STAYING SOBER AFTER REHAB

Treatments That Make Long-Term Recovery Possible

MERIDIAN HEALTHCARE

ADDICTION

Life in recovery is about finding yourself again through moments of growth and healing. It gives you the chance to wake up with a clear mind, see the sunrise, and enjoy the fresh morning air.

When you choose sobriety, you get back to what really matters. You might become more focused. You might have more energy to put into work or school. Or, you might simply enjoy spending more time with the people you love.

Recovery isn't always easy, though. There are tough times when things feel especially hard. In these moments, staying on track can take a lot of effort. Sobriety is about finding balance, facing both the good days and the bad, and learning to be kind to yourself while continuing to move forward.

Each step you take in your recovery journey is a step toward a better and more fulfilling life – a life where you can be yourself, be present, and keep growing.

Long-term sobriety is 100% possible, especially when you have the right knowledge, tools, and support!

Understanding Relapse

Relapse is the process of returning to - or never fully leaving behind - the same feelings, actions, and/or thoughts associated with substance use. If this process is not interrupted, it can ultimately lead to a return to use.

Change doesn't happen overnight. And, a return to use doesn't mean you have to give up on your recovery journey. Be open and honest with your counselor so you can determine what triggered the relapse and develop stronger coping mechanisms for the future.

Possible Triggers for Relapse

- Stress
- Emotional distress or anxiety
- Feelings of emptiness
- Feelings of boredom
- Feelings of sadness or depression
- Being around people or places associated with past use
- Peer pressure
- Physical discomfort and pain
- Withdrawal symptoms
- Physical dependence or cravings
- Relationship issues
- Celebrations and holidays
- Isolation

Stages of Relapse

There are often warning signs when you're at risk for relapse. Just like change, relapse often has stages, and understanding these stages helps to identify when extra self-care and support is needed.

Emotional Relapse

The first stage of relapse is emotional. You may start to feel negative emotions like anger, stress, or anxiety that easily become overwhelming. Feelings of sadness might set in, causing you to pull away from others.

At this stage, the thought of using again may not cross your mind. In fact, you might not even realize that you're at risk of relapsing. But if this emotional overload isn't managed in a healthy and productive way, it can lead to the next stage.

Mental Relapse

During the second stage, you are actively thinking about using even if you want to remain sober. At this point, it's important to seek help from your support system before these thoughts get stronger or more frequent.

Physical Relapse

Physical relapse is the final stage here actual use occurs. It may begin with a singular lapse but can suddenly turn into regular use.

Remember, no matter where you are on your recovery journey, treat yourself with compassion. Relapse doesn't need to be the end of your sobriety.

Understanding what triggers you and developing better skills and tools to deal with relapse make sobriety more successful. The key is to never give up and to explore every avenue for support.

Protecting Your Sobriety After Rehab

Maintaining sobriety means taking care of your well-being – mental, social, physical, and medical. Seeking treatment and support for each aspect makes long-term recovery easier.

Mental Health Support

The relapse cycle often begins with negative emotions that trigger the urge to use. (Because no matter how hard you try, you can't always avoid stress, pressure, or periods of sadness — they're a natural part of life.)

Therapy teaches you how to manage these emotions in healthy ways. It gives you a safe space to work through difficult feelings and situations. Different types of therapy are available to help build the skills needed to make long-term recovery possible.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

CBT helps you identify and manage negative thought patterns. It teaches you how to recognize these thoughts and replace them with healthier ones. CBT also focuses on mindfulness and problem-solving skills, which can help you cope with difficult emotions and urges to use.

Motivational Interviewing (MI)

MI involves exploring your motivations to change any beliefs that are holding you back from maintaining sobriety. It uses open-ended questions to explore and underscore your reasons for recovery. By affirming these reasons, it's easier to combat desires to use again.

Contingency Management (CM)

Our brains are naturally wired to seek immediate rewards, which makes recovery from addiction challenging. The benefits of sobriety, which include better health, better relationships, and improved job opportunities, often take time to see, while the perceived rewards of using can feel instant. CM helps by providing immediate rewards for positive behaviors, such as staying sober.

Psychodynamic Psychotherapy

The psychodynamic psychotherapy method explores unconscious motivations and conflicts that drive addiction. The goal is to identify the defense mechanism you use when you are distressed and unconscious factors that drive you toward relapse. This helps you overcome thoughts and desires to return to use.

