

“Text4Recovery has surpassed what we hoped it would be,” said Allison Garriss, program director of [RECOVERe: Technology Support for Substance Abuse Treatment and Recovery \(link is external\)](#) in Northampton, Massachusetts (a grantee of the Technology-Assisted Care program). “Anytime you’re doing work like this, you hope that you’ll have an impact, but we never imagined we would impact folks at this level.”

“The Text4Recovery concept is simple,” explained Allison: “Every day we send out a message rooted in the spirit of motivational interviewing. It might be a quote or a lyric from staff or from clients.” She adds, “It’s a moment to pause and realize that what you’re doing is good and you’re moving in a positive direction.”

Each day, Text4Recovery now sends messages to as many as 300 clients in addition to providers, partner agencies, and other community members. Allison explains that messages are not meant only for those in substance abuse treatment or recovery. “We don’t directly reference substances or addiction,” she said. “We don’t know where folks are when they’re receiving these messages and it might be a trigger. Our messages can be taken and used in any aspect of your life—they’re meant to be life support.”

Text messaging is just one of the services offered by RECOVERe, which is a program of Clinical and Support Options, Inc. (CSO), a mental health service provider for western Massachusetts residents. CSO RECOVERe seeks to geographically expand aftercare options through technical supports that also include i2i Video Conferencing for clients in rural areas, and ChangeAgent, an interactive Internet Web portal that connects clients to both helpful information and electronic health records.

Allison looks forward to sharing Text4Recovery’s success with others. She explains, “The more we connect with people, the more we’ll be able to expand. We’re really meeting clients where they... [are], which is what we all strive to do.” She hopes that others can learn from their stumbles along the way, such as bandwidth restrictions, funding challenges, and limited client access to mobile devices. And she has plenty of advice to offer: “I would definitely tell you to use the technology you have in hand. If you can save that money, it makes a difference.”

On the day after the Boston Marathon bombing, Allison shared the message that Text4Recovery sent to its several hundred subscribers: “No matter how dark the moment, love and hope are always possible.” She remembers several responses to the message that said, “Thank you. That’s exactly what I needed to hear today.”