



Ambassador of Hospitality Action Training



Welcome to Recovery Café Longmont!
This is the September 2019 edition of the
Recovery Café Longmont Ambassador of Hospitality Manual.
It will likely continue to evolve with our dynamic
life together. Many voices and hands helped in the
preparation.

We welcome your feedback.

In gratitude for the many gifts you bring,
Recovery Café Longmont Volunteer Office

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Purpose of Manual

*Recovery Café Longmont's mission is to be a place of healing and refuge for those in recovery. Whether it's obeying kitchen health codes so we may build community over meals, or understanding mental health and boundaries during our engaging conversations, everything we do contributes to maximizing our effectiveness in our ability to be a refuge of healing. This manual covers all responsibilities and expectations of Ambassadors so they may serve Recovery Café Longmont with love, safety, and efficacy. Most of the time at the Café will be spent engaging in positive interactions with others or providing assistance with food services. However, we are serving a vulnerable population that is at-risk for an emotionally-charged situation to occur. The **Ambassador Actions** are suggestions, not a mandated script, and are intended to empower the Ambassadors to be able to choose from a menu of options to respond appropriately in a scenario.*

Guiding Principles

- Connect with Divine Love in Ourselves and Others
 - Show Respect
- Practice Forgiveness
- Encourage Growth
 - Give Back

Daily Guidelines

There is always something to do at Recovery Café! This bulleted list details Volunteer expectations on a day-to-day basis.

- **For all Ambassadors:**
 - Arrive at assigned time, sign in and collect name tag
 - Demonstrate Radical Hospitality - welcoming, inclusive language, joy, love, interest
 - Engage with members - chat, play a game, do a puzzle, etc.
 - Build community by getting to know the other Ambassadors
 - Lunch is served *after* the sign-up board is full to prevent distraction
- **For New Recovery Cafe Longmont (RCL) Members:**
 - Greet them at the check-in desk, help them to sign in and get a name tag
 - Offer coffee, water or a snack, give a tour of the Recovery Cafe, and provide a brief history of what the Café is all about
 - Sit with the NM, chat over coffee or a puzzle, hang out, etc.
 - If this interaction occurs before lunch time, please pause the chat/tour once 12:30pm lunch ritual has begun, and pick back up over lunch
- **For Established RC Members:**
 - Greet and check-in/chat with them
 - It's acceptable/encouraged to ask an established Member to help the Ambassador give the tour to a guest or potential New Member, and sit with you and the NM at lunch to build rapport & community

Addiction

Addiction is a compulsive engagement in an activity despite negative consequences. It is a disease of the mind and body that affects someone's emotional and behavioral stability. While substances are more common, behaviors such as sex, shopping, eating, gambling, or social media use can also be addictive.

There are 3 primary risk factors for addiction to develop: genetic, environment, and exposure:

Genetic: Studies have shown there are certain genes that predispose an individual to alcoholism and addiction either directly (genes related to alcohol metabolism or bodily response to substance) or indirectly (genes for personality disorders).

Environment: Family and peer groups, pre-existing mental health conditions, coping skills, advertising.

Exposure: Consumption / use of psychoactive substances.

Ambassador Action: Language is powerful, and can make or break stigma. It is one thing for the Member to use phrases to describe their Self or community, it's another for our Ambassadors to condone certain phrases. Here are some useful vocabulary options to reduce stigma:

- Use the phrase "substance use" instead of "substance abuse". The person was abusing *the Self* with the substances. The substances weren't abused.
- Opt for wording such as "drug/alcohol-free time" or "in recovery" **instead of** "clean". "Clean" implies the person was dirty.

The harm-reduction approach compassionately affirms that it is difficult to give up all behaviors or coping skills all at once. We are concerned with empowering the small victories. High expectations can be dangerous and overwhelming.

Trauma

It is important for our Ambassadors to have a basic understanding of trauma due to its prevalence in the recovery community. There is a greater link between trauma and addiction than there is between obesity and Type 2 diabetes. Trauma causes physiological changes to the brain that affect behavior and perspective.

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV-TR) defines trauma as direct personal experience of an event that involves actual or threatened death or serious injury, threat to one's physical integrity, witnessing an event that involves the above experience, learning about unexpected or violent death, serious harm, or threat of death, or injury experienced by a family member or close associate.

