

7 Keys for a Healthy Celebrate Recovery Ministry

Overview

- Historical Context: Celebrate Recovery has survived and been blessed for almost 35 years, with these seven keys in place from the very start
- Purpose: The seven keys help Celebrate Recovery programs not only grow but maintain safety and health
- "These seven keys once in place in your celebratory recovery can only help your celebratory recovery grow, but will help you keep your CR safe."

Key 1: Leadership Training

Foundation Concepts

- Four Leadership Development Concepts: Planning, Teaching, Sharing, and Fellowship
- These form the very foundation of effective Celebrate Recovery leadership
- Core principle: "once you stop learning, you stop leading"

Implementation Strategy

- Monthly Leadership Meetings: These meetings implement all four concepts to discuss recovery issues and leadership dynamics

Planning Component

- Involves discussion of two lessons from the Leaders Guide for the current month
- Ensures consistent curriculum focus and progress tracking

Teaching Component

- Advanced Leadership Training Kit is used to train leaders
 - Content includes:
 - How to write your testimony
 - How's Your Serenity
 - The Lord's Prayer
 - Group dynamics management
 - Suicide contemplation protocols and responses
- "Equipping our leaders through teaching is vital to ensuring the success of your sober recovery."

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Sharing Component

- Leaders break into small groups to share their own recovery journeys
- "I wish I could tell you that once you become a leader in sovereign recovery, you will not have any more struggles or problems. But the truth is, you'll probably have more challenges."
- Key Insight: "It's in our weakness that God's power is perfected."

Fellowship Component

- Table Fellowship Importance: Sharing meals creates a uniquely human and powerful bonding experience
- "There's just something special about leaders sitting around a table sharing a meal."
- Elements of table fellowship:
 - Meals are shared
 - Stories are told
 - Sins are confessed
 - Laughter and tears are shared
 - Members remember where they came from and envision God's direction
- "Sharing around a table is one of the most uniquely human things that we do. No other creature sits around a table to eat his food."
- Food serves for more than sustenance; it enables fellowship

Key 2: Senior Pastor Support

Significance

- Makes Recovery Acceptable: Pastor support signals that recovery is for everyone, not just "those people" with "real problems"
- "If you want your recovery program to be respected and supported by the church as a whole, it needs to be and act as a regular ministry of the church, not as something separate"

Church Integration

- Recovery should be a regular ministry, not a separate entity
- Signals authenticity and transparency as foundational church values

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Cultural Impact

- Church DNA: "No perfect people allowed" becomes part of the church identity
- "It's part of our DNA. It's at the very core of who our church is."
- Creates psychological safety: > "If our church is not a place where members can come and openly share their feelings, their pain, and their struggles with one another, then where else are they going to do it?"

Pastoral Perspective Example

- Pastors recognize spiritual fruit: > "Jesus said you can tell a tree by its fruit. And I see more fruit coming from Celebrate Recovery ministry in our church."

Key 3: Fellowship Time/Fellowship Events

Purpose

- Provides safe community space for people seeking fellowship
- Helps members develop healthy relationships
- Primary Goal: Builds support networks of sponsors and accountability partners

Event Design Principles

- "The very main focus of every fellowship event should be designed to help members develop healthy relationships."
- Fellowship serves as bridge between isolation and community
- Outreach Function: "isn't just a strategy for your own members. It's an outreach opportunity to connect with the unchurched in their community."

Historical Context

- Early conversions (Ethiopian eunuch, Saul, Cornelius, Lydia, the jailer) all involved one-on-one sharing of hope
- "every conversion was about sitting down with someone who was lost and sharing the hope that was available to them"

Modern Application

- Church functions as "a place where people can share their life's struggles"
- Provides "God's answer" to personal challenges

Key 4: Group Structure and Dynamics

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Group Type Evolution

- Traditional Approach: Started with chemical dependent group and codependent group (still valid)
- Expanded Approach: A-to-Z groups, Hurts-Hang-ups-Habits groups, and life systems groups actually increase participation
- Specialized Groups (when large participation warrants):
 - Chemical dependency groups (if many participants)
 - Anger groups (if widespread issue)
 - Sexual addiction/Sexual integrity groups (if high need area)

Group Size Management

- **Critical Principle:** "don't allow your groups to get too large"
- Threshold for New Groups: > "when they start getting so big that you don't have enough time for everybody to share in that one-hour allotted space, it's time to start a new group."
- Each person needs adequate time to share within the one-hour format

Core Principle of Mixed Groups

- "we all deal with the same core shortcomings and character defects that can be addressed in a mixed-issue group."
- Allows universal human experience to bind the group

Primary Goal

- "Our main goal is to build healthy, small groups that encourage and support people"

Key 5: Curriculum and Materials

Integrated Material System

- Provides complete lessons for a full year
- All materials work together for continuity
- "So the material all works together, so there is a continuity"

Components

1. Leader's Guide and Participant's Guides: Step study material

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2. Celebrate Recovery Bible: Shows biblical leaders in recovery, demonstrating that leaders throughout Scripture dealt with their own recovery issues
3. Scripture Support: Every lesson includes scripture supporting the particular principle or step

Purpose

- "It keeps us focused on the recovery principle at hand and gives us a good sense of progress and assurance as we move through these steps and principles."

Accessibility

- Materials available through Celebrate Recovery website
- More expanded training available online

Key 6: Gateway to Christ-Centered Recovery

Role of Celebrate Recovery

- Not the source of salvation, happiness, or hope
- "Celebrate Recovery is not the source of our salvation or happiness or hope, but it is the best resource I've ever seen to introduce people to the source, Jesus Christ."

Outreach Advantage

- "In my experience, it's much easier to get someone to come [to Celebrate Recovery] than it is Sunday morning church."
- Serves as entry point for unchurched people
- Focuses on authenticity and transparency rather than judgment

Integration with Church

- "If you're going to a church that is pointing you to Jesus, that's exactly where you need to stay plugged in."
- For newcomers to authenticity/transparency without a church home, Celebrate Recovery points them to Christ

Key 7: Worship

Centrality and Distinction

- Central Part of Celebrate Recovery experience

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- "Worship is a central part of Celebrate Recovery. It's also a major difference between Christ-centered and secular recovery programs."

Purpose and Function

- "Worship gives everyone an opportunity to put aside just the busyness and the hassles of the world."
- Described as a "mini vacation" - a place to step outside worldly worries
- Enables connection with "higher power, Jesus Christ" and the community

Transformational Power

- Personal testimony: By the end of first worship song, peace comes; by fourth song, hands lifted in praise
- "You never know what baggage people are walking into your celebrate recovery with. Worship is a great place for them to leave that baggage behind."

Importance for All Churches

- "Whether you are in a small or large church, a God-exalting worship experience is vital to the health of your ministry."

Speaker Background and Context

Presenter

- Name: Mack
- Personal Story: Brought to the Church of Jesus Christ through struggle with drugs and alcohol
- Role: Believer and follower of Jesus Christ sharing about Celebrate Recovery
- Motivation: Video created to help those considering opening a Celebrate Recovery program in their church/community

Target Audience

- Church leaders considering starting Celebrate Recovery
- People wanting to help those struggling with "hang ups or habits"
- Those seeking to reach beyond the church into the community

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