

## Recovery

Recovery Month is held each September to educate Americans about substance use treatment and mental health services, which can enable those with mental and substance use disorders to live healthy and rewarding lives while contributing to their communities. The Recovery Month theme for 2019 is, *“Join the Voices for Recovery: Together We Are Stronger,”* and emphasizes the need to share resources and build networks to support recovery.

Supportive interpersonal relationships and positive messages often guide people toward recovery. To help someone you care about who might be abusing substances, try to answer the questions below as honestly as possible:

1. Does the person take the drug in larger amounts or for longer than intended?
2. Do they want to cut down or stop using the drug but can't?
3. Do they spend a lot of time getting, using, or recovering from the drug?
4. Do they have cravings and urges to use the drug?
5. Are they unable to manage responsibilities at work, home, or school because of drug use?
6. Do they continue to use a drug, even when it causes problems in relationships?
7. Do they give up important social, recreational, or work-related activities because of drug use?
8. Do they use drugs again and again, even when it puts them in danger?
9. Do they continue to use, even while knowing that a physical or mental problem could have been caused or made worse by the drug?
10. Do they take more of the drug to get the wanted effect?
11. Have they developed withdrawal symptoms, which can be relieved by taking more of the drug?

If the answer to some or all of these questions is yes, your friend or loved one might have a substance use disorder.

I recently spoke with two individuals about their lives before and after recovery. One indicated that her life was “disastrous” prior to recovery. “I did not care about anything. Not even myself.” Now that she is in sustained recovery, she said, “I have learned that the struggles and negative feelings we face are only temporary and not to let them define us. I have learned coping skills that almost come naturally now. I care to the fullest extent.” The other individual said that prior to his recovery, “My life was a downward spiral. I was fueled by my drug use. My use was winning the battle over me. I was close to death every single day.” Now, with 16 months of sobriety under his belt, he says, “Life couldn't be better. I reached every goal I put in front of myself so far. The sky is the limit.”

Free, confidential help is available 24/7 through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) National Helpline, **1-800-662-HELP (4357)** or by going to <https://recoverymonth.gov>.

Remember: behavioral health is essential to overall health. Prevention works, treatment is effective, and people can and do recover.

For more information, please visit our website at [www.drugfreeadamscounty.org](http://www.drugfreeadamscounty.org).