

Your Recovery Workbook:
Finding Your Way to
Manage Addiction

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YOUR RECOVERY WORKBOOK: FINDING YOUR WAY TO MANAGE ADDICTION

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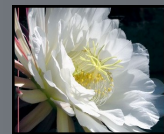
Your Recovery Workbook: Finding Your Way to Manage Addiction

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With thanks to Eve Watson for providing excellent resources for the Drama Triangle pages.

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A Recovery Story: A young man drank alcohol several times a day. He was not able to do well at his job, and was irritable and moody. He liked to “numb” his problems with drinking. He did not eat or sleep much and had unhealthy relationships. Sometimes he didn’t remember how he got home or what he had done. Even though he didn’t believe that he could live without drinking alcohol, he agreed to go to counseling when his boss insisted. He learned more about addiction and how to recover from it. Mood swings and anxiety were safely managed with support from his family and healthcare team. He realized, “My worst sober day is better than my best day drunk. My life will be different, but it can be good.” He was grateful to have avoided more serious problems. He accepted the need to **care for himself**, instead of expecting other people to make sure he followed the treatment plan. Then, he was able to recover with only a few “bumps in the road” as he learned to manage his illness.



1. INTRODUCTION

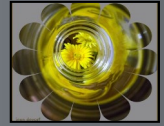


- We want you to be in charge of your life and to be the manager of your health. Don't let addictions control you while seeming to comfort you. They can destroy your life and health.
- You are a unique person with a strong mind, body, and spirit. Your vision for the future should express who you are, based on your strengths and experiences.
- This workbook explores Recovery Steps, a framework to help you move toward hope, problem-solving, empowerment, healthy relationships, and coping as you learn to manage an addiction.
- The alcohol addiction stories are fictional. The steps to recovery would be similar for any serious addiction or illness, but treatments wouldn't be the same.
- See how family drama can affect your health and healing. Avoid thinking of yourself as a victim.
- Think about your own situation and needs. Prepare for a journey of healing and change.
- Take an active role that includes setting goals, planning ahead, learning about your illness, and using a variety of treatments for a healthy recovery.
- Use coping skills along with other treatments. As you learn to relax, your mind and body can be healthier.
- Talk to your doctor, provider, or healthcare team about any questions you have.

***" EVERY DEFEAT, EVERY HEARTBREAK, EVERY LOSS,
CONTAINS ITS OWN SEED, ITS OWN LESSON ON HOW
TO IMPROVE YOUR PERFORMANCE THE NEXT TIME."***

- OG MANDINO

ACCEPT IF YOU HAVE AN ILLNESS



Although stigma still exists, society has become more accepting and understanding of psychiatric illness and addiction in recent years. To help cope with stigma, you can:

Remember that you have choices - You can decide who to tell about your illness and what to tell them.

Remember that you are not alone – Many others cope with situations like yours. People struggle with depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and many other psychiatric illnesses, but there is support available.

Be hopeful and remember that there are effective treatments. Medications and other treatments are available. New treatments are being developed and researched. Most people can lead fulfilling, productive lives.

Be proud of yourself for seeking help – It can be very hard to ask for help, and frustrating if it takes a long time to show positive results. You can learn new ways of coping, and develop a positive, more empowered attitude.

Be active and keep supportive people around you – Withdrawing or isolating from others can be a negative effect from stigma that puts you at risk for depression. Pursue positive activities or hobbies and try new social activities. Consider being a volunteer in your community.

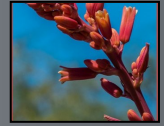
National Consortium on Stigma and Empowerment and Patrick Corrigan gave permission to share the Coming Out Proud Manual (2013). It was revised and renamed to **Honest, open, proud: To eliminate the stigma of mental illness.**

The Honest, Open, Proud Workbook is recommended for you to read:

Corrigan, P. W., Nieweglowski, K., Buchholz, B. A. & Al-Khouja, M. A. (2015). Retrieved from http://comingoutproudprogram.org/images/Honest_Open_Proud_WorkbookBooster_FINAL_2.9.2016.compressed.pdf

Addiction can start with bingeing and compulsions, or it can be something that happens quickly with use. Although this workbook has stories of alcoholism, addiction can involve a wide variety of behaviors.

