

10 Guiding Principles of Recovery



What Is Recovery?

Recovery from substance misuse and/or a mental health disorder is a process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live self-directed lives, and strive to reach their full potential. There are four major dimensions that support a life in recovery:

- **Health**—Overcoming or managing one’s disease(s) or symptoms and making informed, healthy choices that support physical and emotional wellbeing
- **Home**—A stable and safe place to live
- **Purpose**—Meaningful daily activities, such as a job, school, volunteerism, family caretaking, or creative endeavors, and the independence, income and resources to participate in society
- **Community**—Relationships and social networks that provide support, friendship, love, and hope

These four dimensions are the foundation for the 10 guiding principles of recovery.

What Are The 10 Guiding Principles Of Recovery?

The 10 guiding principles of recovery are a blueprint for positive change and growth for individuals in recovery and for those who support them, including treatment providers, family, and friends.

- Recovery from substance misuse and/or a mental health disorder is a process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live self-directed lives, and strive to reach their full potential.
 - Four major dimensions support a life in recovery: health, home, purpose, and community.
 - The 10 guiding principles of recovery are a blueprint for positive change and growth for people in recovery and for those who support them, including treatment providers, family, and friends.
 - Resources are available to help and support people in recovery.
3. **Recovery occurs via many pathways.** People are unique with distinct needs, strengths, preferences, goals, culture, and backgrounds— including trauma experience — that affect and determine their pathway(s) to recovery. Recovery is built on the multiple capacities, strengths, talents, coping abilities, resources, and inherent value of each individual. Recovery pathways are highly personalized and may include clinical treatment, medications, support from family, faith-based approaches, peer support, and other approaches. Recovery is non-linear, characterized by continual growth and improved functioning that may involve setbacks. Because setbacks are a natural, though not inevitable, part of the recovery process, it is essential to foster resilience for all individuals and families.

1. **Recovery emerges from hope.** The belief that recovery is real provides the essential and motivating message of a better future—that people can and do overcome the internal and external challenges, barriers, and obstacles that confront them.
2. **Recovery is person-driven.** Self-determination and self-direction are the foundations for recovery as individuals define their own life goals and design their unique path. People gain independence by leading, controlling, and exercising choice over the services and supports that assist their recovery. In doing so, they are empowered to obtain the resources to make informed decisions, initiate recovery, build on their strengths, and gain or regain control over their lives.



Wheeler

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Clearinghouse

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for Prevention, Wellness and Recovery

800.232.4424 (phone)

860.793.9813 (fax)

www.ctclearinghouse.org

A Library and Resource Center on Alcohol, Tobacco, Other Drugs, Mental Health and Wellness

Connecticut Resources

CT Department of Mental
Health and Addiction Services

www.ct.gov/DMHAS

24/7 Access Line

1.800.563.4086

Connecticut Community for
Addiction Recovery (CCAR)

www.ccar.us

Youth Recovery CT

www.youthrecoveryct.org

National Resources

Substance Abuse and Mental
Health Services Administration

www.samhsa.gov

- Recovery is holistic.** Recovery encompasses an individual's whole life, including mind, body, spirit, and community. This includes addressing: self-care practices; family; housing; employment; transportation; education; clinical treatment for mental health and substance use disorders; services and supports; primary healthcare; dental care; complementary and alternative services; faith and spirituality; creativity; social networks; and community participation. The array of services and supports available should be integrated and coordinated.
- Recovery is supported by peers and allies.** Mutual support and mutual aid groups, including the sharing of experiential knowledge and skills, as well as social learning, play an invaluable role in recovery. Peers encourage and engage other peers and provide each other with a vital sense of belonging, supportive relationships, valued roles, and community. Through helping others and giving back to the community, one helps oneself.
- Recovery is supported through relationship and social networks.** An important factor in the recovery process is the presence and involvement of people who believe in the person's ability to recover; who offer hope, support, and encouragement; and who also suggest strategies and resources for change. Family members, peers, providers, faith groups, community members, and other allies form vital support networks. Through these relationships, people leave unhealthy and/or unfulfilling life roles behind and engage in new roles (e.g., partner, caregiver, friend, student, employee) that lead to a greater sense of belonging, personhood, empowerment, autonomy, social inclusion, and community participation.
- Recovery is culturally-based and influenced.** Culture and cultural background in all of its diverse representations—including values, traditions, and beliefs—are keys in determining an individual's journey and unique pathway to recovery. Services should be culturally grounded, attuned, sensitive, congruent, and competent, as well as personalized to meet each individual's unique needs.
- Recovery is supported by addressing trauma.** The experience of trauma (such as physical or sexual abuse, domestic violence, war, disaster, and others) is often a precursor to or associated with alcohol and drug misuse, mental health problems, and related issues. Services and supports should be trauma-informed to foster safety (physical and emotional) and trust, as well as promote choice, empowerment, and collaboration.
- Recovery involves individual, family, and community strengths and responsibility.** Individuals, families, and communities have strengths and resources that serve as a foundation for recovery. In addition, everyone has a personal responsibility for their own self-care and journeys of recovery. Individuals should be supported in speaking for themselves. Families and significant others have responsibilities to support their loved ones, especially for children and youth in recovery. Communities have responsibilities to provide opportunities and resources to address discrimination and to foster social inclusion and recovery. People in recovery also have a social responsibility and should have the ability to join with peers to speak collectively about their strengths, needs, wants, desires, and aspirations.
- Recovery is based on respect.** Community, systems, and societal acceptance and appreciation for people affected by mental health and substance misuse problems—including protecting their rights and eliminating discrimination—are crucial in achieving recovery. There is a need to acknowledge that taking steps towards recovery may require great courage. Self-acceptance, developing a positive and meaningful sense of identity, and regaining belief in one's self are particularly important.

Individuals seeking treatment and recovery for substance misuse can contact Connecticut's **24/7 Access Line** at **1.800.563.4086**. People looking for mental health services can call **United Way 211** by dialing **2-1-1**.

