



## From Medication Assisted Treatment to Medication Supported Recovery

In October 2021, the ASAP-NYCB Board voted to extend 4-hour Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) training required for initial CARC (Certified Addiction Recovery Coach, 2012) to the training requirements of CRPA (Certified Recovery Peer Advocate, 2014) and CRPA-Provisional (2016). The rationale behind this move was to develop CRPA awareness of available treatments, improve consistency between CARC and CRPA trainees, and increase coverage of key competencies related to multiple pathways of recovery, goal setting, knowledge of trends, non-judgmental behavior, and shared decision making.

During the approval process, concerns were expressed at the board level regarding the use of the term “medication assisted treatment.” To address these concerns, the ASAP-NYCB Trainer Registry Governance Committee worked to find a term that better suited the training needs and practice of peer recovery professionals. To this end, the Trainer Registry Governance Committee drafted the following statement and presented it for board adoption at the January 2022 meeting. The full statement reads:

“The words we use to describe substance use disorders and related services can have a significant effect on the likelihood people will seek help. Indeed, research suggests that stigmatizing language has a profound effect on treatment outcomes<sup>1</sup> and attitudes toward individuals in recovery among professionals and the public<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, ongoing stigma from within the recovery community toward medication as part of recovery creates a further challenge<sup>3</sup>.

Such stigma was an important consideration for the Trainer Registry Governance Committee who also wanted to account for the best practice of the peer recovery profession, person-centered approaches to care/recovery, and potential adoption of language by allied professions. Accordingly, it is the position of ASAP-NYCB that the term ‘medication assisted treatment’ (MAT) be replaced in our certification standards by the more recovery-oriented term ‘medication supported recovery’ (MSR).

This revised language encompasses a more global terminology that better aligns with SAMHSA’s definition of recovery<sup>4</sup>. Additionally, this broader term is inclusive of multiple levels of care and approaches to recovery in a manner that is consistent with the multiple pathways model. Finally, while traditional MAT treatment may be perceived as restricted by time and program, medication supported recovery remains relevant across a range of settings as the individual progresses through their recovery. This latter point helps support the fact that medication is a valid and important route to recovery, that it may be a short- or long-term part of the individual’s life and their development of recovery capital.”

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<sup>1</sup>Volkow, N. D., Gordon, J. A., & Koob, G. F. (2021). Choosing appropriate language to reduce the stigma around mental illness and substance use disorders. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41386-021-01069-4>

<sup>2</sup>Ashford, R. D., Brown, A. M., & Curtis, B. (2018). Substance use, recovery, and linguistics: The impact of word choice on explicit and implicit bias. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, 189 (August), 131–138.

<sup>3</sup>Krawczyk, N., Negron, T., Nieto, M., Agus, D., & Fingerhood, M. I. (2018). Overcoming medication stigma in peer recovery: A new paradigm. *Substance Abuse*, 39(4), 404–409.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/08897077.2018.1439798>.Overcoming

<sup>4</sup>Del Vecchio, P. (2012). SAMHSA’s Working Definition of Recovery Updated | SAMHSA Blog. SAMHSAs Working Definition of Recovery - Updated. <https://blog.samhsa.gov/2012/03/23/defintion-of-recovery-updated/>