UNDERSTAND ADDICTION



What is **binging**? Intense, uncontrolled, but short times with “too much” which includes, but is not limited to, the following. (*Mark the behaviors you have had*)

Overeating	Binge drinking (using alcohol)	Smoking or using tobacco
Taking illegal or recreational drugs	Depending on relationships or having too much sex	Too much shopping or gambling
Working too much	Doing too much exercise	Other:

What are **compulsions**? “Driven behaviors” that usually come from desires and motives that you are not fully aware of

- Strong, “hard to tame or control ” actions or behaviors that can be predicted.
- Binging behaviors that you have very strong urges to do and are hard to stop.

Having binging and compulsions:

- Can interfere with your recovery. Treatment is often avoided but could be helpful.
- Are usually done in secret so other people don’t see the problem.
- Have a lot of influence in your life and lifestyle.

What is an **addiction**? A set of habits and behaviors that have control over you

- A habit that is powerful enough to change the course of your life.
- Behaviors that seem needed and can affect the meaning or purpose of your life.
- A lifestyle choice (good or bad) that affects your health and welfare.
 - A **healthy** addiction includes eating right and having balanced meals, or sticking to habits that help maintain and monitor your health
 - A **healthy** compulsion is something used to reduce the stress in your life, or to live a recovered lifestyle, like relaxation skills or attending support groups frequently.
 - **Unhealthy** addictions can include alcohol or other drug abuse, or the other binging behaviors listed above as they become hard to control.

With negative emotions or trauma, people may use addictions to dull their feelings.

3. EXPLORE ADDICTION



Do you have or know anyone with these signs of addiction?

- ☐ Tolerance and increased use over time
- ☐ Withdrawal symptoms when not using
- ☐ Problems controlling use or behavior, or unable to stop
- ☐ Negative cost to mood, self-esteem, health, school, job, and relationships
- ☐ Lots of time, thought, or emotional energy to get, use, hide, plan, or recover from the behavior
- ☐ Stopping or avoiding social relationships and activities

Modified from Focus Adolescent Services website at <http://www.focusas.com/Help-Your-Addicted-Teen.html>

Which of these behaviors do you have? *(Fill in the table below)*

Behaviors	My Behaviors
Binge Behaviors	
Compulsive Behaviors	
Healthy Addictions	
Unhealthy Addictions	

Why is it important to accept addictions? What affect do they have on your health?

- Your relationship and family can be strained by addictions.
- If you are aware of an addiction, you can seek the right kind of help.
- You can start problem solving and changing habits for recovery.
- Addictions can affect both your physical and mental health

**“THE FIRST STEP TO GETTING SOMEWHERE IS
TO DECIDE THAT YOU ARE NOT GOING TO
STAY THE WAY YOU ARE.” - UNKNOWN**

2. UNDERSTAND WHAT RECOVERY IS



What is recovery? *(Mark the statements below that you agree with)*

- ☐ A journey of healing and change toward a meaningful life
- ☐ Striving to achieve your full potential
- ☐ Using community resources and finding a treatment plan that works for you
- ☐ When your illness or addiction stops getting in the way of your life
- ☐ What does recovery mean to you? _____

Do you believe that recovery is possible for you? Why or why not? _____

Do people on your healthcare team believe that your recovery is possible? _____

Do friends or family members believe your recovery is possible? Why or why not? _____

Who has the biggest impact on whether or not your recovery is possible? _____

Sometimes, health problems are not from treatment that doesn't work. A lack of improvement can be from other reasons. *(Mark the ones that may apply to you)*

- ☐ Believing that your illness or addiction can't be managed
- ☐ Not following your treatment plan
- ☐ A natural change in your illness
- ☐ Not understanding your medicines and how to use them
- ☐ Expecting an unrealistic amount of improvement in a short time
- ☐ Not telling your healthcare team your situation
- ☐ Not being aware of or attending to your own needs, mood and morale
- ☐ Not dealing with trauma that affects your life

You need healthcare, support and guidance. Your treatment may need to be changed.

OUR GREATEST WEAKNESS LIES IN GIVING UP. THE
MOST CERTAIN WAY TO SUCCEED IS ALWAYS TO TRY
JUST ONE MORE TIME. - THOMAS EDISON

4. MOVE TOWARD EMPOWERMENT



- Hope and healing are precious and hard to describe. They can lead to feeling more in control over what happens to you.
- Along with empowerment comes being responsible for self-care, managing your health, and being more independent.
- If you feel a lack of control, helplessness, or dependency because of an addiction or illness, it may feel like you are treated “like a child” by the healthcare system.
- In the past, this was accepted, but things are changing as people become more aware and empowered.
- Educate your family and friends. **Let them** be as involved as you want them to be.
- If you are trying to manage an addiction or illness, but it worsens, that doesn’t mean you are a failure.
- Be kind to yourself and try again to manage your addiction or illness.