Trauma Informed-Care

As aforementioned in the description of trauma, people who have lived experience with trauma may have a hard time regulating their emotions in certain situations. It's important for the

Ambassador to stay calm and focused. If you feel uncomfortable, contact a staff member to assist you. Be mindful of both your language and the language of others, for it could trigger others. If someone is describing a story that could be triggering, tactfully and politely redirect the speaker or topic.

Here are 5 principles to helping someone who has been affected by trauma:

1. Safety. This includes creating spaces where people feel culturally, emotionally, and physically safe as well as an awareness of an individual's discomfort or unease.

Ambassador Action: Use phrases such as “I’m on your team”, “you aren’t alone”, “you are loved and safe”, “this place is safe”, etc.

2. Transparency and Trustworthiness. This includes providing full and accurate information about what's happening and what's likely to happen next.

Ambassador Action: Ground them in the now by reminding them where they are physically, that they have a safe and supportive community at Recovery Café, and what concrete events will occur in the immediate future.

3. Choice-- the recognition of the need for an approach that honors the individual's dignity.

Ambassador Action: Don’t give ultimatums or make threats or demands. Do not intimidate them into a decision. Ask “What do you need right now?”

4. Collaboration and Mutuality-- the recognition that healing happens in relationships and partnerships with shared decision-making.

Ambassador Action: Ask how you can help, and be willing to affirm or deny your ability or capacity to carry out their request. Remind them that they are supported, and refer the Member to the Resource/Referral Binder.

5. Empowerment-- recognition of an individual’s strengths. These strengths are built on and validated.

Ambassador Action: Whether it’s their community, inner skills, past experiences, surrounding resources, etc., call attention to the positive and encourage the Member to see the light within their Self.

Stages of Change

As people come into recovery, they undergo a series of changes. The Stages of Change model helps to know what questions to ask and when to ask them. The focus is on asking questions and listening. Ask questions that provoke thought or perspective within the Member. Empower the person to come to conclusions or see perspective from within.

1) Precontemplation Stage-- Precontemplators usually show up in therapy or recovery because of pressures from others. They resist change. They place responsibility for their problems on factors such as genetic makeup, addiction, family, society, destiny, the police, etc.

Ambassador Action: Listen, nod, validate. This stage is pre-recovery and questions are likely to be answered with a defensive or blaming posture. Not a very effective time for affecting or motivating change.

2) Contemplation Stage--**“I want to stop feeling so stuck, but I’m not ready to take action.”** Contemplators acknowledge that they have a problem and begin to think about solving it. Contemplators struggle to understand their problems, to see its causes, and wonder about possible solutions. Many contemplators have vague plans to take action within the next few months. It is not uncommon for contemplators to tell themselves that some day they are going to change.

Ambassador Action: Listen, nod, validate. This is an information gathering phase. Genuinely ask and listen. Avoid advising. Gauge the person and if they seem overwhelmed, redirect and comment how brave it is to even consider such changes. Praise.

Tactfully ask:

- What ways the Member has caused harm to their Self or others, or how the substance/behavior has played a negative role
- What life might look like if this behavior was changed
- About fears or concerns, goals or dreams

3) Preparation Stage-- Most people in the preparation stage are planning to take action and are making the final adjustments before they begin to change their behavior. May need a little more motivation.

Ambassador Action: This is a time to ask about their plan or strategy. This is an opportunity to ask what strengths, connections, skills, community, the Member can draw on and how these factors can bolster success. Validate that change is scary, but build up the positive.

4) Action Stage --Stage where people overtly modify their behavior and their surroundings to make the move they’ve prepared for. This stage requires the greatest commitment of time and energy. Change is more visible to others.

Ambassador Action: Praise. Positive feedback. Make them feel seen and known and supported. The earlier in the change, the more difficult it is. Notice small victories.

5) Maintenance Stage-- Change never ends with action. Without a strong commitment to maintenance, there will surely be relapse, usually to precontemplation or contemplation stage. Progress is not linear.

Ambassador Action: Check-in. Praise. If there is a relapse, ask how they’re feeling, what could be improved or what were the positive take-aways. Use the changes or experience that occurred as a confidence-booster to empower that change is possible and it can be repeated and built on. Acknowledge that their return to the Café signals some sort of deep conscious motivation.

Conversations

When conversing with a Member, it is important to practice humility in the form of active listening and intentional sharing.

