

Recovery Walk Committee Toolkit: Organising a Successful Recovery Walk

This toolkit provides a step-by-step guide to establishing a Recovery Walk committee and organising a successful Recovery Walk. It is inspired by the Recovery Walk Cape Town model, implemented by the Recovery Walk team in Cape Town, South Africa. The toolkit is designed to help you build a passionate team, plan effectively, and create an impactful event that celebrates recovery from addiction and mental illness.

1. Establish the Recovery Walk Committee

1.1 Identify Key Stakeholders

- **Recovery Peers and Allies:** Reach out to individuals in recovery, their families, and allies who are passionate about mental health and addiction recovery.
- **Organisations and Professionals:** Collaborate with mental health organisations, addiction treatment centres, healthcare professionals, and advocacy groups.
- **Community Leaders:** Engage local leaders, influencers, and policymakers who can support and amplify your message.

1.2 Form the Organising Committee

- **Roles and Responsibilities:**
 - **Chairperson:** Leads meetings, ensures alignment with the mission, provides support and accountability to the committee in their roles.
 - **Secretary/Administrator:** Manages communications (emails and messages on social media), meeting minutes, and documentation.
 - **Treasurer:** Handles finances, bookkeeping, SARS and financial reporting.
 - **Logistics Coordinator:** Plans the venue, route, permits, and event setup.
 - **Marketing and Outreach Lead:** Manages social media, PR, and community engagement.
 - **Volunteer Coordinator:** Recruits and manages volunteers.
 - **Sponsorship Lead:** Seeks partnerships and donations.
 - **Programme Coordinator:** Plans the event schedule, speakers, and activities.
 - **Recruitment:** Use social media, local networks, and recovery communities to recruit committee members. Ensure diversity in representation (e.g., recovery peers, professionals, and allies).
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2. Define the Vision and Goals

(Refer to recoverywalk.co.za for more information on what the Recovery Walk is and what we are not)

- **Mission Statement:** Clearly articulate the purpose of the Recovery Walk (e.g., "To celebrate recovery, reduce stigma, and connect individuals to resources").
- **Objectives:**

- o Raise awareness about recovery from addiction and mental illness.
 - o Provide a platform for sharing recovery stories.
 - o Connect attendees to support networks and resources.
 - o Foster a sense of community and solidarity.
 - o To be inclusive and respectful of all the different pathways that lead to recovery.
 - o To foster a movement of open recovery, increasing visibility that demonstrates recovery works and challenges stigma.
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3. Plan the Event

3.1 Set a Date and Venue

- **Date:** Align with International Recovery Month (September). Choose a date that allows sufficient planning time (e.g., Saturday, 27th September 2025).
- **Venue:** Select a location that is accessible, safe, and meaningful to the recovery community. Consider parks, community centres, or public spaces with permits for large gatherings.

3.2 Develop a Budget

- **Expenses:**
 - o Venue rental and permits.
 - o Marketing materials (posters, flyers, social media ads).
 - o Event logistics (sound systems, tents, chairs, etc.).
 - o Refreshments (non-alcoholic beverages and snacks).
 - o Volunteer and staff support (if applicable).
- **Funding Sources:**
 - o Donations (via platforms like BackaBuddy).
 - o Sponsorships from local businesses and organisations. Local private treatment centres could be approached
 - o Fundraising events (e.g., bake sales, online campaigns).

3.3 Plan the Programme

- **Key Activities:**

Please note that not all of these activities need to be completed; more activities require additional planning and management.

 - o **Recovery Walk:** A short (5 km or less), inclusive walk to symbolise the journey of recovery.
 - o **Speakers:** Invite motivational speakers, healthcare professionals, and individuals in recovery to share their stories.
 - o **Resource Stalls:** Provide space for organisations to offer information and support.
 - o **Workshops:** Host sessions on mental health, addiction and mental health recovery, and self-care.
 - o **Entertainment:** Include live music, performances, or art exhibits that celebrate recovery.

4. Engage the Community

4.1 Marketing and Outreach

- **Social Media:** Create event pages on Facebook, Instagram, X (Twitter), and LinkedIn. Share stories, updates, and motivational content.
- **Partnerships:** Collaborate with local media outlets, recovery organisations, and community groups to promote the event.
- **Flyers and Posters:** Distribute in community centres, clinics, libraries, police stations, and recovery hubs.

4.2 Volunteer Recruitment

- **Roles:** Marshals, registration assistants, event setup/cleanup crews, and activity facilitators.
 - **Training:** Provide briefings on the event's mission, logistics, and how to support attendees.
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5. Execute the Event

5.1 Pre-Event Preparation

- **Permits and Insurance:** Ensure all necessary permits and insurance are secured.
- **Logistics:** Confirm venue setup, sound systems, and signage.
- **Communications:** Send reminders to attendees, volunteers, and partners.

5.2 On the Day

- **Registration:** Set up a welcoming registration desk for attendees.
 - **Programme Flow:** Ensure smooth transitions between activities, speeches, and the walk.
 - **Safety:** Have first aid services and security measures in place.
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6. Post-Event Follow-Up

6.1 Evaluate Success

- **Feedback:** Collect feedback from attendees, volunteers, and partners via surveys.
- **Impact Assessment:** Measure attendance, social media engagement, and funds raised.

6.2 Acknowledge Contributions

- **Thank You Notes:** Send appreciation emails or letters to sponsors, volunteers, and speakers.
- **Recognition:** Share success stories and photos on social media to celebrate the event's impact.

6.3 Plan for the Future

- **Debrief Meeting:** Discuss lessons learned and areas for improvement.
 - **Sustainability:** Develop a long-term plan to grow the Recovery Walk and expand its reach.
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7. Resources and Templates

7.1 Sample Committee Roles and Responsibilities

- **Chairperson:** Leads meetings, ensures alignment with the mission, and represents the committee externally.
- **Secretary:** Takes minutes, manages communications, and maintains records.
- **Treasurer:** Prepares budgets, tracks expenses, and manages donations.

7.2 Event Checklist

- Secure venue and permits.
- Finalise budget and funding.
- Confirm speakers and activities.
- Recruit and train volunteers (Important to be very clear on what the message is we are sharing with volunteers. What are we, what are we not).
- Promote the event through multiple channels.

7.3 Fundraising Ideas

- Crowdfunding campaigns (e.g., BackaBuddy).
 - Partner with local businesses for sponsorships.
 - Host community fundraising events (e.g., charity runs, auctions).
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8. Key Messages for Promotion

- "Recovery is possible, and we celebrate it together!"
 - "Join us to reduce stigma and raise awareness about mental health and addiction recovery."
 - "A free, inclusive, and sober event for everyone in the recovery community."
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By following this toolkit, you can establish a dedicated committee and organise a Recovery Walk that inspires, supports, and empowers individuals and communities on

their recovery journeys. Together, we can create a world where recovery is celebrated and stigma is eliminated.