National Recovery Month
Prevention Works • Treatment is Effective • People Recover
SEPTEMBER 2011

TREATMENT AND RECOVERY: FINDING PERSONALIZED HELP

Treatment and recovery support services for substance use and mental disorders are most effective when tailored to the individual.[1] Recovery is a life-long process, and people in recovery can experience improved relationships, better mental and physical well-being, and newfound abilities to deal with problems in a healthy manner.[2] Treatment and recovery require hard work, dedication, willingness to change, and a customized treatment plan. In 2009, 4.3 million people aged 12 or older received treatment for substance use disorders[3] and 30.2 million adults aged 18 or older received services for mental health problems,[4] beginning their recovery.

In 2009, nearly 20.9 million people aged 12 or older needed treatment for substance use disorders but did not receive it at a specialty substance use facility in the past year.[5] Additionally, an estimated 26.2 percent of adults aged 18 and older—approximately 1in 4 adults—suffer from a diagnosable mental health problem in a given year.[6] The need to help more people access treatment and recovery support for substance use and mental disorders is clear. Fortunately, there is hope.

National Recovery Month: Prevention Works, Treatment is Effective, People Recover (Recovery Month) celebrates people who are in recovery from substance use and mental disorders and the work of their treatment and recovery support service providers, as well as encourages people in need of help to seek services. The campaign, held each September, is sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT), within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). It aims to spread the message that behavioral health is an essential part of health and one's overall wellness, and that prevention works, treatment is effective, and people can and do recover from substance use and mental disorders. ***Recovery Month*** supports several of SAMHSA's Strategic Initiatives, particularly the goals of increasing public awareness of substance use and mental disorders, health reform implementation, and offering recovery support through an individual, program, and system approach. The campaign stresses that all individuals have the fundamental right and inherent value to be accepted and treated with respect, dignity, and worth. It also offers help and resources for those in need of treatment and recovery services, as well as their families, friends, colleagues, and loved ones.

This year's theme, ***"Join the Voices for Recovery: Recovery Benefits Everyone,"*** highlights that:

- All Americans have the opportunity to access provisions within the Affordable Care Act and Mental Health Parity and Addictions Equity Act (MHPAEA), aimed to improve physical and emotional health while ensuring people will receive the care they need at a more reasonable cost.
- Public awareness will increase access for those in need of essential substance use and mental health treatment and recovery support services, including behavioral health treatment.
- These legislative changes will improve the overall health and well-being of people in the United States.

The passage of the MHPAEA provides parity, or the recognition by insurance services—both public and private—that substance use and mental disorders are treated comparably to other physical health and medical conditions.[7]

This document will outline effective treatment and recovery options for substance use and mental disorders the need to address co-occurring disorders, holistic approaches to recovery, and the impact of health reform on access to treatment and recovery services.

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Recovery has enabled me to change my life for the better, and living has truly become much more manageable and enjoyable than it used to be.

Back in my mid-30s, I began to struggle with stress, particularly balancing a career and family. I sought relief and was prescribed antidepressants, but as I attempted to escape the feelings of stress in my life, I began drinking a bit. As time went by, "a bit" turned into more frequent drinking, and soon I found myself drinking every night, unable to stop. I told my doctor that I was drinking and I didn't feel well, but he just continued increasing and changing my anti-depressant medications. I began to feel anxious, and it all just seemed to get worse!

I looked further for help with my drinking and found SMART Recovery® 6 years ago. There I learned how to deal with life's upsets in rational and helpful ways, without alcohol. I had turned to alcohol as a short-term quick fix to escape my upsets and frustrations, but in the long term it made things far worse. The tools I learned in treatment provided me ways to cope with challenges, be sober, and live life and take pleasure in it.

I'm no longer overwhelmed as I was for so long. Challenging situations still arise, but I see that life isn't so much about what happens to me, but about how I choose to think about it. That makes all the difference—in my present life and in the choices I make for my future.

