



## Transcript:

### **Partners In Recovery – The Role of Counselors & Recovery Coaches in African American Communities (M.6)**

Presenter: Mark Sanders  
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MARK SANDERS: Let's take a moment and say a thank you to Great Lakes ATTC for sponsoring this webinar series on African-Americans and substance use disorders. I would like to start with a story. A well-known treatment center in Illinois was putting a facility in Wrigleyville. You know Wrigleyville. That's where the Chicago Cubs lost baseball games for 111 straight years.

And the neighbors started to protest. They held town hall meetings. And we heard things like, we don't want those people in our neighborhood. They were referring to individuals seeking recovery with substance use disorders.

And at one point, the director of this well-known facility said, I don't like how you're referring to our clients. And I said, what do you mean? Well, you're calling the clients we serve "those people." And the residents say, well, what should we call them? The director said, I call them heroes in recovery.

For many clients that we work with, alcohol and drugs are their coping mechanism. And I agree with the director that anyone who's willing to give up their coping mechanism is really a hero. And guess what? Those of you who serve individuals with substance use disorders are heroes, as well.

I would like to share a story with you, and a gift, and honor the work that you do. You might remember a baseball player named Lou Gehrig. For those of you who don't remember Lou Gehrig, he played 100 years ago. And he was teammates with a man named Babe Ruth. In the 1940s, they made a movie about Lou Gehrig's life called The Pride of the Yankees.

And his last game, his retirement game, he went in front of 40,000 screaming Yankee fans and he gave the following speech. "Today"-- there was an echo in the stadium. "Today, today, today, I feel, I feel, I feel, I feel, like the luckiest man, man, man, man, on the face of this earth, earth, earth, earth. Today, I feel like the luckiest man on the face of this earth." How could he be lucky? He was dying. That was Lou Gehrig's death speech. He was dying of a condition which they later named after him, ALS-- Lou Gehrig's disease.



So I went on the internet and I looked up the backstory. The story that I read was that, a day before he gave that speech, there was a 12-year-old boy in the hospital. The boy was sick. The boy was dying, and he refused to take his medication. Doctors told his mother, your son will be dead soon unless he takes his medication.

The mother knew that Lou Gehrig was her son's hero, so she called the Yankee organization to ask if Lou Gehrig could come to the hospital to convince her son to take his medication. And he showed up, and the boy's eyes got so big. He saw his hero and he said, I'm still not going to take my medication unless you hit a home run tomorrow. Lou Gehrig said, OK, I'll hit a home run tomorrow. He didn't hit a home run, he hit two.

Now, fast forward. Right before he gave the speech, the mother contacted the Yankee organization, and word got to Lou Gehrig that her son started taking his medication. He felt lucky because he was able to help someone. And you're very fortunate because you help others for a living. And, of course, the clients you serve are fortunate because of your important help. So I recognize you based upon the work you do.

And thank you for joining our webinar. This one is entitled Substance Use Disorder Counselors and Recovery Coaches Working Together to Promote Recovery in African American Communities. African Americans seeking recovery can benefit from both the use of recovery coach and counselor working together to promote their recovery. So this is not an either-or proposition. This is an and-plus proposition.

This presentation highlights the differences in complementary nature of each role to help avoid role confusion among professionals working with African Americans with substance use disorders. By definition, a recovery coach is a front-line worker in a recovery-oriented system of care. They provide pre-treatment, that is, before clients even into treatment, in-treatment, and post-treatment recovery support in the natural environment where clients live.

In other words, it's easier to stay sober inside of a residential facility, but the challenge really occurs when you leave the facility and you go home. And recovery coaches have been instrumental in helping to support recovery when individuals return from treatment-- or prison, or mental health facilities-- back to African American communities.

Let's talk a moment about the difference between recovery coach and a 12-step sponsor. Because sometimes, I do workshops and people say, aren't they one and the same? First, let's take a moment to celebrate the 12-step communities. Incredible story about this flight attendant who developed alcoholism drinking those little bitty bottles of liquor they used to serve on the airplane. You remember those small bottles of liquor. They were small, but they can get one drunk.