Even unsuccessful efforts to change open up chances to explore other issues/barriers in your life. Many barriers are able to be changed, but **only by you**.

Turning “wanting to do something” into “doing something” boosts your self-confidence and hope.

Once change starts, the process is renewed and you begin to regain control.

Wallbridge, H.R., Furer, P. & Lionberg, C. (2008). Behavioral activation and rehabilitation. *Journal of Psychosocial Nursing*, 46(3), 36-44.

You are not your addiction. It is not your identity. It’s only a small part of you.

Work on making healthy lifestyle choices (*Circle ways you want to improve your health*):

Sleep better/Eat healthier	Exercise more	Avoid alcohol and drugs
Safe driving & activities	Control behavior/emotions	Other: _____

Talk to your healthcare team about your situation and needs. Don’t stop taking your medicine or therapy unless your provider is aware and is guiding the changes.

“FORGET PAST MISTAKES. FORGET FAILURES. FORGET ABOUT EVERYTHING EXCEPT WHAT YOU’RE GOING TO DO NOW—AND DO IT.” ~ WILLIAM DURANT

5. EXPLORE A DRAMA TRIANGLE

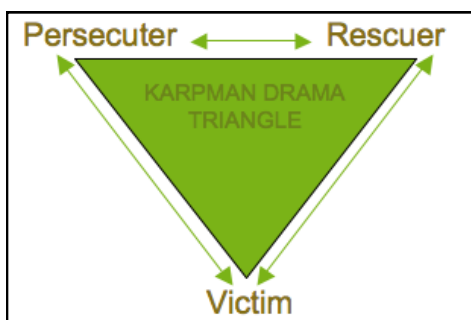


Empowerment and communication can be improved if we recognize when there is a “drama triangle” going on around us, fueling conflict. When we see it, we can respond openly and honestly in a way that empowers instead of rescues.

- In a drama triangle (Karpman Triangle) there is a victim, persecutor, and rescuer.
- The victim fails to take responsibility for himself/herself or keep commitments.
- The rescuer says “You can’t do it. So, I will do it for you.” But, it is not as healthy to be responsible “for” others as it is to be responsible “to” others. This means keeping our commitments, telling the truth, and taking care of ourselves.
- When we try to take over or control someone else’s life, it can be an insult to them. It can enable them to not be realistic about what needs to be done.
- When the person who is ill sees someone as a persecutor (always telling them what to do), that person eventually ends up as a “victim” in the family dynamics.
- The rescuer may also begin to feel like a victim when these unhealthy relationships cause drama.
- It is healthy to express support saying, “I trust that you can figure things out for yourself.” Or, offer to discuss options with them. Ask, “What do you need from me?” and choose to say, “Yes”, or “No. I’m sorry. That’s not my responsibility.”

Forrest, L. (2011). *Guiding principles for life beyond victim consciousness*. Conscious Living Media.

See **The Three Faces of Victim — An Overview of the Drama Triangle** and introduction videos at <http://www.lynnforrest.com/articles/2008/06/the-faces-of-victim/>



By Steven B. Karpman, M.D. - <http://www.karpmandramatriangle.com/pdf/DramaTriangle.pdf>

A DRAMA STORY



- A young man with alcoholism lived near his parents. He had mood swings with anger, anxiety, and guilt. He was at risk of losing more weight, neglecting his health, and going back to drinking when having problems or anxiety.
- After discharge from detox, he didn't want to go to see his counselor and healthcare provider. He saw himself as the victim of alcoholism. He felt out of control and powerless. He went to his parents' house and sat on their couch when he was feeling sad and hopeless.
- His mother (the rescuer) said "I will take care of it for you." She checked on him and did his housework. She brought food that he wanted from the store (mostly soda pop and cookies). The mother didn't like bringing unhealthy food and drinks, but she did it anyway, so her son would at least eat something. She was tired of taking care of both households and was neglecting herself.
- His father (the persecutor) thought, "You can't manage it." He sat his son down at the table to eat and take pills when he was supposed to. The son felt insulted and resentful. The father felt more like he was being mean instead of showing that he cared, but he felt responsible to do this for his son.
- **They all became "victims" because of these unhealthy family relationships.**
- His parents decided to express support saying, "I want you to come up with a plan to keep yourself healthy. Get your healthcare team involved. Then, you can have a fresh start with the right treatment and set your own recovery goals."
- "Your life and health is your responsibility. **You can do more for yourself than we can do for you.** Tell us what you need from us, and we will help if we can."
- "You can handle your life how you want to. But, we want you to be healthy. We decided to only bring you healthy food if we bring groceries. And, we won't be coming over as often as we have been. We all need to set our boundaries."
- The people who care about you may feel like they need to choose between enabling you to keep destroying your life and health, to give up trying to help you, or to take charge and make you do the right things. None are good choices.

