

# RECOVERY AND BEYOND DRUG REHAB GUIDE

PUTTING THE PRINCIPLES AND LESSONS LEARNED DURING DRUG REHABILITATION INTO PRACTICE IN THE REAL WORLD TAKES EVEN MORE HARD WORK, DEDICATION AND PRACTICE



Aftercare



Employment



Family Concerns



Relapse Prevention

## Get ANSWERS To These Questions And More



“Recovering addicts face a variety of obstacles that make it challenging, but not impossible.”

“Recovery from substance abuse and addiction is a lifelong process.”

- What is aftercare and why is it necessary?
- What are common relapse triggers?
- What are relapse warning signs?
- What are the components of effective aftercare?
- What are some practical aftercare tips?
- What to do in the event of a relapse?



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# 1st

## First And Foremost

“Substance abuse and addiction is a lifelong process.”



Graduating from drug rehabilitation treatment for substance abuse is a fantastic accomplishment

First and foremost, graduating from drug rehabilitation treatment for substance abuse is a fantastic accomplishment. It requires hard work, dedication and patience to be successful and one that every individual who achieves it should be proud of. However, putting those principles and lessons learned during drug rehabilitation into practice in the real world takes even more hard work, dedication and practice.

### RECOVERY IS A LIFELONG PROCESS

While it is tempting for anyone who has made it through addiction rehabilitation to come to the conclusion that they are “recovered”, in reality recovery from substance abuse and addiction is a lifelong process. Even though a person has discontinued use of a particular substance and has detoxed physically from the substance, the process of living a life without substance begins.

### LIFE’S DAILY CHALLENGES AND STRESSES

Formal inpatient or outpatient drug rehabilitation programs don’t have an infinite life. In fact, they typically last for a few weeks or months. While drug rehab is an intensive treatment with enlightened learning and immeasurable benefits, learning to deal with life’s daily challenges and stresses is key to preventing a relapse and maintaining recovery.

That said, recovering alcoholics and substance abusers face a variety of obstacles and barriers that make it challenging, but not impossible, to maintain their recovery. These challenges include fighting cravings, recognizing and dealing with relapse triggers, finding and maintaining employment, interacting socially with family and friends and more.

### AFTERCARE TREATMENT AND PROGRAMS

Fortunately, aftercare treatment and programs help recovering individuals who have completed drug or alcohol abuse rehab continue to live substance abuse free lives.

This Recovery and Beyond Drug Rehab Guide provides information that family members and concerned friends need to know about aftercare treatment and what’s beyond drug rehabilitation.

### Obstacles And Barriers For Maintaining Sobriety



- Fighting Cravings
- Relapse Triggers
- Employment
- Social Interactions

Family Members And Concerned Friends Need To Know About Aftercare

# Defined

# Aftercare Defined

“The risk of relapse is a very real reality even after years of abstinence and sobriety.”



It is easier to focus on beating an addiction when surrounded by supporting counselors

Aftercare, also referred to as continuing care, occurs following discharge from a formal substance abuse treatment program, whether that is an inpatient residential program, an outpatient rehabilitation program or some other specialized drug rehab program. It occurs when the patient no longer needs therapy at the intensity required during an initial treatment period. Any subsequent interventions after a primary substance abuse treatment constitutes aftercare, and may include:

- Individual or group therapy (support groups)
- Counseling
- Ongoing education
- 12-Step or Self-Help Groups (such as AA, NA, Al-Anon and Nar-Anon)
- Sober Houses or Halfway Houses

## BENEFITS OF AFTERCARE

Did You Know? Up to 46 percent and 48 percent of recovering alcoholics relapse within six months of inpatient and outpatient treatment, respectively, according to [Alcohol and Alcoholism](#).

Surrounded by supporting counselors and knowledgeable experts in substance abuse addiction, it is easier to focus on beating an addiction and concentrating on recovery. But in the environment outside of a formal rehab program, relapse is familiar for many.

The risk of relapse is a very real reality that both recovering drug abusers and alcoholics live with on a daily basis, even after months or years of abstinence and sobriety. But if the practices learned during a supportive residential or outpatient environment continue to be entrenched in the life of a recovering individual, the risk of relapse is significantly reduced. In a nutshell, that’s what aftercare helps deliver.

