

Paolo del Vecchio Video Transcript

On behalf of the US Department of Health and Human Services and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, I'd like to welcome you to the first webinar on Introduction to Mental Health Recovery in Social Work. From SAMHSA's perspective, there is nothing more important than the concept of recovery and what social workers can do to support individuals with mental health problems and addictions on their journeys of recovery to help them change, grow and heal. Ultimately to overcome their mental illnesses and addictions, be healthy, productive and independent citizens. And frankly, to help people live life to the fullest.

People do in fact recover and I am just one example of that. As the acting director of SAMHSA's Center for Mental Health Services, I'm also a self-defined mental health consumer myself. We know that ultimately recovery is about helping develop treatment and services that are effective and efficient. And that's what recovery is really all about, again helping people heal and grow.

The Recovery to Practice effort is our work at engaging all mental health and addictions providers: psychiatrists, psychologists, nurses, addiction counselors, peer specialists, and of course social workers, to help retool the behavioral health profession to make it a 21st century workforce, to help them and help you obtain the knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes to focus on recovery from behavioral health problems.

At SAMHSA we recognize that recovery has emerged as the overarching goal and paradigm for mental health and addiction services. It's impacting how, first of all, that we plan for services, how we deliver services both in terms of the practice we do in clinical work, how we help to finance services, and policy development regarding service delivery. Finally recovery is also helping us look at outcomes and how we measure the success of services ultimately helping people recover, grow and heal.

We feel this is particularly important for social work. First of all, social workers have an ethical imperative to help people on their journeys of recovery. Certainly the key value of self-determination is one of the most important principles, of course as we know that social workers practice. Social workers also focus on empowerment, helping clients gain the knowledge and ability to help manage their own lives. And of course, social workers focus on helping social reform and systematic changes, which is also about what recovery's about. Finally, recovery is about looking at people as holistic individuals: mind, body, spirit, and community. Looking at us far from just being our own mental illnesses and labels, but looking at the complex individuals that we are with our multiple needs. And this is very much in keeping with the social worker tradition. We also see social workers' unique role as interfacing with mental health consumers and people in recovery as vital in terms of helping to promote recovery into practice.

Finally, I just want to say that as a social worker myself, I'm very proud of being a social worker and the work that we all do in helping people ultimately again recover, grow and heal. Thank you all for participating in this webinar.