



# RECOVERY IS FOR EVERYONE

Every Person. Every Family. Every Community.

Recovery is for everyone because it benefits us all. Mental health and substance abuse disorders affect many people. While it may be tempting to characterize recovery as a universal experience or single journey, our community is proof there are as many pathways to recovery as there are people.

Support is essential to recovery, so it's important to understand what to say in conversations about prevention, treatment, and recovery. Here are some suggestions:

## Love and Respect

People in recovery have had the opportunity to reflect on how their actions have impacted their work, life, and personal relationships. It can often make them feel undeserving and carry guilt for the negative repercussions their condition caused. It's okay to love them but hate their behavior. Recognizing and respecting the steps forward they have made shows them others are aware of their progress. Tell them they are deserving of their new life to help build their resiliency and confidence.

## Express Pride

It's important to acknowledge people's accomplishments and encourage them to continue their journey. Focus on how proud you feel for their success. Remind them of the positive aspects of their life. Stating you recognize how hard the person is working and are proud of the changes they've already made will mean the world to them.

## Celebrate Progress

Recovery is a slow-moving process of gradual changes. These changes can get overlooked when full recovery is the goal, so be sure to celebrate any progress people make towards their end goal. Milestones should be celebrated like a birthday or anniversary to recognize their achievements. Do something they enjoy or give them a thoughtful gift to mark the occasion.

## Communicate Feelings

Encourage people to express how they feel and share what works best for them in their recovery. You may want to share insight from your own personal experiences, however, simply being present and listening is often best. Compliment them on their positive behavior. This leads to feelings of empowerment, promotes the development of positive self-care strategies, and puts them in control of their continued wellness.

## Offer Support

Offering support can make a huge difference. Let them know they're not alone in this and you are invested in their success. Reinforcing your relationship with the person in recovery shows them that you are there for them. Having strong relationships makes it less likely for them to experience a relapse when they have someone they can count on for support.

## Share Companionship

Some people aren't the type to reach out and ask for help when they need it. Think of ways you can help make their recovery easier on a day-to-day basis. Create environments and relationships promoting acceptance by simply planning activities together. For example: watch a new movie; play a favorite board or video game; go on a picnic; take a scenic nature walk; work up a sweat at the local gym; or try out new recipes for healthy foods. Companionship will encourage them to share if they are struggling or motivate them to stay focused.

## Seek Professional Assistance

A full continuum of care is necessary to provide the foundation for a lasting recovery. Seek support by turning to family, friends, spiritual leaders, employee assistance program professionals, mental health therapists, treatment programs, and self-help groups who will listen and offer comfort without judgment. The recovery community has a powerful foundation of mutual aid, peer support, and adaptability. Together we can help people realize the promise of recovery and give others the right support to help them.

## Stay Hopeful

Making major life changes are never easy and it's common for people in recovery to feel discouraged when they're not progressing as fast as they hoped. If the person is struggling or relapsed, it's important to let them know this doesn't mean there is no hope for recovery. It simply means it's time to reevaluate their care plan and find new treatment options better suited for their specific needs.

When we connect with open minds and hearts, we learn from one another and create life-saving opportunities. Social connections, family support, and neighborhood relationships are directly linked to wellness and recovery. We build new connections to ourselves, our families, and our communities.