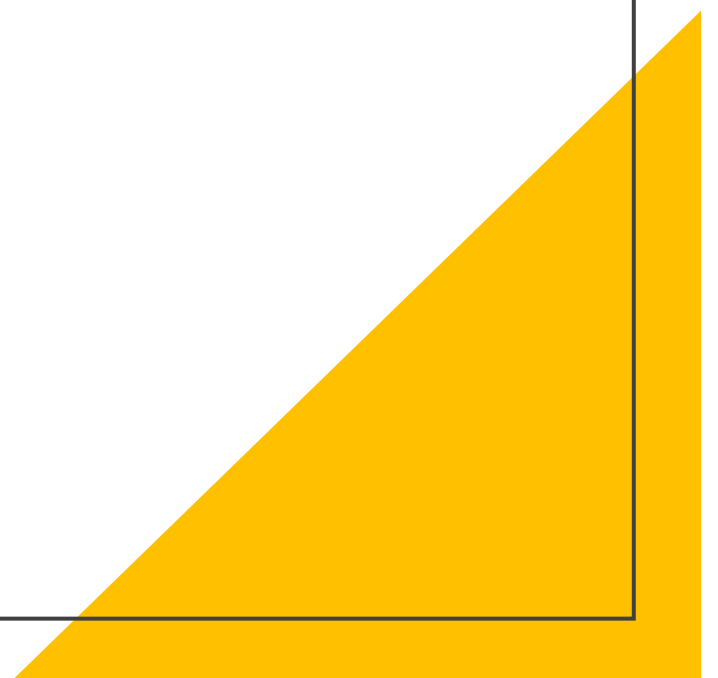


Advocacy in Alabama

Sheila Tyson, CRSS

Jennifer Robinson, CRSS



Learning Objectives



- Upon completion of the presentation, the participants will have a working definition of advocacy and the role of Peer advocacy for substance use disorder in Alabama.
- Identify and discuss benefits of how to organize Peer advocacy in Alabama.
- Upon completing this training, participants will have informative information about Peer Advocacy statewide.

CRSS ADVOCACY

- As a Certified recovery Support Specialist, you are already a role model and positive influencer in eradicating stigma associated with Substance Use Disorder
- CRSS advocacy can further that influence by unifying peers to promote growth, advancements, and deepen our impact in the recovery field





What is Advocacy?

Advocacy is the pursuit of influencing outcomes — including public-policy and resource allocation decisions within political, economic, and social systems and institutions — that directly affect people’s current lives (Cohen, 2001).

*“I learned a long time ago the wisest thing I can do is be on my own side, be an **advocate** for myself and others like me.”*

-Maya Angelou

What is Group Advocacy?

Group advocacy involves people with shared experiences, positions or values coming together in groups to talk and listen to each other and speak up collectively about issues that are important to them. These groups aim to influence public opinion, policy and service provision (SCIFE, 2015).



What Do Recovery Advocacy Groups do?

- ❖ Recovery advocacy groups strive to work collaboratively to eliminate barriers to treatment for those affected by substance use disorder.
- ❖ They promote awareness of substance use disorders and strengthen resources to recovery in your area.
- ❖ They empower peers and build leaders to influence change and mobilize the recovery community.
- ❖ They may promote positive pro-recovery legislation. An advocate investigates, educates, and may seek funding for specific programs.



Alabama Opioid Overdose and Addiction Council

ALABAMA OPIOID OVERDOSE AND ADDICTION COUNCIL

Governor Kay Ivey established the Alabama Opioid Overdose and Addiction Council on August 8, 2017 naming co-chairs, the Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Mental Health (ADMH) Kimberly G. Boswell, the State Health Officer (Dr. Scott Harris Md, MPH, and the State attorney General Steve Marshall, as the Council leadership. The Governor charged the Council to develop comprehensive and coordinated strategic plan to combat Alabama opioid crisis and reduce the number of deaths and adverse consequences in the state.

Georgia Council For Recovery

Advocacy

- Addiction Recovery Awareness Day

CARES Program

- Certified Addiction Recovery Empowerment Specialist

The Georgia Recovers Project

A transformational campaign featuring 16 Georgia Recovery Ambassadors addressing the growing addiction epidemic.