TRIANGLE OF HEALTH AND WELLBEING



Instead of staying in the drama triangle, the responses below can bring inner peace:

The victim is transformed into an observer

- Witnesses life as it happens without judging or blaming
- Accepts personal responsibility for what he/she feels, thinks, and does
- Lives in the moment rather than in the past or future
- Understands that what happens helps him/her learn
- Avoids being defensive or negative toward self or others
- Practices gratitude, thinking of things to be grateful for

The persecutor is transformed to an asserter (standing up for himself/herself)

- Is self-accepting, grounded in reality, and can risk admitting when wrong
- Doesn't take quick offense— responds with calm, clear, and loving firmness
- Expects peace and sanity while having positive thoughts
- Is sensitive, respectful, tactful, and assertive while not being afraid to tell the truth
- Knows his/her boundaries and respects the limits that other people have

The rescuer is transformed to a nurturer

- Focuses on taking care of himself/herself before taking care of others
- Respects the ability of others to seek their own goals (even if they don't approve)
- Allows them to accept the results of their own actions and behaviors
- Develops clear boundaries and detaches themselves in a healthy way, then trusting what happens
- Is honest with himself/herself, knowing their own agendas, motives, and beliefs

Forrest, L. (2011). *Guiding principles for life beyond victim consciousness*. Conscious Living Media. In unpublished handout prepared by Eve Watson.

When people encourage you to **be responsible for yourself**, it is healthier for you and for your whole family. It truly shows that they care about you and want to help you get out of the drama triangle. They may be as frustrated as you are.

People can give you support, but they can't make you healthy and responsible.

Your health and recovery depends on YOU and YOUR actions. Start by thinking about what is important to you. Then, set some reasonable goals.

6. SET GOALS



Long-term goals for the man in the story could be to keep his job, feel less anxiety, and avoid being in the hospital. By eating a variety of foods in a balanced diet, he could meet a short-term goal of staying at a healthy weight and fueling his body. He set some specific goals with the help of his healthcare team.

- To choose healthier foods and eat meals, snacks, and supplements regularly.
- To add more physical and social activity without people he used to drink with.
- To cope with anxiety by using essential oils and grounding or relaxation skills.
- To call his counselor or sponsor whenever he had more anxiety or stronger urges for drinking (so he would have enough support to fight cravings).
- To manage mood swings and anger to keep his relationships healthier.
- To stop drinking alcohol, keeping his liver healthy so his medicines work well.
- To take care of himself so he could do important things now and in the future.

What do you want for your future? What do you care about? Where do you want to be in life?

Share your goals and values with your healthcare provider, counselor or sponsor.

Break up long-term goals into small steps.

Write one of your goals here: _____

When do you want it done? _____

Write the first step here: _____

It is easier to make goals than to keep working on them. So, make sure there is a good reason that makes you want to do it. (Not to please someone else.) Base it on a deep feeling or one of your core values.

Write the date when you met the goal above _____ Or, if it was too much of a challenge, you can change your goal enough so you **can** meet it. _____

CHOOSE CHANGE



To help motivate you, think about a bad habit or a problem you have:

How would you know if it is a problem for you? What would have to happen to know it is serious?

Have you tried to change this problem in the past?

Now, think about what could be different: _____

Why do you want to change right now? _____

What are the barriers **today** that keep you from changing? _____

What might help you overcome whatever holds you back? _____

What things (people, programs and behaviors) have helped you in the past?

What do you think you need to learn about so you can change?

Modified from Miller, W.R. & Rollnick, S. (1991). *Motivational interviewing: Preparing people to change addictive behavior*. New York: Guilford Press (p. 191-202).

When you see for yourself the differences between your current situation and your hopes for the future, **you can see for yourself** why change is needed. Believe that you can do it and that it is your responsibility. Find ways that work for you.

Let your healthcare team, counselor, sponsor, family and/or friends help you stay motivated and supported. Because of withdrawal symptoms, detoxification or other treatment may be needed when you stop drinking alcohol or using substances.

