

Words of Wellness



September- 2021

Recovery Month

[National Recovery Month](#) (Recovery Month) is a national observance held every September to educate Americans that substance use treatment and mental health services can empower people with mental, substance use and trauma related challenges to live a healthy and rewarding life.

Now in its 32nd year, **Recovery Month** celebrates the many ways we can promote and support recovery practices, the emergence of a strong and proud recovery community, and the dedication of service providers and community members across the nation who make recovery in all its forms possible.



The theme for this year is “*Recovery is for Everyone: Every Person, Every Family, Every Community*,” which reminds people in recovery and those who support them, that recovery belongs to all of us. We need to welcome everyone to recovery by lowering barriers to recovery support, creating inclusive spaces and programs, and broadening our understanding of what recovery means for people with different experiences.

You can [download a toolkit](#) for promoting Recovery Month from Faces and Voices of Recovery. Other resources are also available.



Activities in the Eight Dimensions

During *Recovery Month*, plan to celebrate how the Eight Dimensions of Wellness help support recovery, especially for people experiencing the challenges of trauma, mental health, or substance use, and ongoing concerns about the pandemic.

Physical Dimension: Schedule activities that promote good health habits, including moving more, offering healthy food choices, improving rest and sleep, and scheduling the flu shot or COVID vaccines/boosters.

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Intellectual Dimension: Engage in 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 to enhance spiritual connections.

Social Dimension: Be kind to and/or reach out to friends and family. Say hello and smile every day.

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

Financial Dimension: Collect receipts and see if you are buying things based on wants or needs.

Occupational Dimension: Celebrate past or current activities/work (paid and volunteer) that provide meaning and satisfaction in your life.

Environmental Dimension: Set aside time to declutter and recycle. Get outdoors and enjoy the beginning of fall.

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.

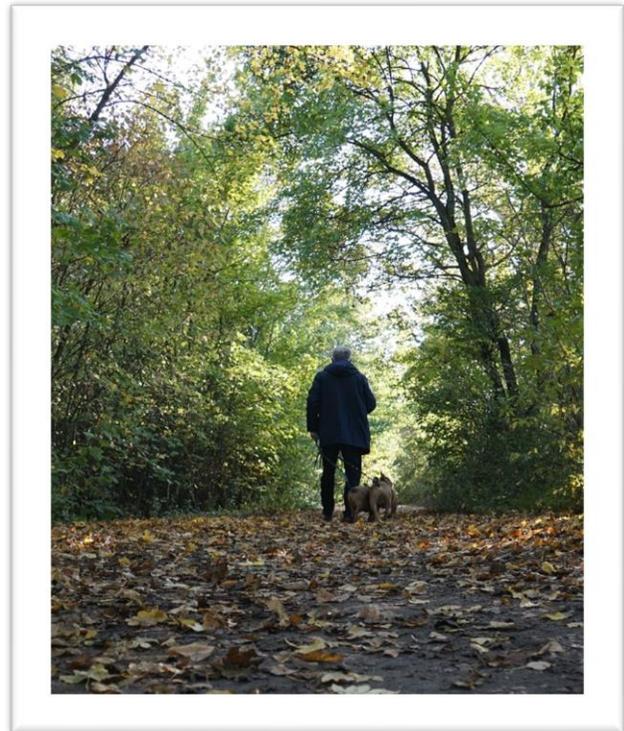
I started walking dogs for neighbors, which gets me up every morning at the same time. I feel so motivated to care for the dogs!

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*

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.



References and Resources

The article on walking has been reprinted from the September 2019 issue of the *Words of Wellness*. Illustrations are listed online as free for reuse without attribution from pixabay.com

Get the Recovery Month toolkit at https://rm.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org/resource/2021_recovery-month-toolkit/

Get your digital media kit to promote flu shots from <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/resource-center/toolkit/index.htm>