Social Support Groups

Even when you've learned how to manage your thoughts and emotions in healthier ways, facing life's challenges alone can still be difficult. Having a strong support system is essential for recovery. Research shows that people with a solid, supportive social network are more likely to maintain sobriety.

Living a sober life may mean saying goodbye to old friends who support old, unhealthy habits, which can increase feelings of isolation and risk of relapse.

Joining a support group like Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous can help you build a new social support network. The people in these groups understand exactly what you're going through and support your recovery journey. They can also offer guidance and encouragement during times when you feel tempted to relapse.

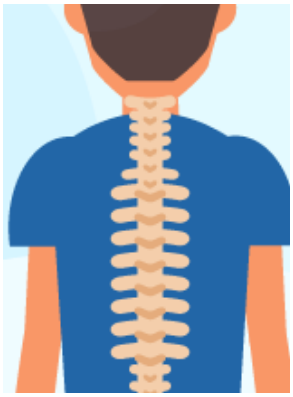
Physical Treatments

Both acupuncture and chiropractic care can be a helpful aspect of the recovery process. By addressing physical symptoms without the use of medication, individuals receive care without worrying about potentially addictive substances for pain relief.

Acupuncture and chiropractic care help with addiction recovery by reducing stress, easing anxiety, and relieving physical pain or discomfort. These therapies are successful in supporting overall well-being, making it easier to manage cravings.

Acupuncture

Acupuncture works by stimulating specific points on the body that balance energy, reduce tension, and promote relaxation. Many people in recovery find that acupuncture helps manage their withdrawal symptoms, decrease cravings, and improve sleep. By creating a sense of calm and grounding, it supports emotional healing to make coping with the ups and downs of recovery easier.



Chiropractic Care

Chiropractic treatments focus on aligning the spine and relieving tension in the body, which can be especially helpful for those dealing with physical stress or discomfort during recovery. Regular chiropractic spinal adjustments can improve your overall physical health, reduce pain, and boost your overall mood. Many find that feeling better physically makes it easier to commit to recovery and focus on building a healthier, substance-free lifestyle.

Medical Treatment

Some medications support addiction recovery by managing cravings and withdrawal symptoms. It's important to work with a trusted primary care physician to find the options that are most effective for you.

If medication is part of your recovery plan, you need to stick to the prescribed schedule and treatment, including regular check-ins with your healthcare provider and/or counselor.

Alcohol Use Disorder Medications

Disulfiram

Disulfiram disrupts the metabolism of alcohol. If you drink while taking the medication, it causes unpleasant reactions like nausea, vomiting, and shortness of breath. In some cases, the reaction can be severe.

Reactions usually last 30 to 60 minutes when they are mild. However, severe reactions can last for hours.

Naltrexone

Naltrexone is used for both alcohol use disorder (AUD) and opioid use. It reduces the urge to consume substances by targeting certain receptors in the brain.

Acamprosate

This medication prevents you from returning to alcohol use by reducing cravings. It restores the proper balance of certain neurotransmitters damaged by alcohol use and withdrawal.

Opioid Use Disorder Medications

Naltrexone

Naltrexone is an opioid antagonist, meaning it activates the same receptors in the brain as the drug. This blocks the effect of opioid use, preventing intoxication and lowering dependence on use.

Buprenorphine

Buprenorphine is a partial opioid antagonist that blocks the effects of opioids while reducing cravings and withdrawal symptoms.

Methadone

Methadone is a full opioid antagonist. Like Naltrexone and Buprenorphine, it eliminates withdrawal symptoms and the euphoric effects of use.

Take Sobriety One Step at a Time

Maintaining sobriety is a journey that requires patience and daily effort. Sometimes it's hard to navigate, but you don't have to do it alone.

Therapists, primary care physicians, and the right social support networks all work together to help you maintain your sobriety and make long-term recovery easier.

At Meridian HealthCare, we've been working for over 50 years to help people find true healing. We've watched our clients overcome recovery challenges so they can build new lives full of love and hope. We know it's possible with the right support.

If you're looking for help on your recovery journey, **reach out** or give us a call today at **330-992-2493**. Our addiction-informed therapists and primary care doctors are here to provide the compassionate care you need to build your better tomorrow. We're ready when you're ready.

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