So her employers smelled liquor on her breath. She was almost fired. Forced into treatment, she took a short flight from Las Vegas to Los Angeles-- from Las Vegas to Los Angeles-- and she landed at terminal 12 in the Los Angeles airport. And she saw all that liquor to her left, and she was about to have a drink. Then she ran over to the person holding the microphone to her right and asked, would you make an announcement?

The announcement was, will all the friends of Bill W., the co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous, please report to terminal 12? She said that, within 20 minutes, 20 people showed up from all over the world, said they were friends of Bill W., the co-founder of AA, and they held a 12-person meeting right there in terminal 12.

The Anonymous programs are really-- they're always there. They're the answer to the question, what happens if you're craving alcohol or crack cocaine at three o'clock in the morning and your therapist is asleep or on vacation? There's always a member of the 12-step community to support your recovery.

We always also know, though, that there are many paths to recovery. We have a webinar that we did before this one in the series called Multiple Pathways to Recovery for African Americans. And I suggested in that webinar that resistance occurs when we only assume that there's one way that people recover.

Let us just review. For African Americans seeking recovery, there have been multiple pathways identified, including 12-step treatment-- sorry, 12-step recovery, treatment-assisted recovery, medication-assisted recovery, co-occurring disorders recovery, religious pathways. Sometimes I ask the question, are there more African-Americans recovering through traditional treatment or the church? No one has ever given me an answer.

There are cultural pathways to recovery like rites of passage. There is a pathway of recovery amongst African Americans that's called maturing out. You know maturing out-- when you get sick and tired of being sick and tired, and you just stop using. Reading the Great Books.

Some African Americans have identified that as their pathway of recovery-- advocacy, fighting for a cause. There are individuals right now who were maintaining their recovery after the police killing of George Floyd, and their advocacy is their pathway to recovery. Some African Americans pursue eastern approaches, like meditation and breathwork. And social protest, as well, as a pathway and style of recovery.

So the 12-step sponsor has to honor one pathway of recovery, the 12-step route. If you're a recovery coach, you have to really honor multiple ways in which those that we serve choose to pursue recovery. The recovery coach's



experience lies primarily in their knowledge of recovery, their connection to recovery support resources within the community. Well, it then suggests that often, it works really well when the recovery coaches are from the same communities as those seeking recovery, because they know the terrain.

An additional source of expertise for recovery coaches is their own long-term recovery. By definition, when the person has been in recovery for five years, that is considered long-term recovery. Research suggests that, once you've been in recovery for five years, your chance of relapse drops beneath 15%. You have much to offer individuals seeking recovery.

Let's take a moment to talk about levels of recovery support provided by recovery coaches. There's pre-treatment recovery support to enhance recovery readiness. That includes recovery coaching and peer mentoring, community outreach. Research suggests that 75% of individuals with substance use disorders will never seek help directly for their addiction.

So now we have, in African American communities, recovery coaches going into the community and actually helping individuals seek treatment. Increasing their motivation to seek treatment. Helping individuals understand what to expect from treatment.

Keeping in contact with persons while they wait for treatment. Then, of course, linking individuals with needed services and needed resources. If you look at those last two bullet points, there [AUDIO OUT] have been individuals who have been working with recovery coaches while they waited for treatment. And as a result of the recovery coach's resourcefulness, that person no longer needed treatment. They were integrated within the communities of recovery.

A second level of recovery support is in-treatment recovery support services. Just imagine a day when individuals in residential treatment or incarcerated can be given the option to have a recovery coach from their neighborhood whom they meet while they're in treatment or in prison. And in order to help to create some seamlessness when they return to the coach. And I can [AUDIO OUT] when you come back to the community.

Then, of course, the third level of recovery support services provided by recovery support-- or recovery coaches-- is post-treatment recovery support in the natural environment. 90 days post-discharge is what the research says is needed in order to be launched on the pathway of recovery. In fact, 80% of the relapses occur within the first 90 days of a person leaving a facility.

