns:

## FEDERAL ADVOCACY

- 2008 The Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA)
- 2008 Affordable Care Act provided addiction coverages with full parity for 65 Million Americans
- 2015 Comprehensive Addiction Recovery Act (CARA)
- 2016 21st Century CURES Act \$6 Billion public health & medical research bill
- 2018 HR6 Support for Patients & Community Act-Combat Opioid Epidemic
- 2019 Appropriations: Building Communities of Recovery (BCOR funding)
- \$1 Million to establish a Peer Technical Assistance Center
- \$4 Million for workforce Development for individuals in recovery

## STATE ADVOCACY

- 2014 eleven total Bills passed improving insurance coverages
- 2016 Significant funding increases to OASAS (Funding for RCOs, Youth Clubhouses, Peer Engagement Specialists and Family Support Navigators) as well as passing additional insurance improvements
- 2018 A07689-A/S6544-B: Eliminating patient brokering in NYS
- 2019 Advocates around the state advocated for a recovery tax credit
- 2020 Continued Medication Assisted Treatment access improvements

## ADVOCACY NEEDS

We have come a long way, but we have a long way to go! We continue to survey our community and develop our policy statement which highlights the need for housing, treatment with wraparound recovery support services, as well as improved access to transportation. We are especially currently concerned about cuts given the budget shortfalls directly related to the COVID-19 situation. Please join us for upcoming trainings; contact us about getting involved in ongoing efforts and about joining or [starting an RCO in your community!](#)



Left photo: Advocates march at the NYS State Capitol to remind legislators that "We Recover and We Vote!" Top photo: Ashley Livingston leads the march during Stand Up for Recovery Day 2020.

# Youth Recovery Movement

## Youth Voices Matter - New York...

### SUPPORTING YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT RECOVERY ADVOCACY

by Ben Riker

FOR-NY Youth Recovery Program Coordinator

Those of us in sustained recovery and those of us who are allies of the Recovery Community understand that our stories of lived experience and resilience are quite often our most effective tools for effecting change. Illustrating in our own words, the gaps in services and the barriers that we've encountered along our personal journeys can be the most powerful advocacy tool at our disposal. We become comfortable identifying ourselves as people in recovery and we become comfortable sharing our struggles and successes with the community at large.

I remember vividly, as a teenager and young adult, the paralyzing fears that ultimately fed my active addiction. I remember the fear of judgment, the fear of admitting failure and the fear of "forever" when considering a life in recovery. How would I ever "fit in" without drugs and alcohol? What would my family think of me if I admitted that I couldn't manage my life? Who goes to college and doesn't party? And so I held it all in and ultimately suffered alone year after year. It wasn't until I was mandated by a judge to spend some time in a church basement that I met a person who spoke freely and matter-of-factly of his experiences, from beautiful to horrific, with courage and without shame, that I began to recognize the power of one's own story to empower another's growth.

So how, as adults, do we support young people's abilities to share their own stories and use those stories towards effective advocacy?

We can make an effort to identify systems where youth voices are valuable and maybe not being recognized and then identify potential leaders within those systems. Offer learning opportunities like Youth Stories Have Power Trainings and others and actively search out speaking opportunities; Schools, panel discussions, advisory councils and the like. Encourage the "Nothing About Us Without Us" culture within the services and supports that are focused on youth!

Engage in candid discussions with young people—What part(s) of your story do others need to hear and will have the most potential for impact? Who needs to hear it and where will your story be a catalyst for change? Policy makers? Your peers? What is your authentic voice and are you tapping into it?



# Youth Recovery Movement

Finally, let's let youth speak first; don't presume to know what guidance to give or what a young person is asking for. Let youth define what they need. Give honest room for a young person to contribute meaningfully and drive the conversation. Sometimes this requires us to step back from "adult wisdom" and give room for a young person to stumble along (with support) in order to learn. Find ways to let a young person lead, initiate, and take control of their life and story.

So, let's not wait to cross paths by chance with a youth or young adult that would benefit from having a mentor. We should be actively creating opportunities for young people in recovery to have a seat at the table. After all, they are the future of our movement.

The YVM-NY Team offers the following trainings. If interested in one of these trainings, please contact Ben Riker at [briker@for-ny.org](mailto:briker@for-ny.org) for more information and to schedule a date and time.

