SMART Recovery®
Self-Management and Recovery Training

BECOMING A
SMART Recovery Facilitator

What It Means to Become a SMART Recovery Volunteer
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www.smartrecovery.org
Introduction

Welcome! You are considering an important and rewarding volunteer position. We thank you in advance for your commitment, time, and dedication to the SMART Recovery® organization and to the participants with whom you’ll come in contact.

By becoming a SMART facilitator, you support our work of:

- Providing free face-to-face and online mutual-support meetings
- Providing forums for learning about and discussing addictive behaviors
- Advocating for choice in help for addiction

Experience shows that people in recovery are more successful when they receive support from friends, family, and mental health professionals. SMART can be one pillar of this vital support network.

SMART is a science-based program, built upon well-established scientific approaches that use techniques from:

- Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT)
- Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT)
- Motivational Enhancement Therapy (MET)

The techniques help people manage behavioral problems and achieve successful change. As a facilitator, you’ll help participants learn to apply SMART’s tools to their addictive behavior as they build on the 4-Point Program and move toward a more balanced life.
The Global SMART Community

We offer face-to-face meetings in more than 20 countries, including the United States, Australia, United Kingdom, and Canada. Volunteers translated our 3rd edition participant’s Handbook into Spanish, German, Portuguese, Farsi, Mandarin Chinese, and Danish. We hope to have this Facilitator’s Manual translated by volunteers, too.

Our online meetings reach a global community. Most of our face-to-face and online meetings are for people in recovery, but there are Family & Friends meetings, too. Anyone may attend any of our meetings except for those listed as “closed.”

We aren’t a membership-based organization, so there’s nothing to join. Trained volunteers facilitate all of our meetings and serve in many other roles. They generously share their experience, knowledge, and compassion, and are the backbone of the SMART community.
SMART Recovery is a science-based program to help people manage their recovery from any type of addictive behavior. This includes addiction to substances such as alcohol, nicotine, and other drugs, as well as behaviors such as gambling, sex, eating, self-injury, etc.

SMART stands for Self-Management and Recovery Training, and was founded in 1994 in the United States. It has become a worldwide network of mutual-support meetings — face-to-face and online — in which participants help each other recover. SMART is growing; we operate in the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and around the world.

No single approach to recovery is right for everyone. Research suggests that mutual aid and professional treatment can help people who are in recovery. Many people benefit from a combination of the two.

SMART Recovery helps participants decide if they have a problem, builds their motivation to change, and offers a set of proven tools and techniques to support recovery.

The SMART Recovery 4-Point Program® is:
1. Building and maintaining motivation
2. Coping with urges
3. Managing thoughts, feelings, and behaviors
4. Living a balanced life

People participate in SMART for as long as they want. There is no requirement to make a lifetime commitment to the program, only to their recovery and to leading a healthier life. Many find that continued participation in SMART helps them maintain their recovery. Some become facilitators and start meetings to bring SMART Recovery to new people and places.

SMART avoids using labels — addict, alcoholic, druggie, overeater, etc. — because labeling people based on their behavior isn’t conducive to recovery.

There are varying degrees of addictive behavior; almost everyone will experience addiction to some degree during their lives. SMART can be an important and effective part of the recovery journey for those who find their lives overwhelmed by an addictive behavior, no matter what the addictive behavior is.

SMART encourages individuals to determine a recovery path that is right for their needs and beliefs. Some may choose to use the program in concert with other mutual-support groups, or in conjunction with professional treatment. SMART recognizes there are many pathways to recovery.
While being a facilitator may sound a little scary, think about what you do in your everyday life. If you’re a parent, manager, co-worker, spouse or partner, friend, or sibling, you probably use facilitation skills every day, you just don’t think of them as such.

Because the meeting process is a big part of what makes meetings successful, it’s the facilitator’s role to ensure meetings follow the process to run smoothly and effectively.

This involves six main tasks:
1. Facilitate the meeting to follow the meeting outline
2. Enable free-flowing mutual-support discussions focused on recovery from addictive behaviors
3. Ensure all attendees have the opportunity to participate
4. Prevent any one participant from dominating the discussions
5. Maintain discussion focus on the recent past, present, and future – discouraging “war stories”
6. Ensure every meeting uses at least one SMART tool.

Facilitators also:

Encourage participative learning. When people participate in discussions and actively apply SMART’s tools to their experiences during the meetings, they get a lot more out of the meetings. This is likely to lead to their continued attendance and successful behavior change. People actively involved in meetings also are actively learning.