**YOUR LIFE IS NOT A SNAPSHOT. IT IS A FILMSTRIP.
YOUR BEST DAYS MAY STILL BE AHEAD OF YOU.**

~DAVE RAMSEY

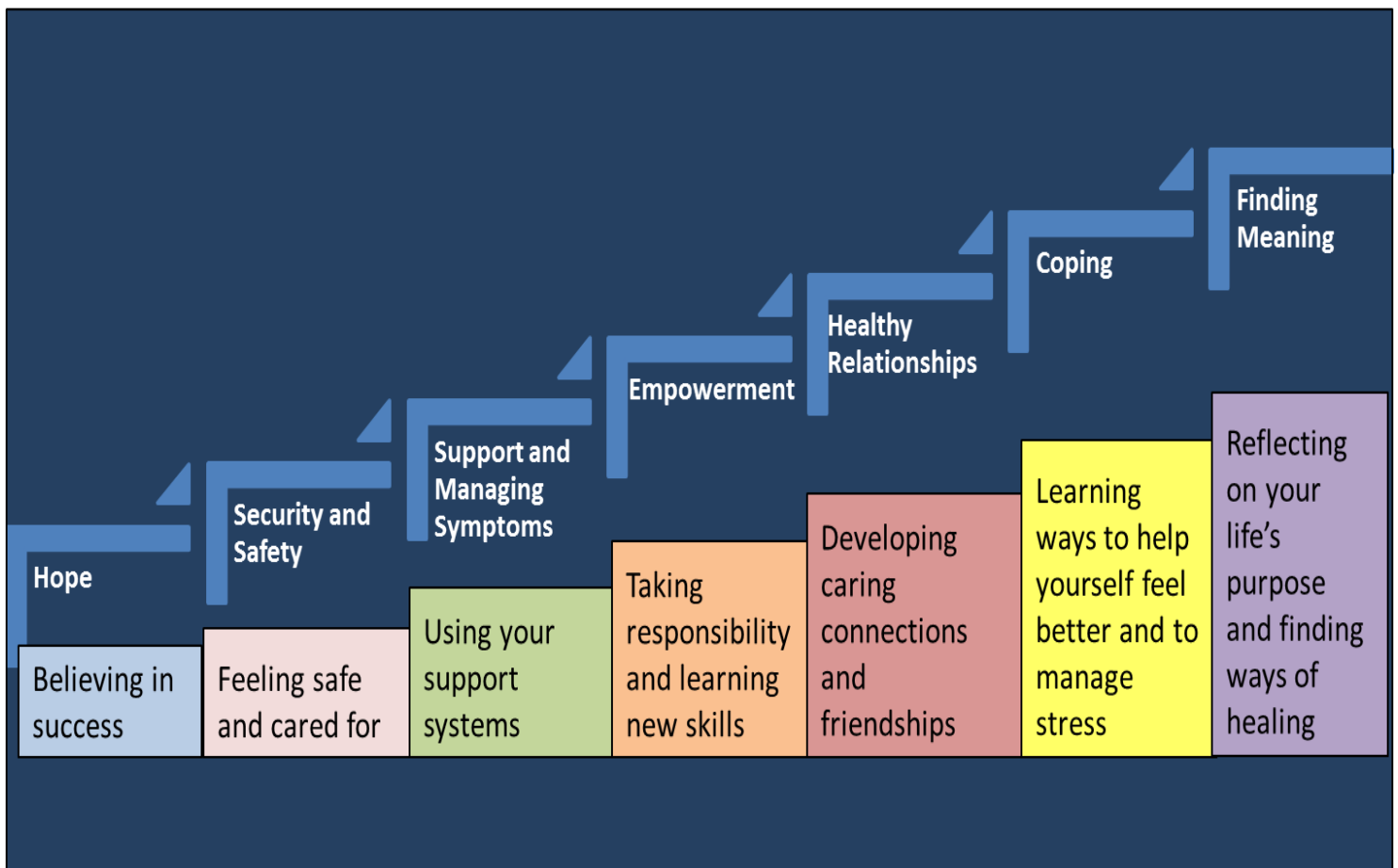
7. TAKE RECOVERY STEPS



Now let's look at the big picture. This **recovery model** is your framework for successful recovery:

Which of the following Recovery Steps do you want to focus on? _____

Which ones do you already feel strong in? _____



Developed by Mary Knutson (2008) and modified slightly from recovery model featured in Knutson, M.B., Newberry, S, & Schaper, H. (2013). Recovery Education: A tool for psychiatric nurses. *Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing*. 20(10), p. 870-881.