**Building Your YRCO From The Ground Up**  
*Creating Recovery Capital in Your Community!*

**Recovery 101**  
AN OVERVIEW OF RECOVERY  
CREATED BY YOUTH VOICES MATTER-NEW YORK

YOUTH VOICES MATTER + NEW YORK  
#PUMPUPYOURVOICES

**Youth Stories Have Power!**  
Based on "Our Stories Have Power"

**A Training in Effective Storytelling and Recovery Advocacy!**

**YOUTH VOICES MATTER-NEW YORK**

**45-SECOND ADVOCACY ELEVATOR PITCH**  
HOW TO COMMUNICATE YOUR EFFICIENTLY MESSAGE TO ADVOCATE FOR RECOVERY SUCCESSFULLY!

**#Empower #Inspire #Recover**

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



# Connect & Network

Come together to network, learn, and advocate...

## NYS RECOVERY CONFERENCE RE-IMAGINED

by Theresa Knorr

FOR-NY Director of Recovery Education & Training

REGISTER HERE FOR EARLY RATE...  
PAY LATER!

Join us on October 18-20 for this re-imagined NYS Recovery Conference!

Throughout the past several months, the Recovery Community has shown its resiliency. By October, it will be time for our community to refuel during this annual and very popular event. This will be a shortened virtual experience with plenary sessions, networking opportunities and exciting workshops with current topics. This is also the perfect opportunity to learn more about advocacy and provide you with the skills and confidence needed to make your voice heard loud and proud!

The Conference begins on Sunday evening with a welcome, followed by a movement workshop with Katharine Pettit Creative... or choose to participate in an RCO or Peer Professional networking session. Then wrap up the evening with Karaoke with our Youth Voices Matter NY team and Friends of Recovery-Warren-Washington.

Monday and Tuesday's schedule begins with an optional morning movement or meditation, followed by a plenary session and workshops. The conference ends by early afternoon with the Laura Elliott-Engel Recovery Advocacy Award and Recovery Arts Festival awards.

See [sample schedule here](#), which includes a one hour workshop with Ben Riker, Allison Weingarten, Richard Buckman and Ashley Livingston: Advocacy in the time of COVID-19, Big "A", little "A".

Register right now through [this link](#) to receive the early rate of \$70 for the full conference, which includes eight (8) credits. One day participation is \$45 for 3.25 credits. After August 20th, the full conference rate jumps to \$80. Also available is a Recovery Community Organization group deal. For \$525, Centers will be able to have up to seven (7) people receive full credits from the conference and unlimited attendance (Peer Professional Credits sponsored by [ASAP/NYCB](#)).

This conference is aimed at individuals interested in furthering the recovery efforts throughout the state. Attendees include a mix of individuals and family members in recovery, recovery coaches and peer advocates, program administrators and directors, clinical staff and other addiction recovery professionals from local, state and federal agencies, as well as recovery allies. Learn more with this [FAQ sheet here](#).

Revised sponsorship opportunities are available for this newly re-imagined virtual Recovery Conference. Learn the possibilities [here](#).



Katharine Pettit Creative - KPC will offer a fascinating movement workshop on Sunday evening. Learn more about Katharine Pettit Creative - KPC through their Facebook page [here](#).

# Recommit & Reset

## FOCUS YOUR MINDSET ON HEALING & RECOVERY

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

*With every change of season brings the opportunity to reset our mind and body, and refocus our priorities. Health, well-being, family, friends, involvements, commitments... now is the time to stop for a moment, breathe and rethink our mindset. This is your mid-Summer check-in after the interesting previous months and all that we continue to face in our current world.*

Take some time to ponder these questions:

- “What recovery tools and information did you use to help you navigate through the New York State PAUSE?”
- “Would you like deeper connection and involvement in your local Recovery Community Organization (RCO)?”
- “Would you like to explore more conversations about social justice recovery?”
- “To become more engaged in recovery advocacy? To engage your friends and colleagues in discussions about what recovery means to you in order to bring more awareness to the power, promise and hope of recovery?”

Below are some ways to help motivate you to reset and recommit to the recovery movement this summer:

### Get to know your... FRIENDS OF RECOVERY - NEW YORK

Who we are and what we do... share [this Fact Sheet](#) far and wide and also encourage people to subscribe to our email list through [this link](#) to receive up-to-date recovery-related information.

