Guiding Principles of Recovery

- **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.

- **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.

- **Recovery occurs via many pathways.** Individuals are unique with distinct needs, strengths, preferences, goals, culture, and backgrounds – including trauma experiences – that affect and determine their pathway to recovery. Abstinence is the safest approach for those with substance use disorders.

- **Recovery is holistic.** Recovery encompasses an individual’s whole life, including mind, body, spirit, and community. 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.

- **Recovery is supported through relationships 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.

- **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 a person’s journey and unique pathway to recovery.

- **Recovery is supported by addressing trauma.** 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 responsibilities.** Individuals, families, and communities have strengths and resources that serve as a foundation for recovery.

- **Recovery is based on respect.** Community, systems, and societal acceptance and appreciation for people affected by mental health and substance use problems – including protecting their rights and eliminating discrimination – are crucial in achieving recovery.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), 2011
www.samhsa.gov/newsroom/advisories/111223420.aspx