Aftercare services can significantly increase the chances of avoiding relapse and staying clean after drug, rehab, reports the [Cleveland Clinic](#), with one caveat -- if the patient participates actively.

**TAKEAWAY** - With continued aftercare and active patient participation, relapse is preventable.

Aftercare Services Can Significantly Decrease Relapse



- Therapy
- Counseling
- Self-Help Groups
- Sober Houses

With Continued Aftercare and Active Patient Participation, Relapse Is Preventable



WARNING

# Relapse warning signs

“There isn’t just one relapse warning sign, there are many.”



Because relapse is preventable, it is important to know the significant behaviors displayed

Although relapse from substance abuse rehabilitation is common, it rarely comes without a warning. Because relapse is preventable, it is important to know the significant behaviors displayed that signal that a recovering individual is at a high risk for relapse. There isn’t just one relapse warning sign, there are many.

## BEHAVIORAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL RELAPSE WARNING SIGNS:

- Denial
- Impulse behavior
- Depression (either mild or deep)
- Isolating oneself
- Feeling frustrated
- Easily angered
- Eating irregularities
- Sleeping irregularities
- Lack of concern over appearance
- Lack of daily structure
- Open rejection for assistance or help
- Sudden need for money
- Self-pity
- Drop in work or school attendance
- Discontinuance of aftercare activities

## Some Physical Signs That Signal A Relapse



- Mood Swings
- Lethargy
- Fighting
- Unusual Odor

Relapse From Substance Abuse Rehabilitation is common, it rarely comes without a warning

## PHYSICAL SIGNS THAT SIGNAL A RELAPSE

Physical signs that signal a relapse include bloodshot eyes, large or small pupils, sudden weight loss or weight gain, slurred speech, tremors, mood swings, agitation, fights with coworkers or friends, lethargy or unusual odor on body, clothes, or breath. Oftentimes, it is not just one warning sign that indicates that a relapse is imminent, it is actually a combination of warning signs.

## Bloodshot Eyes





# Relapse Triggers

A single episode of abuse, is considered a relapse."



A relapse trigger is an event, emotion, or mindset that justifies substance abuse behavior

## Know Relapse Triggers And How To Handle Them



- Boredom
- Overconfidence
- Old Friends
- Self-Pity

Relapse is a far too common story that's almost always brought on by certain triggers

A "lapse", sometimes referred to as a "slip", usually involves a single episode of a recovering individual use of a substance after a period of rehabilitation and abstinence. However, some say that a return to any amount of substance use, even if a single episode, is considered a relapse, as the National Institute on Drug Abuse points out. Others usually brought one by one or more relapse triggers, and the important point is to prevent a single lapse from spiralling into a relapse. It is important to note that a lapse doesn't also precede a relapse.

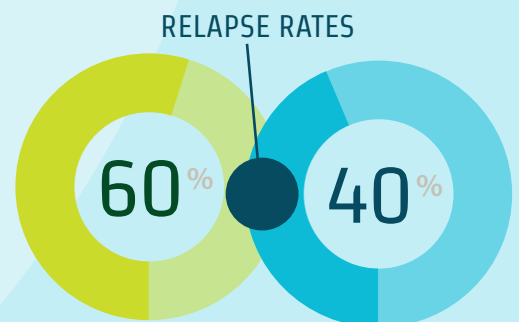
A relapse trigger is an event, emotion, or mindset (disguised as an excuse) that gives someone the justification to return to substance abuse behavior.

Did You Know? Relapse rates for drug addiction range between 40 and 60 percent, according to the [National Institute on Drug Abuse](#).

## COMMON RELAPSE TRIGGERS

While relapse rates vary depending on the substance abused, relapse is a far too common story that's almost always brought on by certain triggers. A fundamental skill that the recovering patient needs to learn is to practice drug and alcohol addiction relapse prevention skills by knowing what relapse triggers are, and how to handle them. The most important thing to do for someone who is recovering from a history of drug abuse is to help that person avoid relapse triggers such as these:

- Return to Former Associations
- Stress
- Loneliness
- Exhaustion
- Boredom
- Self-Pity
- Overconfidence
- Great Expectations



Relapse rates range between 40% and 60%

# Return to Former Associations

A Deeper Look at These Triggers

## Stress and Loneliness

“A Return To Old Crowds Can Cause A Relapse.”