### Advocating for the Recovery Community... SHARE YOUR STORY

Participate in Project: Face-Off. Share your recovery story in a short one to two minute video on social media, tag two to three friends to do the same, as well as tagging your representatives on the post so they know how crucial it is to continue to #fundrecovery.

### Expand our Reach... SOCIAL MEDIA

Help Friends of Recovery - New York build up followers by sharing the below links with friends. Additionally, while we are hearing from our people, according to Facebook demographics for our FOR-NY page, we are not reaching enough of those individuals who identify as “males.” To ensure our content is inclusive, we want to hear from those that do identify as male and have them “like” and follow us. ALL voices of the Recovery Community are needed and appreciated!

- ▶ FACEBOOK: <https://www.facebook.com/recoveryny>
- ▶ INSTAGRAM: <https://www.instagram.com/friendsofrecoveryny/>
- ▶ LINKEDIN: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/10145692/>

### Also, we need a few more friends... CONSIDER JOINING THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

FOR-NY is looking for a few recruits to join the Board of Directors. Complete the interest form [here](#).

**“Nothing about us without us!”**

**FRIENDS OF  
RECOVERY**  
New York

ONE COMMUNITY  
ONE VOICE



# Remember, Honor, Advocate

Taking a moment...

## RECOGNIZING THOSE LOST TO OVERDOSE; MOVING FROM GRIEF TO ADVOCACY



We would like to take some space to recognize International Overdose Awareness Day coming up on August 31, 2020.

Last year, when the Governor released data showing a small reduction in overdose deaths in New York State, we celebrated each life saved for various reasons whether by harm reduction, prevention, treatment, recovery, or a combination of all four. However, we also recognized that each life lost is precious and until there are no lives lost, there is still work to be done. Now, with the COVID-19 crisis going on, we have seen a spike in overdose deaths.

We want to take this moment to share our deepest sympathy to all those who have lost a loved one to overdose. Our entire community has felt this loss. To share your

grief or words of support, please visit our Facebook page dedicated to those we have loved and lost - [Recovery Community In Memoriam](#).

We also want to take the time to recognize the peers who are in the field each and every day reaching out to share their experience, strength, and hope with those who are struggling and in search of a pathway to recovery.

So on this Overdose Awareness Day, August 31, let's take time to mourn the loss of our loved ones.

The next day - September 1, starts Recovery Month (read more below). This will be our opportunity to join together and promote the living proof of recovery. We must use Recovery Month, as well as each and every day, to advocate for recovery support services as a means of preventing deaths from overdose, in addition to of course supporting wellness for all. As Mother Jones says, "Mourn for the dead, fight like hell for the living."

Sending love and strength to our entire recovery family.

Now in its 31st year, Recovery Month looks a little different as Faces and Voices of Recovery has taken the helm to spearhead this important observance.

National Recovery Month (Recovery Month) is an international observance held every September to educate people about how substance use and mental health services can enable individuals and their families to live healthy and rewarding lives. This observance celebrates the millions of people in recovery from mental health and substance use issues, reminding us that behavioral health is an essential component to overall health, that prevention works, treatment is effective, and people can, and do, recover.

Learn more through the official Faces & Voices website, [NationalRecoveryMonth.org](#).



**NATIONAL  
RECOVERY  
MONTH 2020**

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*“Nothing about us without us”*



October 18-20, 2020

We are showing how resilient the Recovery Community is by continuing with our 5th annual NYS Recovery Conference, but in a virtual setting to keep us safe yet connected and informed. Earn up to 8 credits by participating in virtual workshops, plenary sessions and movement activities.

**HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:**

- ❖ Inspiring Current Topics
- ❖ Informative Workshops
- ❖ Sunday Night Dance & Karaoke
- ❖ Networking

Register by August 20th - \$70

After August 20th - \$80

One day participation - \$45

#NYSRecoveryCon

Anchor yourself with us  
on September 10th for a  
Paint Recovery Night!

Since we can't gather in-person for our traditional S.A.I.L. (Sober Advocates in Life) Cruise on the Hudson, we will use this time for a virtual instructional paint night.

Details coming soon...  
but hold the date for a fun  
and creative evening!

DEADLINE EXTENDED UNTIL AUGUST 31st... still not too late to submit your creation!

Guidelines & Form [here](#).

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*