Hope is an important first step in recovery. You can watch a narrated slideshow called **Finding Hope** at <http://www.healthvista.net/education-resources/recovery-resources/>. Scroll down to click on the video link on that page.

FIND YOUR WAY TO RECOVERY



Having ups and downs doesn't mean you have been doing something wrong. Sometimes on a journey there are changes along the way and bends in the road. It helps if you have the following keys to empowerment. (*Mark the ones you have already*)

Good attitude	Assertiveness	Autonomy
Belief in recovery	Flexibility to change	Courage
Growth and experience	Gratitude	Hopefulness
Learning	Positive thoughts	Responsibility
Rights	Respect	Self-determination
Self-esteem	Spirituality	Other:

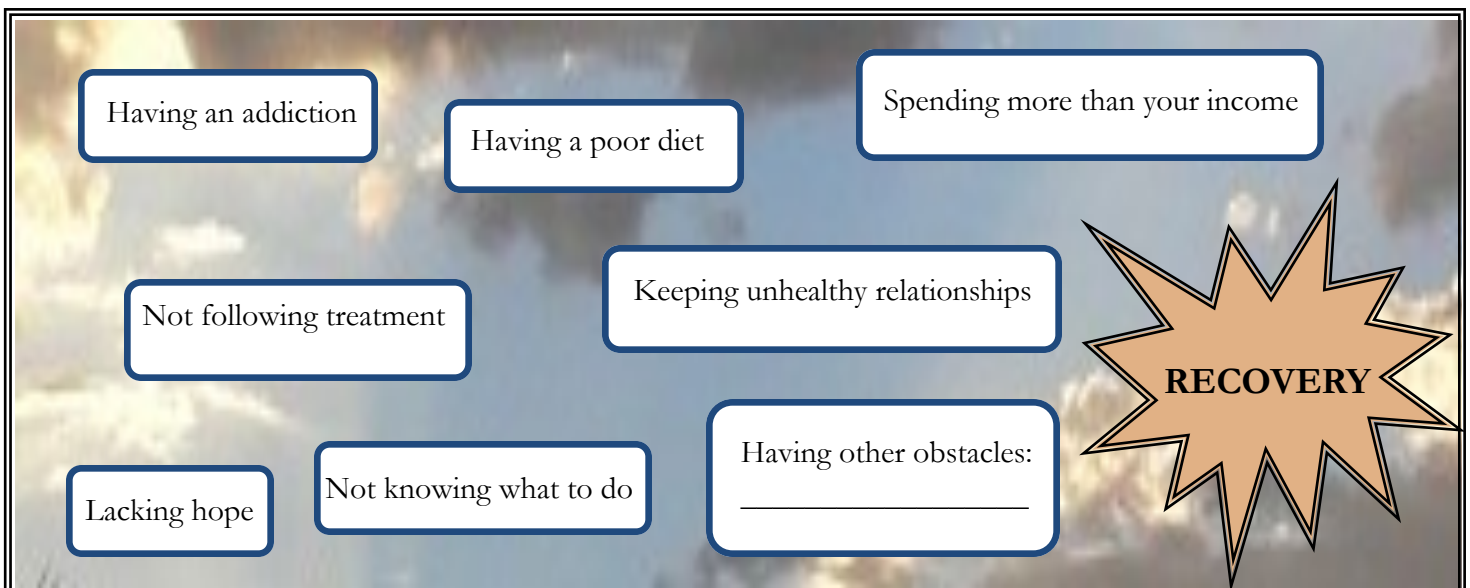
Start journaling:

- Keeping a journal or a private diary can help prevent you from feeling “stuck” and provides a way to look back and understand what happened.
- Your journal is a tool to help you heal and tap into a deeper wisdom.

Day, A.L. (2001). The journal as a guide for the healing journey. *Nursing Clinics of North America*. 36, 131-142.

Write down something you are grateful for every day. It is a powerful way toward positive thinking. For fun, watch the video (3:24 minutes) **The Original Gratitude Dance!** at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R9z2ELaBVJY>.

Find your way through obstacles to reach RECOVERY. (*Mark those that apply to you*)



EXPRESS YOURSELF



When you think of your recovery as a journey, think of how to **move towards a healthier path** than what you have been on.

Draw how you feel:

Draw how you want to feel:

8. EXPLORE MIND-BODY CONNECTIONS



When you are feeling stressed, anxious or upset, **your body responds** to the way you think, feel, and act. Your body tries to tell you that something isn't right. If you listen, you can learn to stay on the path toward recovery.