Effective Treatment and Recovery Options for Substance Use Disorders

Since the mid-1970s, research has proven the effectiveness of treatment and has shown how it helps people recover from substance use disorders and sustain abstinence from alcohol and/or drug use.[8] In the United States, more than 11,000 specialized treatment facilities provide rehabilitation, behavioral therapy, counseling, medications, and other types of services.[9] Other treatment and recovery programs exist outside the specialty sector—including emergency room services, private doctor's offices, self-help groups, prisons, and hospitals—which provide support and guidance for those with substance use, as well as mental health problems.[10] Recovery-oriented systems of care (ROSC) support the idea that each person must be the central participant in his or her own recovery and that a personal recognition of the need for change and transformation is necessary. ROSC also acknowledges that there are many pathways to recovery and that recovery services should offer choices, honor each person's potential for growth, focus on a person's strengths, and attend to an individual's overall health and well-being.[11]

A customized treatment and recovery support plan tailored to meet an individual's unique needs is the most effective. As a person's needs change throughout the recovery process, the treatment and recovery plan must be re-evaluated frequently and tailored as necessary.[12] Common treatment settings include:

- Residential or inpatient treatment programs;
- Outpatient treatment programs;
- Recovery support services, including peer supported services; and
- Online support.

Elements of each of these treatment settings are detailed below.

Residential or Inpatient Treatment Programs

These treatment programs are located in a hospital or residential setting, where people temporarily or permanently live to participate in rehabilitation and recovery.[13] Residential or inpatient programs can last from a few days to several months and are usually best suited for severe cases and those needing medical supervision. They include the following:

- **Hospital-based rehabilitation units** – Located in a medical/hospital setting or a specialized chemical dependency facility, these programs usually include medical detoxification, a process in which individuals are systematically and safely withdrawn from addictive substances, usually under the care of a physician or trained personnel. This treatment option is best suited for people who need intensive monitoring or have developed chronic or acute medical or psychiatric problems along with their addiction.[14]
- **Inpatient residential programs and therapeutic communities** – Short- or long-term inpatient treatment programs house individuals at a treatment facility while they undergo intensive therapy. This type of treatment is often followed by extended participation in support groups (e.g., ongoing group therapy or individual counseling and 12-step programs). Therapeutic communities are long-term residential programs (usually 6 to 12 months) that focus on re-socializing the individual. They work best for those with severe problems or criminal involvement.[15]

Outpatient Treatment Programs

In these programs, individuals don't live at the treatment facility, but return for treatment services through scheduled visits. This provides flexibility to participants who might need to work or attend school. Outpatient treatment is offered in health clinics, counselors' offices, hospital clinics, local health department offices, community mental health centers, or at inpatient programs that also offer outpatient clinics.[16] Outpatient treatment services include the following:

- **Individual counseling** – These private one-on-one sessions help people address issues of motivation and build skills to resist substance use through the utilization of coping strategies to maintain abstinence. Individual counseling uses behavioral therapy to modify attitudes and behaviors and improve relationships and life skills.[17]
- **Medication-assisted treatment (MAT)** – These clinically driven treatment programs use medications in combination with counseling and behavioral therapies to provide a whole-patient approach to the treatment of substance use disorders.[18] MAT focuses on individualized patient care to treat alcohol and/or drug use. This method includes medication (e.g., buprenorphine, methadone, naltrexone, etc.) approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for opioid detoxification or maintenance treatment.[19] MAT may be provided in an outpatient treatment program or medication unit (e.g., pharmacy, physician's office) or, for buprenorphine, a physician's office or other health care setting. Many MAT treatments combine professional and peer-based recovery support services with medication treatment. For example, Recovery-Oriented Methadone Maintenance (ROMM) assists patients and families in initiating and maintaining long-term recovery for opioid addiction.[20]
- **Family counseling** – These counseling sessions are led by a professional and usually take place in a private practice or clinic to provide a neutral forum for families to work through problems. This approach educates family members about substance use disorders, helps them become aware of their loved one's need for support, and improves family communication.[21]
- **Group therapy** – This type of therapy has trained leaders that offer healing to foster recovery from substance use disorders. This approach reduces isolation, enables members to witness the recovery of others, provides positive peer support, helps members cope with their condition, offers useful information to those new to recovery, and instills hope.[22]

Recovery Support Services

Recovery support services are nonclinical options that provide help through all stages of recovery. They focus on a continuum of care to achieve and maintain long-term abstinence from alcohol and/or drugs. Recovery support services can be found in a variety of settings, including recovery community organizations, which are nonprofit organizations that provide support services to individuals in recovery.[23] Services may include peer-to-peer services, support groups, job training and employment services, housing assistance, parent/family education, and life skills development. [24]