Recovery coaching can be utilized in post-treatment or support to enhancing the durability and quality of recovery maintenance, to help with the fragility of early recovery-- as I mentioned 80% of relapses occur within the first 90 days



of individuals leaving primary treatment. Then, of course, providing strong linkages into communities of recovery.

Let's take a moment to talk about how recovery coaches can support persons seeking recovery in the natural environment, first in the short run. And number one, returning to an anxious home. You provided some intensive outpatient services or residential services. The client comes back well, better than they were before they went to treatment. Then they return home to an anxious home.

Everyone is still nervous. Will he relapse? Will she relapse? They may be angry or filled with rage about things that happened during the person's active addiction. Client goes into the bathroom for 15 minutes, they wonder, is he actually using the bathroom or is he shooting up heroin in the bathroom?

You should know that anxiety passes from family member to family member easily. And there have been some individuals in early recovery who have gone back home and they've caught the family's anxiety. And they deal with that anxiety through the use of alcohol and other drugs. Recovery coaches have been there. They could be instrumental in providing recovery support while the person seeking recovery returns back to an anxious home.

Pressure from bill collectors. They're individuals that, when they were actively using, didn't even realize they had bills. The bills were passed-- were piling up. And now, in the recovery, they realize, I've got bills. And the phone rings. It's constantly bill collectors.

In fact, they receive a bill from the very treatment center that saved their life. And now they're dodging the facility that saved their life. Recovery coaches can be instrumental in providing support around strategies to get out of debt.

And then, of course, we have early efforts to disengage from a drug culture. Historian William White wrote a book on addiction from an anthropological perspective. And the historian said that, in every society, people use three types of drugs.

One type of drugs what's called a socially celebrated drug. And a socially celebrated drug is the kind of drug that people use in that society, that community, in that town. Imagine having a celebration without it. In America, the most common socially celebrated drug is alcohol.

And then there's what's called socially tolerated drugs. And a socially tolerated drug is a kind of drug that a person uses in society where the society says, you can use these drugs only under a doctor's order or over there. That includes drugs like medical marijuana or cigarettes in that area that's designated for smokers.



Then, of course, the third type of drug is what he calls socially prohibited drugs. And these are drugs that cultural groups use that, if they're caught with possession or they're known to be users of that drug, they receive the greatest amount of legal sanctions, the greater amount of ostracism within the community. And these include drugs like heroin, OxyContin not prescribed by a doctor, methamphetamines, crack cocaine, et cetera.

And historian William White said that individuals who use socially prohibited drugs are often shunned in society. And what they tend to do is go out in the community and find tribes-- again, an anthropological term, tribes-- to support them and support their use when the rest of the community has turned its back on them. He goes on to say that, for some individuals, they can become more addicted to the tribe than the drug that they're using. We'll see a little bit more about that in a few moments.

What you might say is, there are three types of drug users in tribal societies. One is called an acultural drug user. And a cultural drug user is someone who's using a socially prohibited drug, like crack or methamphetamines or heroin, who have no connection to the tribal culture.

They might be a rich person who lives on a hill who says to the butler, hey, Watson, I'm [AUDIO OUT] the name Watson. Go to that neighborhood and bring me some crack. In other words, he's using the drug without having a connection to the culture.

What you might say is that some individuals are bi-cultural drug users. [AUDIO OUT] They're comfortable in two cultural milieus. She may be a soccer mom by day, crack user at night, a doctor by day, a heroin user at night.

I have a friend of mine who is a tri-cultural drug user. He was a salesman by day. He played on a basketball team in the evening, sponsored by a bar. So he would drink in the evening, alcoholically following the game-- the basketball game. And then, when all of his teammates went to sleep, he would go to a crack house. And he tried to keep all three of those cultures separated as long as he possibly could.

The third type of drug user is one that's called a culturally immersed drug user. And this is the person whose whole life is the tribal culture. They only hang out with their comrades who get high every day. They hustle [AUDIO OUT] detoxification facility. And as William White said, if they're not careful, they can become as addicted to the tribal culture as the drug they're using.