This multi-media project is designed to change social norms and reduce stigma surrounding substance use disorder

WHY ADVOCATE ALABAMA

- OPIOD Settlement Fund: 85% of these funds should go to the Department of Mental Health to make grants for recovery support services, addiction treatment and prevention.
- Good Samaritan Laws – To encourage people to get the help for others without the fear of legal consequences. Alabama require a person to provide the law enforcement with their full name and to remain on the scene.
- Chemical Endangerment-Let's get treatment and not jail for pregnant women. Etowah county goes beyond other Alabama counties by singling out pregnant women for special bond conditions. Pregnant women are held in jail for months on low-level drug charges that would ordinarily lead to a small bond and release.
- Harm Reduction – The primary goal of harm reduction is to save lives and protect the health of both people who use drugs and their comm)unities.

Some of the best-known harm reduction tools include:

- Free syringe service (Jefferson County have one)
- Overdose prevention sites
- Vending machines stocked with harm reduction tools (fentanyl test strips, naloxone kits women hygiene and more)
- Education for the community on addiction, recovery, medication assisted recovery.
- Advocate to show people what recovery look like!!!



Why Advocacy Matters

- ❖ Creating a unified community for our profession will further the advancement of CRSS by working together to advocate for pro-recovery policies and legislation, CRSS services, support and more!

Advocacy seeks to ensure that **all** Certified Recovery Support Specialists have their voice heard on issues that are important to them.

What is FORA?

FORA is a nonprofit organization which aims to serve as the unifying body for **all** Certified Recovery Support Specialists in Alabama while also encouraging support from allies of the recovery community.



FORA ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN

Aims to empower the voice of the recovery community, family members and allies in recovery to use their experiences to shape and inform policies in Alabama.

Lower policy barriers to recovery. Provide information and educate the recovery community and policymakers on issues that impact persons with substance use disorder and their families

OUR MISSION



Friends of Recovery Alabama seeks to strengthen and promote recovery supportive services through advocacy, collaboration, and education.

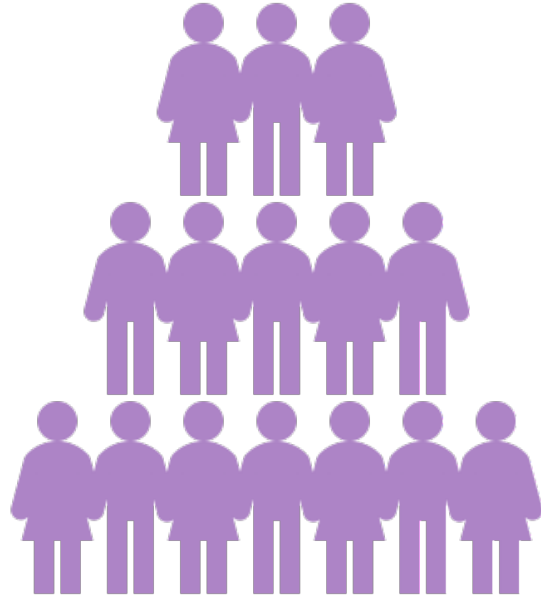
What does FORA want to accomplish?

- ❖ Grow the CRSS profession in all ways - more jobs, more peers, greater opportunities, increased compensation and more!
- ❖ Provide an organized peer workforce in Alabama—think of FORA as a Voice for CRSSs.
- ❖ Introduce and advance substance use disorder policies through pro-recovery legislation.
- ❖ And set our goals into action!

OUR GOALS

- ❖ We are dedicated to introducing and advancing substance use disorder policies through pro-recovery legislation and the growth and utilization of recovery supportive services throughout the state.
- ❖ We seek to analyze and understand the impact of current drug policies and legislation, offer alternative approaches and advocate for methods that significantly reduce the negative impact of substance use disorder.
- ❖ A key aim of this council is to reduce the stigma associated with SUD's, lift the veil of anonymity by having representatives who are in long-term recovery and identify as such, while at the same time offering hope to those who are currently impaired.

Please Join Us!



We feel that the leadership and base of this new group should be wholeheartedly supported by and include all CRSSs. We know that we are the best and most passionate individuals to promote this cause.

FORA supports many pathways to recovery. Group membership is open to all without regard to race, age, gender, sexual identity, political affiliation or other differentiation.