Wanting to belong, glamorizing and missing the good old days can be a very strong pull toward relapse

Lookout For Stressors That Could Derail Recovery



- Work
- Finances
- Children
- Health

Loneliness is One of Four Common Relapse Triggers

Part of H.A.L.T.

### RETURN TO FORMER ASSOCIATIONS

Whenever former drug abusers or recovering alcoholics return to their old crowds, bad things can happen. In the recovery community there's a saying so common that it made [The Fix's list](#) of AAs Most Annoying Clichés,

“If you hang around a barber shop long enough, sooner or later you're gonna get a haircut.”

However tired and overused it may be, there is a distinct ring of truth to the saying. The last place a recovering substance abuser needs to be is in the company of people who presently abuse drugs.

[Psychology Today](#) backs this up saying, “Wanting to belong, glamorizing and missing the good old days can be a very strong pull toward relapse.”

### STRESS

A recent study, conducted by [Brown University](#) and published in *Neuron*, reveals that scientists have now identified “Specific key steps in the chain of events that causes stress-related drug relapse. They identified the exact region of the brain where the events take place in rat models and showed that by blocking a step, they could prevent stress-related relapse.” Despite the years of stress-related drug abuse relapse; there is now evidence that a drug may be created to reduce that likelihood, concludes the study. Until then, anyone watching a loved one struggling with recovery needs to be on the lookout for potential stressors that could derail the recovery process.

### LONELINESS

Loneliness is one of four common relapse triggers (part of H.A.L.T. - hunger, anxiety, loneliness and tiredness), lists [Narcotics Anonymous](#). People in recovery often had intricate social circles based around their use of drugs or alcohol. During recovery, those social circles are no longer available to them and they're often intimidated by the prospect of seeking out new and unfamiliar friends. It's not possible for one person to be all aspects of socialization for another person but it's important to be there for loved ones going through recovery so they don't succumb to loneliness and return to old friends and social circles.

# Exhaustion - Boredom - Self-Pity

A Deeper Look at These Triggers

"Tiredness Is Another One Of The Four Common H.A.L.T. Relapse Triggers."



While relapse is usually triggered by a combination of factors, constant boredom is a possible cause

People Consider Themselves Victims Of Circumstance



- Life
- Other People
- Drugs & Alcohol
- Everything

The Alcoholic Or Substance Abuser Are Not Used To Feeling Good About Themselves

## EXHAUSTION

Tiredness is another one of the four common H.A.L.T. relapse triggers. Becoming overly tired leaves recovering substance abusers in a state of mind where they are likely to make poor decisions that lead them off the road to recovery straight into relapse.

## BOREDOM

While relapse is usually triggered by a combination of factors, constant boredom is a possible cause, according to [University of Utah Health Sciences](#). Lack of structure and routine in life can cause the recovering abuser to be pulled back into old habits. "During the long trek toward sustained sobriety, persistent and sustained boredom is unquestionably the feeling state that the average person struggles with most, and it is the effect that relapsed addicts invariably cite as the primary reason for succumbing to the temptation to use again." reports [Psychology Today](#) in the article [Recovery from Boredom](#).

## SELF-PITY

Some people consider themselves victims of circumstance, life, other people, and even alcohol or drugs. They blame any and everything else in the world for their abuse of alcohol and drugs and feel powerless to manifest real change and overcome their addictions. [Med Help](#) points out that the alcoholic or substance abuser are not used to feeling good about themselves, and can actually relish low self worth and self-pity. However, when the recovering patient starts to feel good about themselves, this is the time they need to practice what was working for them and work harder in their recovery.

EXHAUSTION  
BOREDOM  
SELF-PITY



A Deeper Look at These Triggers

# Overconfidence & Great Expectations

“Overconfidence could very easily turn into an opportunity to relapse.”



Why not have drinks to celebrate a project successfully completed or smoke a joint to relax?

