

A THOM RUTLEDGE WORKSHOP

THE RECOVERY DECISION

ESTABLISHING A SOLID FOUNDATION
FOR LONG-TERM RECOVERY

This workshop is developed specifically to address the needs of clients in treatment for trauma, addictions, mood disorders and dual diagnosis. Recovery Decision creates opportunities for participants to become better consumers of mental health services in general and more focused and responsible participants in the residential setting in particular. An emphasis is placed on clients taking an active role in identifying and communicating what they want to accomplish while in treatment and in identifying and facing the inner resistance that inevitably stands between them and the changes they want to make.

Contrary to what many professionals will tell you, client resistance is not an obstacle to treatment. In fact, guiding clients to identify and face their own resistance is the objective of treatment. Resistance, in all its many forms, is manifestation of fear, in all its many forms. To be sure we are all on the same page, an important clarification: I am not talking about client resistance that is characterized by blatant denial of problems, disruption in group work and/or withdrawal to the point psychological paralysis. The content of this workshop has great potential to help clients with that level of resistance but that is not the focus of the program. The purpose of this workshop is to offer clients a new paradigm for understanding their own consciousness in the context of asking for/volunteering for growth and change. The resistance we talk about is about how clients get in their own way, potentially sabotaging success with treatment. Even highly motivated clients are surprised to discover the nature of, and the power of, their internal resistance. All of the work we do is done with the specific intention of guiding clients toward what we call "Ultimate Responsibility." And this is accomplished by identifying "Individual Resistance Strategies" and tracing those back to "Original Fear."

To the extent that something as subjective and fluid as psychotherapy can be labeled, we call our model INTRApersonal Change Process (ICP). Long before a name was assigned, the essence of ICP was (and is) the common thread that runs through all of my books and all of my workshops and professional training seminars. Over the course of any Recovery Decision Weekend, Jules and I are not only going to utilize this model in working with clients, we take it an extremely important step farther by teaching participants, in explicit and practical terms, ways for them to implement the work of ICP into their personal daily lives. Corny and well worn as the old adage is... we are committed to "teaching them to fish."

All of our work is done in the spirit of collaboration with clients. It is by way of our "ultimate respect" for clients that "Ultimate Responsibility" is possible.

I won't launch into the actual content of the workshop here, but instead say something about what Jules and I believe are reasonable expectations for you to have for clients who participate with us in Recovery Decision Weekends:

- Common language. Defining certain terms necessary for good communication between staff and client. Certain terms will be given different definitions than they are accustomed to and others will be clarified to avoid multiple meanings that we all know is a slippery slope in communication. Examples of specific terms we will clarify and/or redefine are *recovery*, *victimization*, *perfectionism*, *support* and *responsibility*. Language/vocabulary is a crucial element to effective treatment. Too often, problems arise because client and therapist are not on the same page with language. (Some time with clinical staff and CA's would be useful re: common language – but since Jules is on staff, continuity will be pretty natural.)

- Increased investment in participating in treatment planning, goal setting & evaluating outcome. This comes from our emphasis on each person accepting full responsibility for their own recovery. One very important element for success with this is introducing clients to the idea that to be undecided about what they want or don't want in terms of their recovery is a perfectly acceptable presenting problem in therapy/treatment. The alternative to this is compliant clients with little substance to their recovery.
- Increased awareness of the wisdom of looking within themselves before blaming other people or circumstances. This is accomplished by introducing clients to a specific model for understanding the nature of consciousness. It is a model that is totally compatible with the philosophy and methodology of Milestone methods. This INTRApersonal model is presented as the way to translate interpersonal problems and circumstantial problems into problem definitions that emphasize the client's ability identify his/her part of problem resolution.
- Improved ability to more specifically identify their own needs in therapy. This is a theme throughout the workshop but we address it directly with writing exercises to help clients clarify what they want from treatment, followed by helping them to establish expectations beyond what they have previously thought possible. In part, this addresses common problems with all or none thinking in regard to expectations of treatment.
- A specific way for clients to assess their own motivation, not only for recovery in general but also for specific issues that need to be addressed. This is based on a list of 5 essential components for effective motivation. Clients will at least have a basic understanding of how to make good use of this 5 component check-list by the end of the workshop.

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