- **Peer-to-peer support programs** – These programs are designed and provided by leaders in the recovery community who are often in recovery themselves. They build strong and mutually supportive relationships and can expand the capacity of formal treatment by initiating recovery, reducing relapse, and intervening early if or when relapse occurs.[25]
- **Mutual support groups** – These groups are comprised of members with similar problems who want to voluntarily provide social, emotional, and informational support. It allows for an open environment to share experiences and solutions to problems and can help participants sustain recovery by building new friendships with people who don't use alcohol or drugs. These support groups include well-known programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, and other non-12-step programs such as SMART Recovery®.[26]
- **Faith-based support groups** – Many people rely upon their spirituality during difficult times, and faith-based recovery support programs provide additional support. Many churches, synagogues, mosques, or other places of worship offer faith-based support and provide it at a low-cost or free of charge.[27] Additionally, there are faith-based community recovery organizations that also support spiritual aspects of recovery.

Online Support

Online support provides individuals the opportunity to receive treatment sessions and attend meetings virtually. Online programs and meetings enable people to participate in treatment from any location, when their schedule permits, and are useful for people with limited transportation or childcare. Rural populations and areas with limited in-person treatment options also can benefit from online support. Online support includes the following resources:

- **E-therapy services** – These services offer participants electronic counsel through text-based communication methods (e.g., email, Internet chats, text messaging) or non-text-based communication methods (e.g., telephone, video conferencing). These services provide greater flexibility in terms of time and location for those needing treatment.[28]
- **Recovery chat rooms** – Online venues, such as chat rooms, offer a free-form structure for people to share their stories with fellow members of the recovery community. Conversations can be tailored to focus on specific topics, such as co-occurring disorders or different stages of recovery, and allow people to anonymously connect with others.[29]
- **Blogs and social networking sites** – One way to connect with others in treatment and recovery is through blogs and social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter. Through these sites, people can read others' stories and share their own to connect and offer support. Refer to the "Building Your Social Network" document in this toolkit for more information on how to effectively connect through social media, and visit the ***Recovery Month*** Facebook page, YouTube channel, and Twitter account.

Effective Treatment and Recovery Options for Mental Health Problems

There is no universal approach to treating mental health problems.[30] There are more than 200 classified forms of mental health problems, and similar to cancer, diabetes, and heart disease, these conditions are often physical as well as emotional and psychological.[31] Mental health problems can be effectively treated with a variety of treatment options. Approximately 70 to 90 percent of individuals experience a significant reduction of symptoms and improved quality of life with a combination of medication, therapy, and other support services.[32] It's important to find a trained mental health professional that understands a person's condition and can help find the most effective treatment plan. Common treatment options include:

- Psychotherapy;
- Medication therapy; and
- Support groups, including peer specialists.

Psychotherapy

This method for treating mental health problems is also known as "talk therapy," and involves talking face-to-face with a therapist or other medical professional to help a person understand his or her mental health problem.[33] There are many different types of psychotherapy, which include:

- **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)** – Helps individuals identify distorted thinking patterns, recognize and change inaccurate beliefs, change behaviors, and relate to others in more positive ways. CBT can be used to treat depression, anxiety, bipolar, schizophrenia, and eating disorders.[34]
- **Psychoanalysis** – Long-term therapy that seeks to identify unconscious motivations and early patterns to resolve issues and to become aware of how those motivations influence present actions and feelings.[35]
- **Family-Focused Therapy (FFT)** – Designed to include the whole family as way to identify the difficulties and conflicts among family members that may contribute to or worsen an individual's mental health problem. FFT is a main component in treating bipolar disorders.[36]
- **Dialectical Behavior Therapy** – Originally developed to help individuals who have suicidal thoughts. The therapy stresses the value of a strong and equal relationship between the individual and therapist. The individual is reminded when his or her behavior is unhealthy or disruptive and the therapist teaches skills needed to better deal with similar situations in the future.[37]
- **Interpersonal Therapy** – Works to improve communication patterns and helps people learn to express appropriate emotions in healthy ways and is commonly used to treat depression.[38]

Medication Therapy

Many treatment options stress the importance of combining prescription medications with psychotherapy and support groups to help create a stable treatment plan and sustain recovery.[39] Medications are often used to treat the symptoms of mental health problems. They do not cure conditions, but can help people feel better and maintain normal daily routines. Medications work differently for everybody. People should ask their health care professional about the risks, possible side effects, and using the medication with certain foods, alcohol, and other medications.[40] In addition, it is extremely important that prescription medications are taken in the prescribed dosage, at prescribed intervals, and monitored daily.