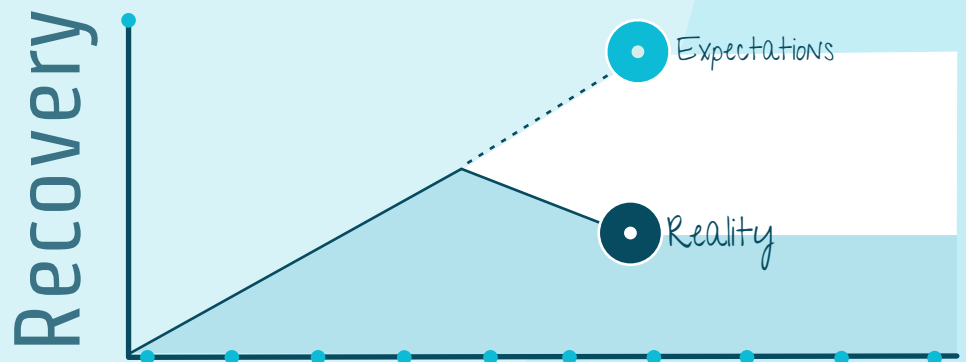
## OVERCONFIDENCE

Some people going through recovery become complacent or even cocky in their ability to overcome the addiction and handle things in the future. Unfortunately, this frequently results in them failing to follow the prescribed program and practice diligence in their efforts to avoid situations where they may be tempted to use drugs.

“Overconfidence could very easily turn into an opportunity to relapse. Why not have drinks to celebrate a project successfully completed or smoke a joint to relax? What harm could it do? You know the answer to this one. It’s not likely to stop at one drink. The next thing the person knows, he or she may be on the wrong side of sobriety, having slipped into relapse,” reports [Addiction Treatment Magazine](#).

## GREAT EXPECTATIONS

It’s important for people recovering from addiction to have positive attitudes and high expectations. There’s a thin line between a positive outlook and expecting too much (from themselves, the recovery process, and other people). During the recovery process, it is important to ask for help when it’s necessary. Learning they can’t do everything by themselves is an important part of the recovery process.



Be watchful of loved ones going through recovery who do not ask for help at all, begin to rely on another person too heavily or seem to think the process itself will cure everything without making other necessary changes. These are all signs that expectations, somewhere along the line, are too high and relapse is a possible outcome.

Be Careful Of Having Too High Of Expectations From:



- Yourself
- Other People
- Recovery Process

Be watchful Of Loved Ones Going Through Recovery Who Do Not Ask For Help At All



# Other Common Relapse Triggers ↓

“Triggers should be carefully monitored if you are helping a loved one .”



The threat of relapse is one that hangs over the head of everyone going through recovery from addiction

Find Options That Remove Triggers



- Rest
- Exercise
- Healthy Diet

watch For These Potential Triggers And work To Prevent Them when They arise



THERE ARE SEVERAL OTHER TRIGGERS THAT COMMONLY LEAD TO RELAPSE. THEY INCLUDE:

- Physical pain
- Cravings
- Lack of purpose (employment, school, goals, etc.)
- Anger
- Prescription drug use
- Depression
- Impatience
- Dishonesty
- Frustration

These triggers, like the other mentioned above, should be carefully monitored if you are helping a loved one work through the recovery process. Find options that remove these triggers from the table so your loved one has a greater chance of full recovery from addiction.

Takeaway - The threat of relapse is one that hangs over the head of everyone going through recovery from addiction. It's a valid fear, but one that shouldn't overshadow any progress being made. Watch for these potential triggers and work to prevent them when they arise.



- physical Pain
- Cravings
- Lack Of Purpose
- Anger
- Prescription Drug Use
- Depression
- Impatience
- Dishonesty
- Frustration

# Components of Effective Aftercare

## 1 Counseling – Individual & Group

“Counseling and other behavioral therapies are critical in recovery.”



There's no denying that effective aftercare is a vital part of the addiction recovery process. Aftercare programs provide people recovering from drug addiction with important tools for managing relationships, coping with stress, and effectively dealing with family dynamics and relapse triggers.

### AFTERCARE COMPONENTS INCLUDE:

- Counseling – Individual and Group
- 12-Step Aftercare
- Getting a Sponsor
- Ongoing Education
- Relapse Prevention Skills
- Out-Patient Aftercare
- Family Involvement
- Sober Living Housing
- Job Placement Assistance
- Narcotics Anonymous or Alcoholics Anonymous



### COUNSELING – INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP

“Counseling and other behavioral therapies are critical components of virtually all effective treatments for addiction.”

