

NOTE TO SELF



Self-tracking tools can be invaluable for both clients and peer mentors, say **Gearóid Carey and Mark Hughes**

GEARÓID AND SELF-TRACKING

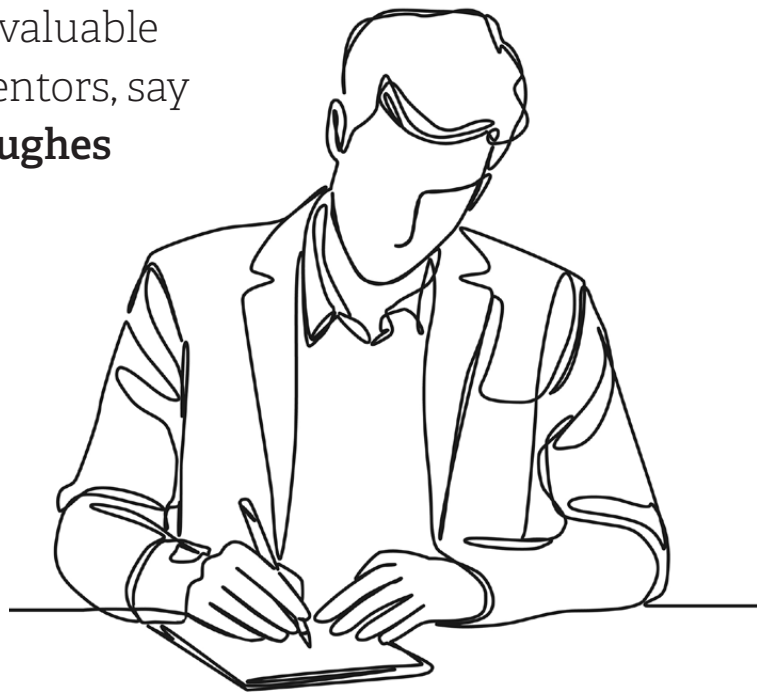
When I started my master's degree in counselling in 2005, I was introduced to routine outcome monitoring. This involves using valid and reliable assessment instruments to track a client's progress. Good examples of these tools include the Outcome Questionnaire (QC) and the Outcome Rating Scale (ORS).

These tools allowed me to collaboratively review each client's progress on a weekly basis. If a client was at risk of a poor outcome – such as dependency or deterioration – this process helped us identify it early in treatment and explore ways to adjust our approach. The goal of routine outcome monitoring is to support a successful outcome,

meaning the client feels better and functions more effectively week by week as they recover from a distressing and difficult time in their life.

In 2014, I began developing tools for people to use independently of therapy to monitor their progress. I called these self-tracking tools (*DDN*, June 2024, page 18). They are based on the same psychometric principles as professional assessments, measuring aspects like social role function, intrapersonal distress, and interpersonal distress. Many people have found these tools invaluable in their recovery journey.

Self-tracking peer mentors use these tools to empower their mentees, facilitating them to reflect on and discuss their progress. This collaboration between mentor and mentee fosters new insights and action



plans for continued growth while also preventing common pitfalls—either getting worse (deterioration) or getting stuck (dependency).

Last year, I asked a self-tracking peer mentor – someone I deeply respect for his pioneering

spirit, and who has supported many of my clients – to share his experience. Here it is.

Gearóid Carey is a Delphi DARS recovery practitioner at HMP Manchester, the author of Recovery Made Simple – Why Suffer? and the founder of 2-Step Recovery.

MARK'S EXPERIENCE

My name is Mark, and I've been a recovery peer with the Delphi drug and alcohol recovery service in my community for the past year and a half. My role offers many types of support to service users who are at different stages of their recovery. What works for one may not work for all.

One of the best tools is self-tracking. To explain, I have been working with one lad called Dave for nearly a year now. We started with weekly self-tracking where we were able to fine tune and see what

kinds of things were working well for him and what areas needed to be improved.

Dave had been very withdrawn, not working, and struggling with day-to-day things like routine and structure, difficulties with staying abstinent, and the impact that all of these things had on his mental health. Over the course of the last year, however, he has made massive improvements.

After a few months of working with him, we moved on to the monthly self-tracking sheet. During this time, Dave has remained focused and has engaged well with self-tracking. He now has a full-time employment – he is

a cleaner, and has completed biohazard training. He has become more confident and looks so much better.

Self-tracking has been a great tool for Dave. It's not a cure – it's quite simply a great way to look back and reflect. I've found that for some service users it's been a great tool to open up dialogue, especially when they might be finding it difficult to say what's on their mind. I also use a self-tracking tool to monitor my wellbeing in my role as a recovery peer, which is really very helpful – especially during the busier weeks.

Given the benefits I have observed from a mentor's

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perspective, I fully recommend self-tracking. It's an adaptable tool that can be used in many different environments.