Let me give you a few examples. I have a nephew who was addicted to marijuana, and he was also gang-affiliated. We wanted my nephew could stop smoking marijuana, but he couldn't stay away from the gang. And when he went around the gang, he would smoke marijuana.



What we've learned is to never suggest to anybody, just give up their culture, the individuals who they use meth with, or who they drink with. But instead, it's our responsibility to help them to find another culture to replace that with. My nephew left the gang by joining the US military, another strong culture. That also does-- in the military, urine drops for drugs. And this pathway was switched from gang culture to military culture as his route of recovery.

I had a former student who received a PhD, and he's the dean of a university. But in his backstory, the great doctor used to be gang-affiliated. Gangs are one example of a tribal culture within African American communities. He's been in recovery for over three decades.

I said, how did you do it? He says, I went to 12-step group meetings, and I listened to stories, and I latched onto all of the old-timers that used to be involved in gang activity. So I joined the culture of former gang members who are now in addiction recovery. He shifted from one cultural milieu to the next.

I have another friend of mine, an African American male who gets together every Friday for over 25 years with other African American males over a poker game. He says, we discuss racism over those poker games, our wives. We talk about girlfriends, our work. We solve the world's problems doing those poker games.

And there's also heavy drinking. My friend is an alcoholic who can stop drinking. He's done it a number of times. But he can't stay away from the Friday night poker game. And when he goes to the Friday night poker game, he drinks. So recovery coaches can be helpful in helping those seeking recovery shift, within African-American communities, from drug cultures to cultures of communities of recovery.

We're talking about services provided to persons seeking recovery in the short run provided by recovery coaches. Feeling of useless in the community. Many individuals leaving prison, according to research, a major relapse trigger is going back to the community where they live and feeling useless, not welcomed at home by their family, not employed yet, et cetera. And recovery coaches can [AUDIO OUT] around feelings of useless.

Did you know that research suggests that the individual seeking recovery may be more likely to divorce during recovery than active use-- than when someone was actively using. Who are you? I don't know you, this sober person. And as they have described separation and divorce as a minor death, recovery cultures can provide emotional recovery support during those times.

Disengagement from self-help groups and other sources of support. Another quick 12-step story. A friend of mine was early in her recovery from alcoholism. And she decided that she would look for God. You ever notice that many people who seek recovery start looking for God?



And she was convinced that, if God existed, God would have to be in the Four Corners. There's this region in the United States called the Four Corners, and each corner is a different state. So you're standing in one corner, you're in New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Colorado.

She was convinced that, if God existed, God would have to be in the Four Corners. She got in her car one hot July afternoon, looking for God, [AUDIO OUT] from Chicago. And as soon as she got to Missouri, she had an unbelievable urge to have a drink. She was about to have it, and then a voice came into the head, and the voice said, don't do it. Don't do it.

You ever had an experience where you're about to do something you might regret later, and the voice said to you, don't do it? I was once speaking to a group of teenagers that were incarcerated. And I asked them if they ever heard the voice that said, don't do it. Don't do it. They said, Mr. Sanders, we hear that voice all the time. I said, whose voice is that? Half said the state's attorney, the other half said the judge.

So my friend held on. She made it to the Four Corners. And she was standing in Arizona about to have a drink No one knew her from Adam. She said there was a Native American woman standing in Utah selling beads. This woman walked across the state from Utah and stood in front of my friend in Arizona and said, it's so good to be clean and sober, by the grace of God and the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. And they held a two-person meeting right there in Arizona.

The Anonymous groups are always there. And yet surveys suggest that 90% of individuals seeking 12-step recovery-- 90% will drop out within the first 90 days of your making a referral. Many will come back. But we're living in a time where recovery coaches living in the same neighborhood might actually spot them right when they drop out and encourage them to get back reconnected with communities of recovery.

Dealing with urges and cravings and relapse in early recovery-- recovery coaches can help with that. Navigating high-risk situations to get high in African American communities. Let's take a moment to talk about how recovery coaches can support persons seeking recovery in the natural environment in the long run.