-The University of Utah Health Sciences

Both individual and group counseling are important tools to include in the aftercare process. Group counseling provides a sense of solidarity and allows people recovering from drug abuse to associate with others who are recovering and understand that they are not alone in their struggles. It also gives them an opportunity to sound off on concerns, fears, and temptations they face openly without concern over repercussions from loved ones.

Individual therapy, on the other hand, is necessary because drug addiction rarely happens without other underlying emotional and/or mental health needs. These needs must be met in order for the person recovering from addiction to truly move on.

Individual & Group Counseling Gives People In Recovery:



- Sense Of Solidarity
- Freedom To Express
- Mental Clarity

Drug Addiction Rarely Happens without Other Underlying Emotional and/or Mental Health Needs.

Components of Effective Aftercare

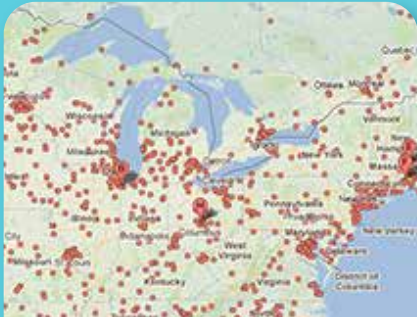
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12-Step Aftercare

3

Ongoing Education

“Larger cities often have 12-step meetings at any hour of the day or night.”



12-Step Aftercare programs available in almost every community throughout the country

### 12-STEP AFTERCARE

12-step programs are widely available to people recovering from addiction. They are available in almost every community throughout the country to offer essential guidance and support to anyone going through the recovery process. The programs are called 12 step programs because of the 12-steps involved in recovery originally published by Alcoholics Anonymous.



While the steps are cardinal, the sense of community in these programs is even more vital. Fellowship among others who have moved on and are embracing life beyond addiction is a great way for people struggling to cope with recovery the strength to believe they can do it too.

Larger cities often have 12-step meetings at any hour of the day or night. Small towns may have fewer meetings, but there’s always the option of online meetings and meetings via telephone for additional support.

### ONGOING EDUCATION

Continuing education is a necessary part of the aftercare process. Not only do recovering drug abusers need to be educated about the drugs they’ve abused in the past, the impact of those drugs on their bodies, and the potential consequences of relapse, but they also must be educated in a manner that’s meaningful for life beyond addiction. This will help them develop the training and skills they need to find meaningful employment in the future.

“Without access to education, job opportunities, housing, insurance, and health care including drug dependence treatment, persons in recovery face a higher risk of relapse and related mortality and also increase the burden on their communities.”

— United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Recovering drug abusers need to be educated about:



- Impact Of Drugs
- Relapse
- Training And Skills

There is a Higher Risk Of Relapse without Access To Education, Job Opportunities, Housing, Insurance, And Health Care

Components of Effective Aftercare

# 4 Getting a Sponsor

“Sponsors share their experience, strength, and hope with their sponsees.”



Sponsors are voices of experience that can be instrumental in helping a person to recovery

A Sponsor Can Help In Recovery With:



- A New Perspective
- General Direction
- Understanding

Sometimes All It Takes Is Saying Something Out Loud To Someone Else For Me To See Things Differently

## GETTING A SPONSOR

“Sponsors share their experience, strength, and hope with their sponsees. Some describe their sponsor as loving and compassionate, someone they can count on to listen and support them no matter what. Others value the objectivity and detachment a sponsor can offer, relying on their direct and honest input even when it may be difficult to accept. Still others turn to a sponsor mainly for guidance through the Twelve Steps.”

— Narcotics Anonymous World Services, Inc.

Sponsors are voices of experience that can be instrumental in helping a person walk the rocky road to recovery. Not only are these people who have usually been there and done their time with addiction, but also they are people who are on the other side and have long experience with sobriety. The role of the sponsor in any 12-step program is to teach the 12-steps to recovery and provide emotional support and friendship along the way.

