



Pacific Southwest

RURAL OPIOID TECHNICAL

ASSISTANCE REGIONAL CENTER

Food Smarts for Recovery

Motivating Health Change Through
Trauma-Informed Messaging



Presenters

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Session Objectives

1. Link the Self-Determination Theory & the Recovery Capital Framework to Nutrition Education Opportunities
2. Understand novel ways to develop recovery messages
3. Analyze examples of nutrition curriculum tailored for recovery populations



Guiding Question

How can nutrition education be responsive to the mindset of individuals in substance use recovery?



Critical Context for Recovery-Specific Nutrition Education



SAMHSA's WORKING DEFINITION OF RECOVERY



10 GUIDING PRINCIPLES
OF RECOVERY

“A process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential.”



Recovery Capital Support the Process



How do nutrition and food security
support the four dimensions of Recovery
Capital?



Words that Work

Messaging for Sustainable, Self-Driven
Change



Self-Determination Theory

- “Self-directed life”
- Emphasizes self-mobilization - encouraging individuals to take proactive steps toward recovery, despite emotional and psychological challenges
- Combining motivation + recovery capital domains
- How do nutrition decisions support self-mobilization?



Regulation and Coping



SUD and Food Choices
can both be seen as
Coping Mechanisms



Mental Climate of SUD

Substance Use
Short-term Rewards
Immediate Relief

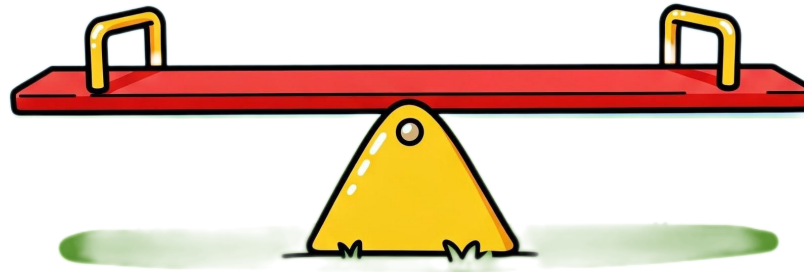


Lack of Consistent and
Sustainable Regulation
Strategies



What's Needed for Balance?

Re-engagement
Self-Mobilization
Self-regulation
(even in the face of
stress/distress)



Recovery Capital:
Health
Home
Purpose
Community

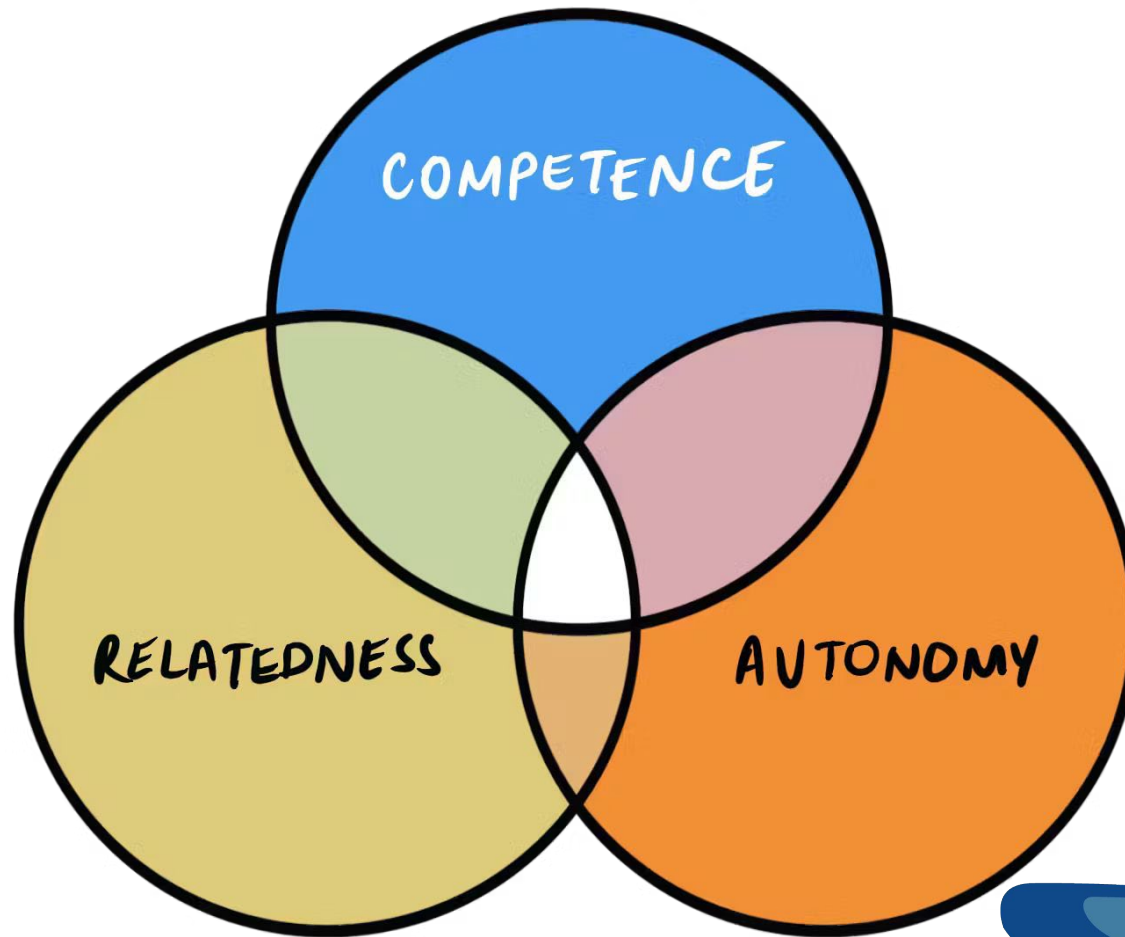


Motivation and Meaning

- Extrinsic motivation
- Intrinsic motivation
- Example of intrinsic motivation in your life?
- How does meaning influence motivation?
- How can messaging support intrinsic motivation?



Self-Determination Theory (cont.)



How Do We Incorporate Supportive Messaging?

Offer choices rather than demands



Supports autonomy
(feeling in control)

Encourage growth in area just slightly out of reach



Builds competence
(feeling capable)

Create connections to personal experiences, shared struggle, and peer support



Supports relatedness
(feeling connected)



Nourishing Recovery Through Supportive Messaging

Key Takeaways:

- Recovery is about rebuilding health, meaning, and connection.
- Nutrition can support the healing brain, spark intrinsic motivation, and foster self-care.
- Trauma-informed, recovery-responsive messaging helps meet people where they are—building trust, agency, and hope.
- When we align nutrition education with human needs for autonomy, competence, and connection, we create the conditions for real, lasting change.