I am convinced that at the core of addiction-- trauma, grief and unresolved trauma-- trauma and grief and issues of abandonment, which are also traumatic. And as a person gets into recovery, sometimes these emotions, these experiences rear their head.

I've known of many clients who have histories of trauma who were using drugs to numb the pain of that trauma. And then, in recovery, they get into a



relationship-- a sexual relationship-- and all of the memories of the trauma come flooding back. They can use some recovery support at that time.

Development of recovery capital. I'm defining recovery capital as the internal and external resources a person can bring to bear on their recovery, like improving their education, going back to high school in recovery and finishing high school, getting their GED. Or entering a vocational school or community college.

I used to have lots of students that came right from treatment to community college, unable to concentrate because of stage two, protracted withdrawal, or having [AUDIO OUT] difficulty just sitting in their seat in the classroom. Some of my students told me, I haven't been in classrooms in 20 years. I've been hustling to get drunk for 20 years. I'm uncomfortable. I want to drop out.

But then they're working with a recovery coach who says that an active addiction-- I haven't been in school for years, either. What I learned from my own personal journey [AUDIO OUT] is that the longer you sit in the seats in the classroom, the more comfortable you get sitting in those seats.

Dealing with chronic pain. Live long enough-- let's face it. Live long enough, and eventually, you might start to experience some chronic pain. You may be thinking about using some OxyContin or heroin to deal with that pain, and yet your recovery coach suggests to you that there's another way of dealing with that pain besides the use of heroin.

Areas in which recovery coaches can provide support in the long run, continued. Many individuals in long-term recovery, or later in their recovery, start that experience an existential crisis. Why should I stay sober? I've wasted 40 years of my life by getting high. The recovery coach's self-disclosure might be helpful. I wasted 35 years of my life getting high too, but now I'm on purpose. I'm helping people with their recovery.

Coach can also challenge and help the client develop healthy relationships. I'm convinced that what addiction is, is a pathological relationship with a drug that is actually a substitute for true human intimacy. And once the client learns to have healthy relationships, they no longer need drugs the way they needed them in the past.

I did a workbook called Relationship Detox: Helping Clients Develop Healthy Relationships in Recovery. And a pattern that I saw in my work is that there were individuals that would go from an addiction to a drug to an addiction [AUDIO OUT]. I imagine that some of you believe that it's possible to be addicted to a person, thus my book on relationship detox. One sign of an addictive relationship is extreme jealousy.



Here's a story. Years ago, I had a client, and people called him Mr. Recovery. All of his dialogue was about recovery. He was a poet for recovery. He would say clever things like, my worst day sober is better than my best day when I was getting high. I'm so grateful for my recovery. I'm grateful I woke up this morning, he'd say. If you think you woke yourself up this morning, try skipping a day. Oh, he was a poet for recovery.

And all the men navigated towards him to be their sponsor. And he had a girlfriend who was equally poetic for recovery, all the women navigated towards her to be their sponsor. One day, he heard that she went on a date with someone. He shot and killed her.

She's buried in a suburban community. He's in prison for life. This man went from crack cocaine as his god to his girlfriend as his god. As a matter of fact, the real work in recovery is on relationships. Individuals can use recovery support during that period in their recovery where they're trying to establish relationships.

Another area in which recovery coaches can be helpful is during periods when the person seeking recovery is having celebrations, anniversaries, holidays, accomplishments, et cetera. In America, we tend to celebrate everything with alcohol or other drugs-- weddings, anniversaries, holidays, even funerals.

Some people relapse on the anniversary of their recovery day or their dry day, because that's how we tend to celebrate in our country. What recovery coaches can be helpful in helping the person seeking recovery learn other ways to celebrate accomplishments besides the active use of alcohol and other drugs.

The importance of recovery coaching in African American communities-- to help navigate high-risk situations that threaten recovery, such as poverty or easy access to drugs. I mentioned this in a previous webinar, that there's some communities where a person can get drugs quicker and they can get an apple.

The presence of street gangs. Every client I ever worked with, young African American male who had an older brother that was in a gang or he himself was in a gang. Recovery was quite difficult because of how easy they could get access to drugs through street gangs. Trauma. An overabundance of liquor stores in the community as a relapse trigger. High unemployment. High felony arrest.