Most 12-step programs set aside time at every meeting for sponsorship. All one needs to do in order to find a sponsor is ask for one. It’s a mutually beneficial relationship so people in search of sponsorship should not feel as though they’re imposing. Sponsors are seeking an opportunity to give back and help someone with their experience.

As one recovering patient said about their sponsor to NA,

“I rely on my sponsor to give me general direction and a new perspective. If nothing else, she’s an important sounding board. Sometimes all it takes is saying something out loud to someone else for me to see things differently.”

“my Life is CRAZY right now and I don't think I can handle it.”



Components of Effective Aftercare

- 5 Family Involvement
- 6 Relapse Prevention Skills
- 2 Out-Patient Aftercare

“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”



Anyone going through drug addiction rehabilitation is encouraged to participate in out-patient aftercare

Outpatient Aftercare Provides Tools For Recovery



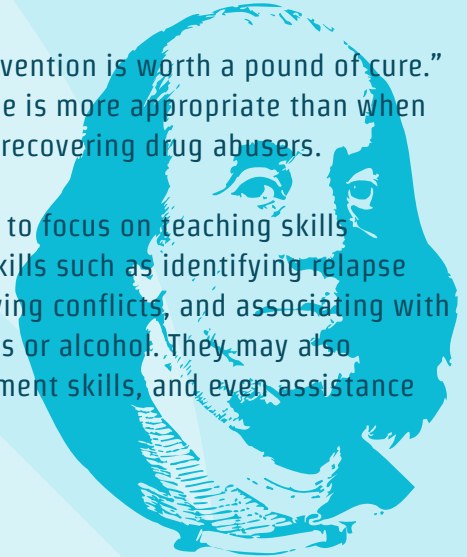
- Life Skills
- Socialization Skills
- Drug Screenings
- Legal Advocacy

Family and Friends Involvement is Critical To The Success Of Recovery.

## RELAPSE PREVENTION SKILLS

Benjamin Franklin said “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” There are few instances where this quote is more appropriate than when discussing relapse prevention skills for recovering drug abusers.

The best way, by far, to avoid relapse is to focus on teaching skills necessary to prevent it. These include skills such as identifying relapse triggers, managing relationships, resolving conflicts, and associating with people who do not currently abuse drugs or alcohol. They may also include continuing education, job placement skills, and even assistance for finding homes and jobs after rehab.



## OUT-PATIENT AFTERCARE

Anyone going through drug addiction rehabilitation is encouraged to participate in out-patient aftercare once the residential aspect of rehabilitation is through. However, it is even more necessary for those who come from situations or environments that leave them at high risks for relapse to participate.

These programs are not simple cheerleading sessions designed to encourage sobriety. They offer real lessons in life skills, socialization skills, mental health treatments, relapse prevention efforts, drug screenings, legal advocacy, and even affiliations with sober living homes in the community.

## FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

“Family and friends involvement in supporting those in alcohol and drug rehabilitation is critical to the success of recovery.”

— McLean Hospital, A Harvard Medical School Affiliate

Many programs schedule family sessions onsite and via telephone conferencing to aid the recovery process even during the inpatient stages of recovery. People coping with addiction need, more than ever, to feel as though they have the people they love the most in their corner and it gives them the perfect opportunity to practice new social skills and behavior.

Components of Effective Aftercare

# 2 Sober Living Housing 8 Job Placement Assistance

“Getting a job after rehab is often difficult. However, it’s essential .”



Sober living homes serve as an important buffer between rehab and returning to the real world

Sober Living Homes Often Have Strict Requirements



- 12-step Meetings
- Drug Testing
- Daily Chores
- Curfews

The Real Battle Begins The Day Recovering Drug Abusers Walk Outside The Doors

## JOB PLACEMENT ASSISTANCE

Getting a job after rehab is often difficult. However, it’s essential to helping people struggling to succeed and lead drug-free lifestyles to feel like contributing members of society once again. Getting a job and gaining some degree of financial stability is an important part of the process. That’s why job placement assistance is so important to a sustainable aftercare or relapse prevention effort.

## SOBER LIVING HOUSING

Not everyone going into recovery has a permanent home environment that is favorable for sustaining recovery. Sober living houses can be found in communities, large and small, throughout the country. They offer an environment free of drugs and alcohol where people can stay during the recovery process. These facilities are not endorsed or licensed by the state and must be paid for by the residents.

