

10 Steps to Recovery

1. **Believe in Yourself!**

Decide that you want to recover and can recover. It takes hope, determination, and personal responsibility, but recovery is possible for you.

2. **Embrace Your Strengths.**

Write down (or share with a trusted person) three of your strengths or the best things about you. Don't be modest — feeling good about yourself increases hope and positive energy.

3. **Recognize your Stressors.**

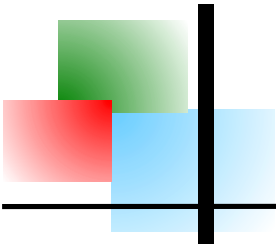
Learn what stresses you out, so that you can try to avoid or better cope with it. Some major stressors—which can make you sick or go into crisis—are getting or losing a job, moving, not having enough money, ending a friendship or intimate relationship, certain times of year, or being around certain people or places. Ask for support when you're stressed out and need help managing.

4. **Know Yourself.**

Most people have early warning signs when they are about to go into a crisis or get sick. They might stop sleeping, stop eating, become very tense or angry, feel anxious or suspicious of others, start drinking or drugging, or have bad or scary thoughts and visions. Make a list of your early warning signs (or tell them to someone you trust), so you're prepared when they happen.

5. **Make a Plan.**

Write down (or tell someone you trust) your plan for coping with your early warning signs. Figuring out what to do before you feel the signs coming on can put you in control of your own life and recovery. You might need to get some exercise, eat healthier foods, adjust your medications, write in a journal, join a support group, talk with a friend, or listen to music or do art. Make a promise to do these things when you're starting to feel sick or a loss of control.



10 Steps to Recovery, continued

6. Share a Dream.

Write down (or tell someone you trust) one dream that will help support your recovery and give you reasons to keep trying.

7. Master your Meds.

If you use medications, learn exactly what you're taking and all of the side effects. Whenever you have side effects, share them with your doctor as soon as you can. If this is hard for you, ask for help from a relative, friend, or service provider. Reducing side effects is one of the best ways to feel better and to have hope.

8. Get Connected.

Connecting with other people can be hard sometimes, but it helps to feel better. You can meet others at a support group, volunteer activity, place of worship, community center, social service program, or on the Internet.

9. Let it Go.

Pick one thing that you feel interferes with your recovery and make a plan to start letting it go.

10. Remember that You are a Person First.

Emotional or mental health problems are just one part of your life. They are NOT all of you and they don't have to define you, especially when you do things to support your recovery.