The absence of residents facilities in African-American communities to support recovery. My friends, as you listen to my words, there needs to be more [AUDIO OUT] treatment facilities in African American communities. So many African Americans will leave their community and drive 100 miles away



from where they live to seek residential treatment, and then come back home without any recovery support. Thank goodness for recovery coaches.

Strengths in African American communities. Recovery coaches can help [AUDIO OUT] individuals in recovery tap into within African American communities with strong 12-step traditions, spiritual outlets for recovery, help to reconnect them with the extended family. There's a relationship between family support in recovery and one's ability to maintain the recovery.

Then, of course, connecting them with the tradition of advocacy and outreach within African American communities. There's a strong tradition. Malcolm X, a person who died in long-term recovery, said that his primary pathway of recovery was religious conversion in prison and reading the Great Books while he was in prison. And through his advocacy, he helped hundreds, if not thousands, of African-Americans who were incarcerated live a life of recovery.

A number of years ago, I did a focus group with African-Americans whose primary pathway of recovery was the Nation of Islam. They were influenced by the advocacy of Malcolm X. In this focus group, I asked these persons in recovery, what did the Nation of Islam do for you that helped you with your recovery that traditional treatment did not do for you?

And here were their most common answers. It provided a sense of hope. After reading the autobiography of Malcolm X, I believed that I, too, could get sober. They helped me change physically first. One young man said, I commonly wore gym shoes every day, and blue jeans, but as I connected with the Nation, I changed my attire and I started wearing suits and bow ties. What I discovered is, if I dressed better, I felt better about myself. And the better I felt about myself, the more easy it was for me to maintain my recovery.

Role models. Some of the members in the focus group said that, I saw others who were in recovery within the Nation, and I began that I can get into recovery too. Ethnic pride. Several participants in the focus group said that they were able to, through the Nation, redefine what it meant to be a black man, which has negative connotations within the society. All of a sudden, it's reframed as something positive to be a black man.

Encouragement to read. Several participants said, the way you keep one a slave was to never allow them to read, never teach them to read. But as I learned to read, I started to feel freer. Reading actually freed me and played a major role in my recovery.

And, of course, eating a healthy diet. Several said, going from the diet that we ate in slavery towards a more healthy diet, we felt better about ourselves both physically, but also psychologically, based on putting better foods in our bodies.



Danny K. Davis, a member of the US Congress. He was the one who wrote the legislation called the Second Chance Act, expungement for individuals who were incarcerated or who committed crimes that were not communities [AUDIO OUT] crime there were not violent were drug-related crimes. Expungement legislation is really important because, as I mentioned in the beginning-- I haven't finished-- has longer-term gainful employment for years.

It was Michelle Alexander who wrote the New York Times best-selling book *The New Jim Crow*. As you know, disproportionately, African-Americans with substance use disorders are incarcerated within US prisons, and she calls that the new Jim Crow. Through her writing and her advocacy, a movement was ignited towards prison release and reform.

Strengths within African American communities to support recovery, continued. The whole faith-based drug ministry. There's some recovery coaches that have been able to connect persons seeking recovery to churches that provide services that support recovery.

And my younger brother noted that there are many individuals seeking recovery who find themselves attracted physically to other individuals seeking recovery. And yet he said to me, there is no blueprint as to how they can stay sober while in a relationship.

He said, if you think about it, Bill W was in AA, but Lois Wilson was not. Jimmy K the founder of Narcotics Anonymous, was in Narcotics Anonymous, but his spouse was not. My brother started a recovery support group, *Couples in Recovery*, as a way of helping African American communities maintain their recovery and their relationship at the same time.

Recovery coaching in African American communities. We're starting to see new frontiers. A number of years ago, in Cleveland, Ohio they learned that indigent men who didn't have Medicaid had a hard time accessing treatment. There was a six-month gap, they discovered, between the initial intake appointment and the first counseling a session. They had to wait.