Support Groups

A group-based approach is helpful for many people looking to find support and common ground. Mental health support groups differ, with some groups led by peers and others led by a mental health professional. A variety of organizations specialize in different mental health problems (e.g., Alzheimer's, anxiety, bipolar disorder, autism, depression, eating disorders) and most offer groups for individuals, family members, and friends tailored to their specialization.[41] Additionally, many people benefit from the practical, experientially-based guidance that a peer support group can offer, and others enjoy the opportunity to give help as well as receive help—an experience linked to benefits such as better psychosocial adjustment and increased longevity.[42] Some organizations also offer online support through blogs and discussion boards as a way for people with similar mental health problems to connect, if unable to meet in person.[43] For more information on mental health support groups, or for a support group referral, refer to Mental Health America or the National Mental Health Consumers' Self-Help Clearinghouse.

How Health Reform Will Affect Access to Treatment and Recovery Services

The Affordable Care Act and the MHPAEA include many new provisions aimed at improving coverage for and access to substance use disorder and mental disorder prevention, treatment, and recovery support services. Many of these laws' provisions will be implemented over the next few years, with the large coverage expansion for the uninsured implemented in 2014. Research suggests that expanding people's access to treatment and recovery support services significantly increases the number of people who actually seek out treatment services.[44] SAMHSA's Health Reform Strategic Initiative supports and promotes the increase in affordable health care coverage, access to appropriate integrated and high-quality care, and works to reduce disparities that currently exist between the availability of behavioral health services and services for other medical conditions.

These are important developments, given that in 2009, approximately 22 percent of adults with substance use and/or mental disorders were uninsured.[45] Of these uninsured adults, one in three had incomes below the Federal Poverty Level.[46] Health insurance plans will differ depending on the provider and plan options, so it's important for all people to understand their plan to best use the benefits. With wider access to treatment, all individuals in need and their loved ones can gain the necessary skills to live a productive life. Refer to the "Fast Facts About Health Reform, Substance Use and Mental Disorders, Treatment, and Recovery" document in the "Resources" section of this toolkit for more information on health reform.

The Importance of Addressing Co-Occurring Disorders

An individual who suffers from both a substance use disorder and a mental health problem, such as anxiety or depression, has a co-occurring disorder.[47] Like substance use disorders alone, co-occurring disorders affect people's families, friends, and co-workers.[48] In 2009, more than 8.9 million adults aged 18 or older with mental health problems also had substance use disorders.[49] Through treatment and recovery services, people can and do recover from co-occurring disorders. People with co-occurring disorders may use alcohol and/or illicit drugs to self-medicate symptoms of depression, anxiety, or other mental health problems, but this can eventually worsen the symptoms they initially tried to relieve.[50]

When researching different treatment options for people with co-occurring disorders, it's important to know whether the treatment facility has experience in treating both substance use and mental disorders. Below are some helpful tips to maintain your mental and physical health if you have a co-occurring disorder:[51]

- **Follow your physician's advice** – Don't stop treatment, including taking your medication, without first consulting your physician. If you do, it may make it difficult to sustain recovery even if you feel better and think you no longer need treatment or medication.
- **Adopt healthy habits** – Regular exercise releases dopamine, a powerful natural chemical that serves as an antidepressant in your body and improves physical health. Adopting healthy eating, exercise, and sleeping habits can result in more energy and can help you balance your mood.
- **Learn your triggers and identify positive coping mechanisms** – It's important to recognize the causes and signs of your substance use and mental disorders so you can develop a personal action plan if you recognize the onset of symptoms. You can better sustain recovery by understanding your triggers, such as stressful events, big life changes, or unstable eating or sleeping patterns.