Sober living homes often have strict requirements for their residents including participation in 12-step programs, weekly or monthly drug testing, daily chores, curfews, and cleanliness guidelines. They serve as an important buffer between a clinical rehab program and returning to the real world and include a supportive network for peers with similar goals and experiences.

Takeaway - While nothing should diminish the tremendous accomplishment of making it through the drug rehabilitation process, that’s only part of the work. The real battle begins the day recovering drug abusers walk outside the doors to the facility and being the integration back into the real world. Without adequate and effective aftercare, that journey is much more difficult than it needs to be and relapse is a much likelier outcome.





# Narcotics Anonymous & Alcoholics Anonymous

“These Programs Were Instrumental In Aiding Their Recovery .”



Al-Anon Family Group addresses the needs of sober friends and family members

## These Are The Best KNOWN 12-step Programs

- Alcoholics Anonymous
- Narcotics Anonymous
- Al-Anon Family Groups
- Nar-Anon Family Groups

Be Sure To Ask For Specific Recommendations From The Facility Where Rehab Is Conducted

These are the best known 12-step programs available today to people recovering from drug or alcohol addiction and their families. Many people from all walks of life feel as though these programs were instrumental in aiding their recovery from addiction.

Alcoholics Anonymous – As a group where people work to overcome addiction to alcohol, Alcoholics Anonymous offers opportunities where people can meet anonymously to share experiences, offer encouragement and associate with other people who have been in the same places.

Narcotics Anonymous – Similar to AA, Narcotics Anonymous deals with narcotics addiction rather than alcohol abuse, as its name suggests. It’s the same 12-step program, support, anonymity and camaraderie while addressing needs unique to recovery drug abusers.

Al-Anon Family Groups – This group addresses the needs of sober friends and family members dealing with loved ones who are addicted to alcohol. Since addiction is never isolated to the person suffering from the alcohol abuse, this group exists to lend support to the other people addiction impact.

Nar-Anon Family Groups – Another group for family members suffering through addiction as non drug users, this group focuses on drug use rather than alcohol. It can be a vital lifeline to help families maintain a positive attitude and work through the addiction and recovery process.

However, there are some groups that may address needs specific to the situations of people going through rehab. Be sure to ask for specific recommendations from the facility where rehab is conducted before deciding on a program.

Which Program Is Right For You?





**1** & **2**

# Practical Aftercare Tips

“Aftercare is a lifeline between rehabilitation and recovery.”



Associate or hang out with friends and family who lead sober lives

## Attend Aftercare Appointments

- Group Therapy
- 12-Step Programs
- AA meetings
- Narcotics Anonymous

Being with Sober Friends will Help Reduce The Temptation To Use Drugs and Reinforce Change



One of the most essential components for a successful recovery effort after seeking treatment for drug addiction is adequate aftercare. This isn't a catchy buzzword that clinics and treatment facilities have come up with in order to get people to invest more time, energy, and money into the treatment and rehabilitation process.

Aftercare is a lifeline between rehabilitation and recovery and these practical tips help make the aftercare process even more effective.

### ASSOCIATE WITH SOBER FRIENDS

One of the most difficult, and necessary, aspects of the recovery process is to shake the shackles of drug and alcohol use and abuse. One of the best ways to do that is to associate or hang out with friends and family who lead sober lives. This will help reduce the temptation to use drugs, particularly in social settings, and also helps reinforce the fact that this is a different chapter in life for the person struggling to recover from addiction.

### ATTEND AFTERCARE APPOINTMENTS, GROUP THERAPY, OR 12-STEP PROGRAMS

Group counseling, AA meetings and Narcotics Anonymous all provide opportunities to not only associate with other people who are sober, but also provide a confidential environment to talk about individual struggles and challenges that people not struggling with addiction would have a difficult time understanding – or may even draw the wrong conclusions from. 12-step programs, in particular, have the added benefit of setting members up with sponsors or mentors as an additional level of support.

#### Hang with Sober Friends







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# Practical AfterCAR Tips

Continued...

"It's difficult to return to an area where drug users and abusers are."