What are your physical signs when your emotional health is out of balance? Do you listen?

Improving emotional health can make your body's immune system stronger and add the energy you need to take care of yourself (be active, eat healthy foods, and follow your treatment plan). *How can you improve your physical and emotional health?*

Your family and healthcare team can't really know how you are feeling just by looking at you. You need to talk to them about feelings and problems. Express stress, sadness, frustration or anxiety instead of keeping them "bottled up" inside. Sometimes just talking to someone helps problems seem smaller. *Who can you talk to?* _____

Sometimes, people develop depression when they have a serious illness. Counseling and/or antidepressant medicine may be needed as you learn to manage your illness, but it may only be a short-term need. *What helps your mood?* _____

If someone you trust says you need to get more help, listen to them. If your addiction or illness gets worse, you may not see things as they really are.

Don't expect too much of yourself as you are recovering. **Be kind to yourself.**

Recovery takes time. Try to be patient. See <http://www.essentiallifeskills.net/patience.html> for more about this. A link between childhood trauma and addiction is explained at <http://www.cassioburycourt.com/article/84/the-link-between-addiction-and-childhood-trauma>

In life, there is always hope. But, sometimes you have to change what you are hoping for. Explore your strengths and limitations on the next two pages. Successful recovery is possible as you focus on your strengths and move toward your goals.

FIND STRENGTHS—HOW YOU BEHAVE



Mark on the list below your values, skills and strengths:

- ☐ Ambitious (hard working, aspiring toward goals)
- ☐ Broad-minded (open-minded)
- ☐ Capable (competent, effective, skilled, able to do something well)
- ☐ Cheerful (lighthearted, joyful, having a good sense of humor)
- ☐ Clean (neat, tidy)
- ☐ Courageous (standing up for your beliefs)
- ☐ Forgiving (willing to pardon others)
- ☐ Helpful (working for the good of others)
- ☐ Honest (sincere, truthful)
- ☐ Imaginative (daring, creative)
- ☐ Independent (self-reliant, self-sufficient, able to stand on your own two feet)
- ☐ Intellectual (intelligent, smart, sensible, reflective)
- ☐ Logical (consistent, reasonable, well thought out, rational)
- ☐ Loving (affectionate, kind, tender)
- ☐ Obedient (dutiful, respectful)
- ☐ Polite (courteous, well-mannered)
- ☐ Responsible (dependable, reliable, in charge)
- ☐ Self-controlled (restrained, self-disciplined, having will power)

Which of your strengths are the most important to you? Why?

FIND STRENGTHS—HOW YOU LIVE



What do you have? *(Mark on the list below your values, skills and strengths as you live your life)*

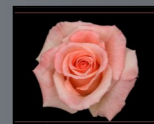
- ☐ A comfortable life (prosperous, having what you need)
- ☐ An exciting life (stimulating, active)
- ☐ A sense of accomplishment (lasting contribution)
- ☐ A world at peace (free from war and conflict)
- ☐ A world of beauty (finding pleasure from beauty, nature and arts)
- ☐ Equality (brotherhood, equal opportunity)
- ☐ Family security (taking care of loved ones)
- ☐ Freedom (independence, free choice)
- ☐ Happiness (being content with what you have)
- ☐ Inner harmony (freedom from inner conflict)
- ☐ Mature love (intimacy, deep caring)
- ☐ National security (protection from attacks)
- ☐ Pleasure (enjoyment, leisure, meaningful activities or relationships)
- ☐ Salvation (being spiritually saved, believing in eternal life)
- ☐ Self-respect (self-esteem, confidence in your abilities)
- ☐ Social recognition (having respect, admiration from others)
- ☐ True friendship (close companionship)
- ☐ Wisdom (a mature understanding of life that comes from experience, knowledge, and judgment)

What have you learned about yourself from using this checklist? _____

How can your strengths help you make changes during recovery? _____

Modified slightly from Rokeach, M. (1973). *The Nature of Human Values*. New York: Free Press.

STAY HEALTHY



Use your basic personal values as strengths. They can be very powerful.