These are six **Ambassador Actions** to take while practicing active listening:

Pay attention. One goal of active listening is to set a comfortable tone and allow time and opportunity for the other person to think and speak. Pay attention to your frame of mind as well as your body language. Be focused on the moment and operate from a place of respect.

Withhold judgment. Active listening requires an open mind. Even when good listeners have strong views, they suspend judgment, hold their criticism and avoid arguing or selling their point right away.

Reflect. Learn to mirror the other person's information and emotions by paraphrasing key points. Don't assume that you understand correctly or that the other person knows you've heard him/her.

Clarify. Don't be shy to ask questions about any issue that is ambiguous or unclear. Open-ended, clarifying and probing questions are important tools. They draw people out and encourage them to expand their ideas, while inviting reflection and thoughtful response.

Summarize. Briefly summarize what you have understood as you listened, and ask the other person to do the same.

Here are some do's and don'ts for **Ambassador Actions** when practicing intentional sharing.

Do:

- Practice humility. You are not here to save anyone. This is not a therapeutic, medical, legal, financial or religious advisory role.
- Share to your level of comfort. Graphic details aren't necessary. Simply saying "I've been there" is acceptable. It is acceptable to share more if comfortable so long as the conversation doesn't become all about you.
- Practice "touch-and-go". When someone shares a relatable story, briefly touch on your experience and a validating emotional statement, then return the topic back to them. Do not make the conversation into all about you unless they ask to hear more.
- Begin shares with "in my experience..", "what has worked/not worked for me in the past is..". Keep it about your experience and not as advice of what they *should* do.
- Ask for permission before giving feedback, an opinion, or possible solution.

Don't:

- Give easy, clichéd answers or blithely comments, or lack awareness of your tone of voice!
- Stop them from talking about their feelings or fears.
- Invalidate, minimize, or deny their traumatic experience.

- Make them feel weak because they aren't coping as well as others.
- Tell them they were lucky it wasn't worse.

De-Escalation

Sometimes conflict tension escalates between people. Here are ways to recognize potential escalation and what you can do to calm it.

For recognition, here are some signs of conflict escalation:

- A person clenching his or her fists or tightening and untightening their jaw.
- A sudden change in body language or tone used during a conversation.
- The person starts pacing or fidgeting.
- A change in eye contact.
- The "Rooster Stance" – chest protruding out more and arms more away from the body.
- Disruptive behaviors – Such as yelling, bullying, actively defying or refusing to comply with rules.

Ambassador Actions for de-escalating a conflict:

- First, calm yourself before interacting with the person.
 - If you're upset, it will escalate the situation. Calm down and then begin to look at the situation and how you can intervene safely.
 - Take a deep breath.
 - Use a low, dull tone of voice and don't get defensive even if the insults are directed at you.
- Becoming aware of your situation is also critically important. This can include:
 - Other people in the room,
 - Objects like chairs, tables, items on a table,
 - The space around you, like exits or openings, and if you are blocking the person in a way that they may feel trapped.
- Try to look as non-threatening as possible.
 - Appear calm and self-assured even if you don't feel it.
 - Maintain limited eye contact and be at the same eye level. Encourage the Member to be seated, but if he/she needs to stand, stand up also.
 - Maintain a neutral facial expression.
 - Place your hands in front of your body in an open and relaxed position.
 - Don't shrug your shoulders.
 - Don't point your fingers at the person.
 - Avoid excessive gesturing, pacing, fidgeting, or weight shifting.
 - Maintain a public space distance, which is 12 feet or more.
- Make a personal connection. Something as simple as asking, "What's your name?" can diffuse a situation quickly.
 - People respond positively to their own name and can make the dialogue more personal.
- Listening to the person's concerns. - Acknowledge the other person's feelings without passing judgment on them.

- Show empathy during conflict situations. Even if you do not agree with the person's position, expressing an understanding why that person feels a particular way may help resolve the conflict.
- Clarifying, paraphrasing and open-ended questions all help to ensure that the person is aware you have understood their frustrations completely.
- Ask to take notes.
- Ask for their ideas or solutions.
- Help them talk out angry feelings rather than act on them.
- Shift the conversation to the future, create hope, and you make yourself less threatening.
 - Using "what" and "we" helps include the person in those future plans.
- Get them to say yes.
 - It is very hard for someone to stay angry towards you if they are agreeing with you.