Encourage observational learning. Participants learn from listening to and watching each other — and the facilitator — use SMART’s tools and techniques.

Recognize the resourcefulness of the group. People share their experiences and the successes they’ve had with problems and issues. Facilitators encourage the group to come up with solutions rather than provide the solutions for the group.

What Does It Take to Become a Facilitator?

Confidential. Those who attend meetings – both participants and facilitators – do not discuss who was there or what was said with (or within hearing of) people who were not present at the time.
If you have benefited from the program and want to “pay it forward,” we simply request you feel confident about your recovery before serving others. The “self-management” of SMART allows you to determine when the timing is right for you.

For guidance about where you are in your recovery, you may want to talk with the SMART staff or long-time facilitators about taking on this role.

All facilitators running a meeting described as SMART Recovery or using SMART Recovery materials must complete either the online FAST (Facilitator and Support Team) Distance Training Program or the two-day face-to-face training program.

Facilitators are representatives of the SMART Recovery movement in local communities. The reputation and success of SMART Recovery depends on facilitators who:

- Complete the training program
- Abide by the Code of Conduct
- Register meetings with the National Office, and submit any new changes to meeting information
- Facilitate meetings according to the SMART Recovery meeting outline
- Ensure the Opening Statement is read at meetings in which newcomers are present
- Get to know other SMART facilitators (and your Regional Coordinator) to share experiences and challenges, locally, at online SMART Meeting Management (SMM) meetings, or at the annual SMART Recovery Conference

When meeting facilitators cover these basic tasks, SMART Recovery remains a respected and effective mutual-support recovery program.
Why Become a Facilitator

Our facilitators are a vital part of a worldwide network of SMART volunteers. They see remarkable changes in many of the people who attend meetings. Although recovery is an individual's choice and responsibility, facilitators feel the satisfaction of helping to make a difference in the lives of participants.

While you can learn to facilitate SMART Recovery meetings in a relatively short period of time by completing the training, you can hone your skills and deepen your knowledge for years and decades if you choose.

After you complete the training, you can continue to learn from:

- Books relevant to SMART and facilitating. A reading list is available on the SMART Recovery website.
- Attend ongoing training and support meetings available to our volunteers.
- Share issues and questions over the SMARTCAL listserv.
- Contribute to the SMART blog.
- Attend SMART meetings to observe how other facilitators work.
- Meet with other SMART facilitators to share experiences and challenges. Get to know your Regional Coordinator.
- Visit other recovery meetings to build bridges and learn how other programs fit into the recovery picture.

Facilitating a SMART Recovery meeting can be a rewarding, fascinating, and absorbing journey. You may use many of the skills you'll learn in other areas of your life, including your workplace and at home. SMART facilitators often build on their experience running meetings to take on other leadership roles within the recovery community and beyond.
Get Started

Thank you for downloading this first chapter of the facilitator’s manual, and for considering one of the strongest ways you can contribute to improving your local and global communities. We hope that you decide to sign up for one of our next regular facilitator trainings.

To continue learning about and to sign up for facilitator training, check out the SMART Recovery Online Training page at www.smartrecoverytraining.org.

If at any point you have questions, please feel free to contact us by phone toll-free at 440-951-5357, or by email at training@smartrecovery.org.

Additional Chapters of Facilitator’s Manual
The full Facilitator’s manual contains the following chapters:
- Being a SMART Facilitator
- Code of Conduct for SMART Recovery Volunteers
- Starting Your Face-to-Face Meeting
- Running the Meeting
- Facilitation Skills
- Facilitation Challenges
- Using the Tools
- Questions Facilitators are Asked
- Worksheets

The full Facilitator’s Manual and wealth of other helpful materials are provided free of charge to everyone who completes the program.

To continue learning about or to register for Facilitator Training, click here: www.smartrecoverytraining.org.

Acknowledgements
Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Jim Braastad, Randy Lindel, and John Frahm, who generously gave their time and expertise to create this version of the SMART Recovery Facilitator’s Manual, and extra thanks to editor Rosemary Hardin.

Disclaimer

Our program isn’t intended to be a substitute for professional help or treatment. While SMART does help many people who choose to work toward recovery on their own, it’s also an effective supplement to professional help.

If someone has serious difficulties with alcohol, drugs, compulsive gambling or sexual behaviors, overeating, self-harm, or other dangerous problems, they may benefit from professional help in addition to working the SMART program.

To find a mental health professional in your area who subscribes to SMART’s principles, visit www.smartrecovery.org.