



SMART Recovery Meeting Fidelity Framework

SMART Recovery is an international model currently operating in over 30 countries worldwide. For participants, the experience of attending a SMART meeting should be consistent, no matter the country, culture, or community they attend in. It is vital that we all work together to keep key aspects of the SMART program predictable and safe, creating an environment where participants feel secure to make lasting changes in their lives.

This Traffic Light Framework aims to help guide facilitators and member organisations to understand which parts of the program must remain consistent, which require consultation before any changes, and which offer flexibility. Think of it as a guide to balancing fidelity and local adaptability.

Red, Amber & Green Light Decisions >





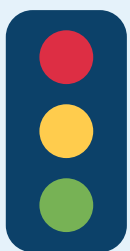
Practical Analogy The McDonald's Example

Imagine visiting McDonald's in Sydney, London, New York, or Tokyo. Regardless of location, the Big Mac sauce tastes the same, the golden arches look the same, and the brand feels familiar and trustworthy (although it may not be as healthy as it should). This consistency creates comfort and safety for customers.

Similarly, SMART Recovery's brand and core program elements must remain consistent worldwide to provide participants with a familiar, reliable, and safe experience. However, just as McDonald's may adapt uniforms, menus, or promotions to local preferences after consultation, SMART Recovery allows for appropriate adaptations and daily operational decisions by facilitators.

This balance of fidelity and flexibility is key to delivering a globally effective, locally relevant program.

In Summary



RED represents non-negotiable principles safeguarding program integrity and participant safety.

AMBER requires consultation to innovate or adapt responsibly.

GREEN provides facilitators with flexibility to respond to local needs and improve participant engagement.

This framework supports facilitators and member organisations to deliver SMART Recovery consistently and safely, while encouraging thoughtful adaptation where appropriate.

Together, we maintain a trusted global program that helps people make meaningful, lasting changes.

Thank you for being an essential part of the SMART Recovery community.

Red: Core Principles

Key areas to keep consistent

These are non-negotiable elements that ensure the SMART Recovery program remains true to its evidence-based roots, maintaining safety and trust for all participants. They are applied in every meeting, everywhere.

-  Meetings must be free
-  Facilitate according to the [SMART Recovery Vision](#), [Mission Statement](#), and [Facilitator Code of Conduct](#).
-  Follow the SMART Recovery Meeting Guidelines and the 4-Point Innovation programs such as YARN, Inside Out Program structure.
-  Keep meetings safe, confidential, respectful, and non-judgemental.
-  Use only SMART-approved branding and promotional materials.
-  Limit facilitator self-disclosure to relevant and safe sharing.
-  Online meetings must use SMART-approved platforms.
-  Meetings must be registered with SMART Recovery Australia.
-  Facilitators must have completed accredited training with SMART Recovery.

Amber: Consultation Required (Changes Only With Approval)

These areas can be adapted but only after consultation and approval from SMART Recovery Australia and the Research Advisory Committee (RAC) to maintain program integrity.

-  Introducing new research-based tools or exercises to the program.
-  Adapting the program to specific cohorts, such as young people, Indigenous communities, CALD communities or LGBTIQ+ groups, Men, Women etc.
-  Limiting attendance for safety or effectiveness reasons such as women-only groups, or when meetings grow too large and we need to cap numbers to keep the group effective
-  Co-branding or marketing initiatives involving SMART materials alongside partner branding.
-  Adjustments to delivery that require cultural adaptations.
-  Adaptation of tools and introduction of new tools as a framework

Green: Facilitator Flexibility (Operational Decisions)

Facilitators may exercise discretion in these areas to suit local community needs without formal consultation, so long as core principles remain intact.

-  Selecting meeting venues, days, times, and durations (e.g., reducing meetings to 60 minutes for youth).
-  Facilitator style and personal approach within SMART Recovery guidelines.
-  Use of whiteboards, worksheets, and other materials to support engagement, avoiding 'expert' roles.
-  Providing refreshments and breaks during meetings.
-  Choosing to facilitate with or without a co-facilitator (co-facilitation encouraged but optional).
-  Collecting participant data internally for attendance and enrollment, respecting privacy.
-  Referring participants to other support services post-meeting.