



### **Opening the Conversation**

- Introduce yourself and your connection to the world of recovery. Consider if you want to share your story.
- Introduce NAADAC – the association representing over 100,000 professionals working in the field of addiction and recovery around the world.
- Introduce VAAP – the Virginia Association of Addiction Professionals representing over 400 addiction and recovery professionals in the Commonwealth and approximately 30 Community Partners (businesses and treatment providers). ***This community is in the best position to understand addiction and recovery and uniquely positioned to advise individuals, families, citizens, lawmakers . . . on the best ways to deal with these issues.***
- Introduce the concept that recovery (building recovery capital) is a bedrock principle for helping individuals who are dealing with addiction to become responsible and productive citizens of the Commonwealth – an outcome that is beneficial to all of Virginia’s citizens!

***"Creating a healthy, productive, responsible citizenry and society makes all Virginians safer, richer, happier. Building recovery capital – housing, jobs, harm reduction, treatment - means less crime, reduced strain on law enforcement and hospitals and emergency clinics; fewer tax dollars needed for policing and incarceration; more tax dollars coming in from a healthy, working, citizenry. Transforming people suffering with addiction into healthy, productive, tax paying citizens is good for all of Virginia!"***

While there are many ways to build recovery capital, we are focused on 2 topics at this point as ways to help those in recovery stay healthy and productive:

- Safe housing – Recovery Residences: specifically providing Virginians with a sound Recovery Residence certification process so recovering Virginians seeking a safe home can find one.
- Jobs - knocking down barrier crimes roadblocks that prevent recovering Virginians from finding good jobs and becoming contributing citizens rather than being locked out of the mainstream workforce.

One of the most powerful ways to drive home your point is to relate a concept to a real-life story or event. Do you have a story that highlights how lack of oversight impacted someone in a recovery residence? Do you know about someone who has been impacted by a barrier crime? Do you have a story that demonstrates how barrier crimes have hurt recruiting efforts at DBHDS and in turn made services less available to the community? You can use those stories to breathe life and a sense of urgency into your discussions.