No person, group, or set of conditions can guarantee that a conflict will proceed constructively. If de-escalation is not working, stop! If the situation feels unsafe, leave and call for help. Remember to be patient, calm and aware of the situational surroundings should a conflict arise in your workplace.

Suicide Prevention

People who have lived experience in addiction, trauma, or other mental health issues have a higher risk for both suicide and suicidal ideations. This topic may come up in conversation, either with you or a fellow Member. Anyone can save a life. Anyone can ask, listen, encourage hope, and refer to more resources. It can be uncomfortable and hard.

Ambassador Action: Question. Asking directly and privately, "Are you considering ending your life?" or "Are you considering harming yourself?" is far more effective than dancing around the question. Essentially, if you can't ask the question directly, the suicidal person won't trust you to handle the direct answer. Please let staff know if someone has discussed suicide so we can take appropriate legal action.

Healthy Boundaries

In a community or environment that serves a vulnerable population, it is important to maintain healthy boundaries. Some situations may not have clear-cut rules, so trust your judgment or ask a staff member if you're unsure.

Ambassador Actions:

Please limit exchange of personal contact information.

Use discretion when meeting outside the Café with Café Members.

Do not give money.

Be aware of the impact of touch and appearance.

- Don't touch a Member or their possessions without asking.
- If a Member has made you feel uncomfortable, kindly express your discomfort directly to them, with a request to stop. If the behavior continues, talk to staff.

- Do not wear clothing that is sexy or revealing (low-cut or see-through shirts, very short skirts or shorts). It can create a barrier to building authentic and appropriate relationships with Café Members.
- Avoid clothing and accessories that are obviously expensive, promote alcohol, drug or tobacco use or express political or religious views that could be offensive to others.

Communicate questions, concerns, or discomforting situations with staff.

If there are particular situations of harassment or boundary violations that arise, *inform staff immediately*. If it happened to you, it is likely to occur to someone else as well.

Self-care

This environment can have moments or days of emotional intensity. It is important to take care of yourself first-- knowing one's limits maximizes efficacy, joy, and health. Proper nutrition, exercise, mindfulness, and rest are important, as well as enjoying hobbies, communicating with your supportive community, and meditation. Know when to say "no" or "I'm unable to do that". Self-care is vital to the sustainment of sanity and function. It is far more beneficial to yourself and the Members to be a lively and engaged volunteer than an exhausted and ineffective volunteer. Additionally, we will have Ambassador check-ins as a group offered twice a month.

Staff Support

The Recovery Café staff supports our Ambassadors and is on your team. Please talk with us if you are experiencing any distress, and we will work with you to empower you to be your best self.

Our contact information is:

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***Thank you for committing your time to this training and to Recovery Café.
It is truly a sacred and special act to be of service to those in need.***

Sources Used:

Active Listening: <https://www.ccl.org/multimedia/podcast/the-big-6-an-active-listening-skill-set/>
Addiction: <https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/addiction/what-is-addiction>
De-escalation: <https://vividlearningsystems.com/safety-toolbox/conflict-de-escalation-techniques>
Trauma: <https://www.samhsa.gov>
Trauma-informed care: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/tic/principles.htm>
Stages of Change: <https://www.smartrecovery.org/smart-articles/the-stages-of-change/>
Suicide Prevention: <https://www.mhpcolorado.org>

Suggested Books:

Alcoholics Anonymous (nicknamed “Big Book”). See also: other 12-step literature.

Useful to learn what many of our Members use as a tool for their recovery; basis of 12-step literature.

It Didn't Start With You, Mark Wolynn.

How inherited family trauma shapes identity and how to break the cycle.

Upside: The New Science of Post-Traumatic Growth, Jim Rendon.

How suffering from trauma can be harnessed as a force for self-improvement and success rather than destruction.

The Deepest Well, Nadine Burke Harris, MD.

Healing the physical and emotional effects of childhood adversity.

The Body Keeps the Score, Bessel van der Kolk, MD.

The brain, body, and mind in the healing of trauma from leading researcher.

Unbroken Brain, Maia Szalavitz.

Understanding the science of addiction.

Suggested TED Talks:

Everything You Know About Addiction is Wrong, Johann Hari.

Addiction is a Disease, Michael Botticelli.

How Childhood Trauma Affects Health Across a Lifetime, Dr. Nadine Burke Harris.

What Trauma Taught Me About Resilience, Charles Hunt.