

Recovery Month

During September, the nation observes *Recovery Month*. Events, posters, and print materials provide education about how treatment services and recovery peer supports can empower people with a mental and/or substance use disorder to live a healthy and rewarding life. *Recovery Month* spreads the positive message that recovery in all its forms is possible, that behavioral health is essential to overall health, that prevention works, and treatment is effective.

This year is the 30th year of *Recovery Month* and is a time to applaud the gains made by people who have reclaimed their lives and are living happy and healthy lives in long-term recovery, just as we would for people who are managing other health conditions such as cancer, hypertension, diabetes, asthma, and heart disease.



Let's honor the prevention, treatment, and recovery service providers who make recovery possible and to encourage all citizens to act to help expand and improve the availability of effective prevention, treatment, and recovery services for people in need.

To download a toolkit, watch public service announcements, or access materials in both English and Spanish, including the logo above, go to:



<https://recoverymonth.gov/>

Activities in the Eight Dimensions

During *Recovery Month*, plan to celebrate how the Eight Dimensions help support recovery, especially when confronted with challenges related to trauma, mental health, or substance use. Remember to continue to focus on the eight dimensions each week during September and throughout the year.

Physical Dimension: Schedule activities that promote good health habits including moving more, offering healthy food choices, improving rest and sleep, and scheduling screenings or flus shots.

Intellectual Dimension: Encourage and display creative pursuits, such as poetry, artwork, and crafts. Inspire learning and creativity through sharing interests and hobbies.

Spiritual Dimension: Help people explore the role of practices such as meditation, prayer, or mindfulness on recovery.

Social Dimension: Plan an event to bring people together. Say hello and smile.

Emotional Dimension: Laugh! Remember to keep engaged in activities that provide a release of stress and provide a sense of personal satisfaction.

Financial Dimension: Offer education on budgeting or managing finances.

Occupational Dimension: Encourage people to explore or celebrate their work (paid and volunteer) that provides meaning and satisfaction in their lives.

Environmental Dimension: Plan a community clean-up event. Set aside time to declutter and recycle. Get outdoors and enjoy the beginning of fall.

It's never too late to be what you might have been. ~George Eliot

Small Steps to Recovery

I have been living with mental health and addiction challenges for many years. Despite many years of lost dreams, I continue to remain hopeful that I can set and achieve wellness goals.

A few years back, I felt anxious and angry. I was hostile and made hurtful remarks. I wanted to be a better person. I tried and I tried. I listened to suggestions and went to self-help groups.

I read self-improvement books and learned about my condition. I began walking. I got involved in structured activities. Though it took a few years, the insurmountable pain that plagued my days abated. I then noticed and discovered for myself that each morning I was waking up earlier, refreshed, and looking toward a pleasant day.

How did I go from anger, hostility, and paranoia to see in the world a most pleasant way? Maybe sharing some of the steps I followed could help others with similar struggles.

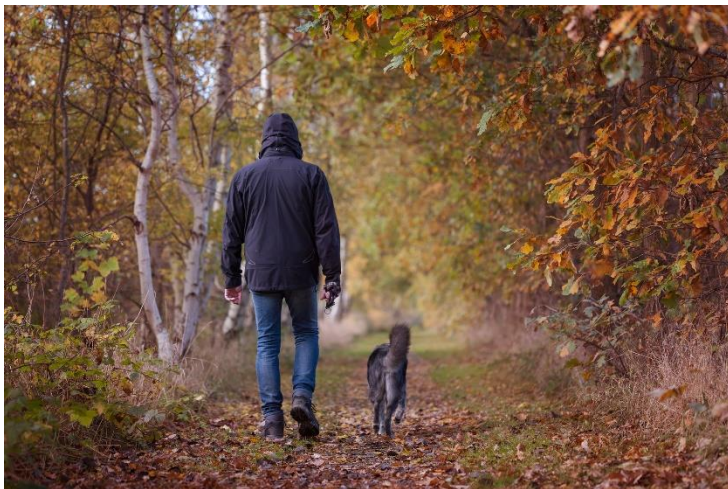
I worked on developing healthy habits and routines. I clean, I cook, and I watch how I spend my money. I prepare my own meals. I listen and learn. I read. I became conscious of how much gratitude I have for the people who help me through so many difficulties. I started walking dogs for neighbors, which gets me up every morning at the same time. I feel so motivated to care for the dogs!

As I reflect, I remind myself of what I do to keep myself well. My successful wellness journey has simply been a series of small steps. I encourage you to reflect on what steps you can make today to start or continue on your own journey to manage mental health and substance use challenges.

By Ed

*You have brains in your head.
You have feet in your shoes.
You can steer yourself any
direction you choose.*

~Dr. Seuss



References and Resources

- The photo on this page is from pixabay.com
- Abrantes & Blevins. (2019). Exercise in the context of substance use treatment: Key issues and future directions. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 30, 103-108.
- Teut et al. (2013). Mindful walking in psychologically distressed individuals: A randomized controlled trial. *Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine*.
- Wang et al. (2014, Oct 16). Impact of physical exercise on substance use disorders: A meta-analysis. *PLoS One*.
- See the fact sheet on *Walking for Health* at www.samhsa.gov

Walking for Recovery

Walking can be good if you are dealing with mental health and/or substance use challenges. Walking outside adds the experience of being in nature, which has its own benefits.

Using a mindfulness approach for part of your walk may be helpful. Focus on your body sensations, including your breathing, as you walk.

