

Through the Recovery Support Strategic Initiative, SAMHSA has outlined four major dimensions that support a life in recovery:

- **Health:** overcoming or managing one's disease(s) or symptoms as well as living in a physically and emotionally healthy way;
- **Home:** having a stable and safe place to live;
- **Purpose:** conducting meaningful daily activities, such as a job, school, volunteerism, family caretaking, or creative endeavors, and the independence, income, and resources to participate in society; and
- **Community:** having relationships and social networks that provide support, friendship, love, and hope.

SAMHSA also set Guiding Principles of Recovery to reflect common elements of the recovery experience for those with mental disorders and/or substance use disorders:

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 that confront them. Hope is internalized and can be fostered by peers, families, providers, allies, and others. Hope is the catalyst of the recovery process.

2. Recovery is person-driven

Self-determination and self-direction are the foundations for recovery as individuals set their own life goals and design their unique path(s) toward those goals. Autonomy and independence are optimized by leading, controlling, and exercising choice over the services and supports that assist in their recovery and resilience. In so doing, they are empowered and provided the resources to make informed decisions, initiate recovery, build on their strengths, and gain or regain control over their lives.

3. Recovery occurs via many pathways

Individuals are unique with distinct needs, strengths, preferences, goals, culture, and backgrounds that affect and determine their pathway to recovery. Recovery paths are highly individualized and may include professional clinical treatment, medication, support from families and in schools, faith-based communities, and others. Setbacks can occur at any part of the process and need to be met with resilience.

4. Recovery is holistic

Recovery encompasses a person's whole life, including mind, body, spirit, and community. This includes addressing: self-care practices, family, housing, employment, transportation, education, clinical treatment for mental disorders, services and support, primary healthcare, dental care, spirituality, social networks, and community participation. The array of services and supports available should be integrated and coordinated.

5. Recovery is supported by peers and allies

Mutual support and aid groups play an invaluable role in recovery. Peers encourage and engage other peers while providing them with a vital sense of belonging, supportive relationships, valued roles, and community. Through helping others and giving back to the community, one helps one's self. Peer supports for families are very important for children with behavioral health problems and can also play a supportive role for youth in recovery.

6. Recovery is supported through relationship and social networks

An important factor in the recovery process is the presence 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. Through these relationships, people leave unhealthy and/or unfulfilling life roles behind and engage in new roles that lead to a greater sense of belonging.

7. 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 to recovery. Services should be culturally grounded as well as personalized to meet each individual’s needs.

8. 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 use, mental health problems, and related issues. Services and support systems should be trauma-informed to foster safety and trust while promoting choice, empowerment, and collaboration.

9. 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, individuals have 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 need to provide opportunities and resources to address discrimination and to promote social inclusion and recovery.

10. Recovery is based on respect

Community, systems, and societal acceptance and appreciation for people affected by mental health and substance use problems are crucial in achieving recovery. Steps taken toward recovery require great courage and need to be acknowledged. Self-acceptance, developing a positive and meaningful sense of identity, and regaining belief in one’s self are particularly important.

<https://www.samhsa.gov/recovery>