



Center for African American Recovery Development

# RCO Toolkit

Resource 4.5

## **Intersectional Program Design Guide & Checklist**



## 4.5 Intersectional Program Design Guide & Checklist

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### Purpose

This guide provides a framework and checklist for designing recovery programs that affirm the full spectrum of Black identity. It helps staff, peers, and leaders ensure programs are inclusive across age, gender, sexuality, ability, and recovery pathway.

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### Why This Matters

Too often, recovery spaces replicate the same exclusions found in mainstream systems—leaving out elders, LGBTQ+ peers, disabled community members, or those using harm reduction and MAT. Black-led RCOs must go beyond “one size fits all” recovery and create spaces where **every Black person in recovery feels seen and affirmed.**

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### Core Training Topics

- **Age Inclusivity** – Recovery programming for both youth and elders.
  - **LGBTQIA2S+ Affirmation** – Ensuring queer and trans peers are fully welcomed.
  - **Disability & Neurodivergence** – Designing physically and cognitively accessible recovery spaces.
  - **Harm Reduction & MAT Integration** – Affirming non-abstinence-based pathways without stigma.
  - **Shared Leadership** – Elevating diverse voices in decision-making.
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### Essential Peer & Staff Skills

- **Inclusive Facilitation** – Welcoming every voice and identity.
  - **Accessibility Awareness** – Recognizing and addressing barriers.
  - **Intersectional Thinking** – Seeing how multiple identities shape recovery needs.
  - **Advocacy for Equity** – Using program design to challenge exclusion.
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## Practices & Activities

### 1. Program Audit (20 minutes)

- **Setup:** Select one of your existing programs.
- **Instructions:** Ask: *Does this program affirm elders? Youth? LGBTQ+ peers? Disabled peers? MAT users?*
- **Debrief:** Identify one gap and one action step to close it.

### 2. Scenario Role-Play: MAT Stigma (20 minutes)

- **Setup:** A peer shares that they are on medication-assisted treatment and feel judged.
- **Instructions:** In pairs, practice supportive, affirming responses.
- **Debrief:** Ask: *How can peers and staff reinforce inclusion in real time?*

### 3. Accessibility Walkthrough (15 minutes)

- **Setup:** Imagine entering your RCO as an elder with mobility challenges or a neurodivergent peer.
- **Instructions:** In small groups, list what would make participation harder—and what changes could make it easier.
- **Debrief:** Ask: *What's one adjustment you could make tomorrow to improve access?*

### 4. Intersectionality Mapping (25 minutes)

- **Setup:** Provide worksheets with identity factors (age, gender, sexuality, faith, ability, socioeconomic status).
  - **Instructions:** Groups discuss: *How do these intersect for Black peers in recovery?*
  - **Debrief:** Ask: *Which intersections are often overlooked in our programs?*
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## Quick Checklist

- ✓ Elders and youth are welcomed with tailored supports
- ✓ LGBTQIA2S+ peers feel safe, affirmed, and visible in programs
- ✓ Recovery spaces are physically and cognitively accessible
- ✓ MAT and harm reduction pathways are integrated without stigma
- ✓ Diverse voices shape leadership and decision-making
- ✓ Programs are reviewed regularly for intersectional inclusion