The Holistic Approach to Recovery

Recovery from substance use and mental disorders does not stop after initial courses of treatment end. Effective treatment and recovery address a person's overall mental and physical well-being.[52] Holistic recovery is a gradual process that aims to achieve a greater balance of mind, body, and spirit in relation to other aspects of one's life, including family, work, and community.[53] These should accompany a larger treatment plan and can be used to relieve stress and overcome difficult times or events in your life. Some holistic approaches you can try include:

- **Acupuncture** – This ancient East Asian practice involves inserting fine needles into specific points on the surface of your body to stimulate healing. Acupuncture is rapidly increasing in popularity and is used in many treatment facilities as an effective aid to help control substance use disorders.[54]
- **Creative arts therapy** – Creative arts therapy uses art as a form of expression for feelings that cannot be easily identified or communicated. This type of therapy can help you connect with your authentic or emotional selves and learn to manage emotions and stress.
- **Meditation** – This relaxation technique can help you improve your mental concentration and stability, reduce anxiety and depression, and promote a deep sense of inner peace through intense meditative breathing, chanting, and movement techniques.[55]
- **Yoga** – This exercise program uses physical postures and controlled breathing to increase your flexibility, calm your mind, improve concentration, and promote patience. Yoga can provide a greater sense of control when you experience agitation or other symptoms that tempt your body to misuse substances. Regular practice of yoga, along with other exercise programs, can help you sustain recovery.[56]

Additional Recovery Resources

A variety of resources provide additional information on ***Recovery Month***, substance use and mental disorders, and prevention, treatment, and recovery support services. Use the toll-free numbers and websites below to increase your knowledge, and seek guidance from professionals. Through these resources, individuals can interact with others and find support on an as-needed, confidential basis.

- **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Website** – Leads efforts to reduce the impact of substance use and mental disorders on communities nationwide.
- **SAMHSA's National Helpline, 1-800-662-HELP (4357), or 1-800-487-4889 (TDD)** – Provides 24-hour free and confidential information about substance use and mental disorders, prevention, treatment, and recovery referrals in English or Spanish.
- **SAMHSA's "Find Substance Abuse and Mental Health Treatment" Website** – Contains information about all treatment options and special services located in your area.
- **SAMHSA's ADS Center** – Provides information and assistance to develop successful efforts to counteract prejudice and discrimination and promote social inclusion.
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 1-800-273-TALK (8255)** – Provides a free, 24-hour hotline available to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress.
- **Treatment 101: Recovery Today** – Part of SAMHSA's *Road to Recovery* Television and Radio series that examines many aspects of treatment and recovery.
- **Psychology Today's Therapy Directory** – Allows users to locate a therapist, psychologist, or counselor who specializes in mental health problems by city or zip code throughout the United States.
- **RecoverForever.com** – Offers live online support and contains an abundance of resources on alcohol and drug treatment services that are searchable by State.
- **Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous** – Contains an array of resources for individuals suffering from alcohol or drug dependence, respectively, and allows them to find and join a local chapter.
- **Al-Anon/Alateen Family Groups** – Provides support groups for families and friends of people with alcohol problems.
- **Nar-Anon** – Offers a community for family members to share experiences related to substance use disorders.

- **American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry** – Promotes accessibility to quality treatment for all who need it, educates the public to influence public policy regarding addictive illness, and provides continuing education for addiction professionals.
- **American Psychiatric Association** – Works to ensure humane care and effective treatment is given to anyone with mental health problems, including intellectual disabilities and substance use disorders.
- **Mental Health America** – Offers resources about the realities of mental health and mental illness.

As health reform continues to be implemented, use the following resources to learn about the impact of these changes on how to access treatment and recovery support services:

- **HealthCare.gov** – Managed by HHS, this Federal website provides information for the general public, people with disabilities, seniors, young adults, and employers on how the law affects access to health care, insurance options, available preventive services, and comparing care quality.
- **Kaiser Family Foundation** – Issued by a nonprofit, health policy and communications group, this document provides a summary on the comprehensive health reform law, the Affordable Care Act, signed into law on March 23, 2010. The document discusses the law and subsequent changes, provisions to expand coverage, control health care costs, and improve the health care delivery system. Visit the Kaiser Family Foundation's Health Reform Source for more information.
- **The Parity Implementation Coalition's Parity Toolkit** – Created by organizations, including ***Recovery Month*** Planning Partners, this toolkit aids individuals seeking help, individuals in recovery, as well as their families, providers, and advocates in understanding their rights and benefits under the MHPAEA law.

Inclusion of websites and resources in this document and on the *Recovery Month* website does not constitute official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services or the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

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