Relapse is a gradual decline in function that leads to the return of an illness or unhealthy behavior pattern. It can often be prevented if people are aware of changes, ask for help, and avoid the path of self-destruction. Some possible warning signs are listed below. *(Check off any that apply to you. Write 3 in the chart below, along with your usual response and what changes you can make to help prevent relapse)*

- ◇ Thinking about “good times” while using
- ◇ Believing you can “use” again without addiction
- ◇ Spending time with old friends from addiction days
- ◇ Defending or denying old patterns
- ◇ Changing attitude or behavior, such as feeling depressed or rejected
- ◇ Breaking down social relationships by arguing, lying, or pushing away people who try to help
- ◇ Losing interest in hobbies and activities
- ◇ Having some withdrawal symptoms again
- ◇ Losing belief in your addiction recovery program

Modified from <http://www.recovery.org/topics/alcohol-or-drug-relapse-warning-signals/>

When experiencing this warning sign:	I usually respond by:	Instead, I will try:	What others can do to help:
1.			
2.			

Be serious about your health and find your way to stay healthy!

WHERE ARE YOU ON THE JOURNEY?



How close are you to recovery? (*Mark the statements that are true for you*)

- ☐ I have never really thought about recovery from my symptoms or experiences.
- ☐ I don't think I need to recover.
- ☐ I have so much going on that I can't think about recovery right now.
- ☐ I'm thinking about recovery, but haven't decided to move toward recovery.
- ☐ I am committed to my recovery but I am having a setback right now.
- ☐ I am actively involved in recovering.
- ☐ I feel that I am fully recovered and now I have to maintain my gains.

"IF YOU ARE ON THE WRONG ROAD, TURN BACK."

A big turning point in my life was the connection that I made to key people who saw something in me beyond my illness. They pushed me to disclose my dreams and wishes. Through this process of support, motivation, self-advocacy and my own determination, I began my recovery journey.

Recovery enables me to have options and choices... It has opened pathways for opportunities and new discoveries. Most importantly, recovery has given me hope—believable hope—for a future that I can design myself. This hope comes through different channels—spirituality, education, and a support system that includes my peers, coworkers, family members and mental health professionals.

I feel recovery changes people by giving them a language—an understanding—in which everyone can relate. I think most people are recovering or have recovered from something in their life—perhaps a disaster, a death, divorce, or a financial or job loss.

I believe recovery gives my peers and me the simple message...enough is enough of the same old stigmas and beliefs. It is time to take charge of our lives...

- Cherie Bledsoe, Kansas Peer Provider

Reference for this page was Ridgway, P., McDiarmid, D., Davidson, L., Bayes, J., & Ratzlaff, S. (2002). Pathways to recovery self-help workbook. Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas School of Social Welfare.

9. USE YOUR COPING AND LIFE SKILLS



To stay on the right track, learn to cope with setbacks that happen along the way:

- Calm your mind and body with relaxation skills, meditation, or prayer. Tap into protection and guidance from an accepting, peaceful spiritual source (God, Yahweh, Great Spirit, etc.) that is present and can hear us.
- Download and print **Your Recovery Workbook: Coping and Relaxation** free on <http://www.healthvista.net/store/> or the Recovery Resources page. **Practice relaxation skills.** If they don't seem to work the first time, try them again.
- Use coping and relaxation skills while also making efforts to solve your problems. But, **if you are having an emergency, get help.**
- Be open to lifestyle changes. Be honest, brave, and informed. Consider inpatient or outpatient treatment with medication, detox (detoxification) and rehab (rehabilitation), Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, or other types of psychotherapy, 12-step programs or group therapy programs such as AA or Narcotics Anonymous, drug education, and medication for any mental health problems like depression.

Discuss your plan for a healthy recovery with someone on your healthcare team. Who? _____

- The man in the story was able to cope better after accepting his addiction, taking responsibility for his health, following the treatment plan, and sharing his goals and needs with others. He gained insight and stayed more calm through family drama. He decided to go to college to be an addiction counselor and help others recover.
- Small steps at your own pace are good enough to get where you are going, as long as you are going in the right direction. Expect some ups and downs. **Use help and support** to get back on track. Recovery is not easy, but you can do it!

"I AM NOT INTERESTED IN THE PAST. I AM INTERESTED IN THE FUTURE, FOR THAT IS WHERE I EXPECT TO SPEND THE REST OF MY LIFE." - CHARLES F. KETTERING



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mary B. Knutson is a Registered Nurse with a Master's Degree as a Nurse Educator. She has worked to improve education resources in academic settings, hospitals (including psychiatric units), in homes and other community healthcare settings with the goal of empowering people and helping them toward better self-care. A collection of health education resources can be found online at www.healthvista.net.

Visit **healthvista.net** for more recovery resources.

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