And there was a group that emerged called NORA, Northern Ohio Recovery Associates, who went to the city of Cleveland to stay, while these men wait, we'll provide recovery coaching for them. What they discovered, that lots of these individuals, while receiving recovery coaching, no longer needed formal treatment.

In African American communities, we're starting to see a trend where recovery coaches are within emergency rooms of hospitals to help clients-- individuals who survive an overdose [AUDIO OUT] or hospitals that utilized women in recovery as certified doulas.



They are trained to be doulas-- to help women who are addicted to heroin with their delivery of their newborn. But then they're able to say to these women, not only can I support the birth of your child. I, too, am in recovery. I can provide recovery coaching upon your delivery, if you're interested.

Within African American communities, we are starting to experiencing recovery marches and rallies, and churches are getting involved. TASC, Treatment Alternatives to Special Clients. Had a program-- a recovery coaching program for clients who have lost custody of their children due to drug-related offenses.

And they've hired recovery coaches to provide recovery support to these parents who want to regain custody of their children. And what they're finding, within the state of Illinois, is that working with a recovery coach increases the family reunification rate times two-- twice as much. And they've saved the state of Illinois millions of dollars.

Jails and prisons are [AUDIO OUT] for African-Americans leaving the criminal justice system. They're starting to now anchor recovery coaches in African-American communities within public housing facilities, lions, or the investment of the formerly incarcerated.

Its executive director is a man by the name of Benneth Lee, who has a public story of recovery, a public story of transformation. And he started the National Alliance for the Advancement of the Formerly Incarcerated. Bennett said that, if the formerly incarcerated were a cultural group, that they could swing any election.

They've been working together with the formerly incarcerated to return them to citizenship. In fact, he put a bill in front of his state's legislature where he believes that ex-offenders should be treated like a protected class. That once they've paid their debt to society-- they're no longer incarcerated or on probation or parole, their rights should be protected, just like African Americans, and gay rights, human rights, rights for all people, et cetera.

Many individuals who advocate along with National Alliance are also individuals in recovery. And another service they provide is recovery support for individuals coming back to the African American community from incarceration.

Let's talk about addictions counselors, a licensed or certified professional who helps individuals and families seeking recovery. Recovery coaching and how the role differs from an addictions counselor. Generally, recovery coaches self-disclose more than counselors.

And they also have different competencies needed. And this is really important, because if we don't know how the roles differ, then the confusion



might take place. Conflict might take place. Let's take a moment and talk about how the role of recovery coach differs from the role of an addictions counselor.

The counselor needs knowledge of evidence-based practices and the treatment of addiction, how to do an assessment, how to do a treatment plan, how to make a diagnosis. Addictions counselors need information about [AUDIO OUT] or co-occurring disorders because mental illness and addiction overlap at the rate of 50%.

The integration of addiction and trauma treatment. A great majority of individuals also have history of trauma. Addictions counselors need to know and have skill [AUDIO OUT] patients with family illness. They [AUDIO OUT] need knowledge of crises and events, especially during times like these.

As we are recording this webinar, we're in the midst of COVID-19. And during these types of times, domestic violence dramatically increases. How to make referrals to mutual aid groups, and how to partner with recovery coaches.

Counselors also need specific knowledge that would help them in working with African American clients, like African American history-- historical trauma amongst African Americans and how it impacts African Americans seeking recovery today. Current trauma like police brutality, gang violence. Same in cross-cultural counseling. I invite you to look at the webinar we did on cross-cultural counseling with African Americans with substance use disorders as a part of this series.

I take a moment to talk about same-cultural counseling-- that is, when African Americans counsel African Americans with substance use disorders. Peter Bell, in the 1980s, and the books he wrote on counseling African Americans with alcoholism, talked about a couple of different ways that African American counselors can respond to African American clients seeking recovery.

Peter Bell said that some African American counselors will under-identify with the client's pain, the client's problems. That counselor's mindset is, I'm successful and being black didn't stop me, so why can't you just be like me? Stop complaining about racism or oppression. Just be like me. Peter Bell called that under-identifying with the client's pain.

