



# RECOVERY COACHING BASICS: A GAME-CHANGER FOR ALUMNI PROFESSIONALS

Alumni professionals are on the frontlines of long-term recovery support, yet many are still seeking tools to better serve alumni through group facilitation and one-on-one connection. The recent “Beginner’s Guide to Recovery Coaching” webinar with Stacy Charpentier, Executive Director of the Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery ([CCAR](#)), provided an impactful introduction to recovery coaching principles that can elevate the way alumni professionals engage with former clients.

At its core, recovery coaching is about walking alongside someone—not ahead of them, not pulling them up—but meeting them exactly where they are. For alumni professionals, this approach is both practical and transformative.

## Meet Them Where They Are

Stacy’s core message was simple but powerful: recovery coaching is about respecting an individual’s autonomy and unique path. In alumni work, that means resisting the urge to “fix” or “advise” and instead showing up with curiosity, presence, and belief in each person’s capacity to grow.

When alumni professionals embrace this mindset, their role shifts from being the expert in the room to becoming a trusted guide—someone who holds space for exploration, not direction.

This creates a more authentic connection and empowers alumni to take ownership of their recovery journey.

## Active Listening: The Heart of the Work

Recovery coaching calls on professionals to become better listeners—not just to the words someone says, but to the meaning behind them. Stacey described this as using the “four ears” of listening:

- Information – What are they telling you?
- Emotion – How do they feel about it?
- Intention – Why are they sharing this?
- Bias – What filters are you listening through?





## Recovery Looks Different for Everyone

Another critical takeaway: there's no one right way to recover. Some alumni may follow a 12-step path, others may engage with therapy, spirituality, or medication-assisted treatment. As alumni professionals, honoring multiple pathways of recovery is essential.

By creating inclusive, judgment-free spaces, alumni coordinators can foster a sense of belonging for everyone—regardless of how they define success.

## Presence Over Perfection

Perhaps one of the most reassuring lessons from this webinar is that you don't have to be a certified coach to begin applying these tools. Simply being present, showing up with empathy, and practicing intentional listening can make a profound difference in someone's life.

In a field that's often emotionally demanding, recovery coaching offers a structure that reduces burnout while deepening impact. It reinforces that the most powerful thing you can offer is not advice—but connection.

Whether you're leading an alumni support group or following up with a client one-on-one, integrating recovery coaching principles into your work can help you engage more meaningfully, foster self-efficacy in alumni, and build long-lasting recovery connections. As Stacy put it, "Coaching is not about having the right answer—it's about believing the person in front of you does."

## ABOUT TPAS

Treatment Professionals in Alumni Services (TPAS) is a non-profit membership organization dedicated to advancing the field of alumni engagement in behavioral health. TPAS supports programs and professionals in building strong, sustainable alumni communities that foster long-term recovery and connection. Through education, collaboration, and resources, TPAS empowers members to develop impactful alumni services that extend care beyond treatment. Learn more at [www.tpas.org](http://www.tpas.org).