Then Peter said that some counselors can over-identify with the client's pain. The client, in a session, talks about how he is affected by racism, or how she's impacted by the killing of George Floyd, and then the council spends the next 45 minutes of the session talking about the racism that he's endured himself. He has, in fact, become the client.

We're talking about knowledge and skills that African Americans with substance use disorders need from counselors. We need to have an



awareness of multiple styles of recovery for African Americans, how to integrate culture into recovery planning, how to tailor the intervention and treatment plan to the unique needs of the individual. The recovery coach needs knowledge about advocacy, resources available in the community to support recovery.

I talked recently with a recovery coach in an African American community. He says, most of my recovery coaching is resourcefulness. My cell phone is so important for my recovery coaching. 75% of what I do is connect clients with substance use disorders to resources within their community. How to develop resources in the community to support recovery.

Knowledge of long-term recovery. Awareness of roadblocks to recovery that exist within African American communities. How to engage individuals in the natural environment. That takes a real skill. You see when you go to graduate school and they teach you how to sit behind a desk and do counseling? Well, it's a real skill to meet someone within the community where they live, on the street, and engage them.

Indigenous healers present in communities to support recovery, like former gang members who are now in recovery, or individuals who, at one time, were homeless who are now in recovery, or people who have gone to college who are now in recovery, ministers in the community. The limitations of their knowledge is important for recovery coaches to know. And then also, to be on the path of seeing more and more knowledge.

Recovery coaches need to know what to do if a person seeking recovery is in a crisis. How to partner with the treatment community. And how to provide various types of recovery support, including emotional support, informational support-- such as where they can get job readiness training, vocational training, GED programs, et cetera.

Instrumental recovery support. Assisting clients in African American communities seeking recovery in meeting their basic needs, such as where to find clothes, and the emergency food pantries, and referrals for housing, et cetera. Affiliational recovery support. That is, how to get connected to communities of recovery. How to have sober fun-- sober dances, sober movie nights, social celebrations. Connecting clients with these needed services in the community.

Transportational recovery support. In a previous webinar, I talk with you about one of my favorite programs called Miracle Villlage, located in Gary, Indiana. And they provide recovery support services for women seeking recovery in the public housing development.

They hired a woman in long-term recovery to be the bus driver, who's also been trained in motivational interviewing, to pick these women up in their



apartments and take them to Miracle Village, where they can receive recovery support. We call that transportational recovery support.

We have a task for you as we start to wind down with this webinar. We encourage you to go back to your agency and have a discussion about the complementary nature of the role between addictions counselors and recovery coaches, being led by three questions.

The first one is examining how the role of a recovery coach differs from the role of the patient's counselor. What's your opinion about how these roles differ most? What are some ways in which the recovery coach and addictions counselor can be confused by each other's role. And what are your recommendations to how recovery coaches and addictions counselors can partner effectively to promote recovery with an African American communities?

I always like to leave you with one more resource, and then I'll close with a story. I'm curator to the online Museum of African American Addictions, Treatment, and Recovery. And the link is above on this particular slide. I invite you, encourage you, to look at the museum.

You'll find lots of scholarly articles on how to counsel more effectively African Americans. We have a ton of webinars on that website. There's a podcast that talks about multiple pathways to recovery for African Americans. There's a leadership interview with really prominent African Americans who promote addictions treatment and recovery, from the counselor to the administrative levels, in Washington DC.

Here's the story. When Michael Jackson was at the peak of his career-- that is the Michael Jackson who left his brothers and connected with Quincy Jones to make those best selling albums that featured songs by "Billie Jean" and "Bad." Michael Jackson was at the peak of his career. He was outside listening to his music through a \$5 transistor radio.

And one of his music producers said, Michael, why are you listening to your music through a \$5 radio? You have the finest music equipment in the world. Michael Jackson said, some of the people who buy my music will listen to my music through something like this \$5 radio. I want to hear what they hear.

Those of you listening to my voice have been blessed with the gift to hear things and people's stories that others can't hear, because of your empathy. You can feel people's pain. And I want to thank you for you using those gifts to make the world a better place. Thank you so very much.