It's crucial to take care of physical health while recovering from addiction

## CONSIDER THE OPTION OF SOBER LIVING HOMES

Sober living homes provide safe, supportive environments where drug abusers can live while recovering from addiction, points out [HelpGuide.org](http://HelpGuide.org). This is particularly important for people who live in areas where drug abuse is prevalent. It's difficult enough to leave the security of a recovery center and go back into a sober living environment. It's even more difficult to return to an area where drug users and abusers are all around – especially if they're in the same home. Many communities have sober living homes and even provide assistance finding permanent housing in safe environments once residents reach certain benchmarks in the recovery process.

## EXERCISE AND EAT RIGHT

It's crucial to take care of physical health while recovering from addiction. [The University of Maryland Medical Center](http://The University of Maryland Medical Center) states that recovering substance abusers are more likely to relapse as a result of poor eating habits because so many of them associate hunger for food as cravings for narcotics. That is why regular meals and good nutrition are so important.

## EXERCISE ADDS ADDITIONAL BENEFITS TO THE RECOVERY PROCESS.

Exercise "is important for two reasons. One, exercise is a natural antidepressant. It relieves stress and helps you think more clearly. Two, exercise prompts the body to release its own psychoactive substances—endorphins—that trigger the brain's reward pathway and promote a feeling of well-being." — [Harvard Health Publications](http://Harvard Health Publications)

## KEEP A POSITIVE OUTLOOK

Mental health is a key component in any recovery whether the recovery is from cancer or drug addiction. There are many things recovering drug abusers can do to fill their time and avoid sinking into depression or an otherwise negative frame of mind. These things include: finding new hobbies, revisiting old hobbies that once brought drug-free joy into their lives, creating a new social circle centered around sober living, reconnecting with friends and family.

## Exercise Adds Benefits To The Recovery Process

- Natural Antidepressant
- Relieves Stress
- Releases Endorphins

Mental Health is a Key Component in Any Recovery whether The Recovery is From Cancer or Drug Addiction



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&

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# Practical Aftercare Tips

Continued...

“Volunteering keeps the mind and spirit busy and fulfilled.”



Becoming a sponsor for someone else recovering from addiction provides incentive to succeed

There are Tons Of Volunteer Opportunities Available

- The American Red Cross
- Soup Kitchens
- United Way
- Arts Initiatives
- Habitat For Humanity

These Tips will Build A Sense Of Community And Self Throughout The Recovery Process

## VOLUNTEER

This is by far one of the best ways to keep the mind and spirit of someone recovering from addiction busy and fulfilled. There are tons of volunteer opportunities available in any community and some that are sure to appeal to the interests and talents of various people working to move beyond a history of substance abuse.

Soup kitchens, Habitat for Humanity, The American Red Cross, United Way, Arts initiatives, and even opportunities to work with domestic and wild animals are available in communities of all sizes.



## HELP ANOTHER PERSON

The appeal of giving back isn't limited to volunteering in the community at large. There are specific things that every person walking the road to recovery has to offer someone else on the same journey. Recovering addicts have a unique perspective, insight, and understanding about what it means to recover from addiction. Becoming a sponsor for someone else recovering from addiction allows two people to walk the road together. More importantly, it provides additional incentive to succeed.

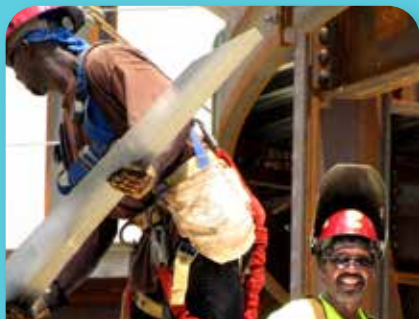
**TAKEAWAY** - These tips won't make the aftercare process a cakewalk, by any means. They will, however, help people recovering from addiction build a sense of community and self throughout the recovery process.





# Getting Back to work

“Getting back to work can be exciting and stimulating, but it can also be hair-raising.”



Going back to work is often the first instance where the recovering patient can put their coping skills into practice

## Fears And Challenges Of Returning To work

- Gossiping Employees
- Exposure To Drugs & Alcohol
- Stress Of Job

Many Employers Allow Employees To Keep Their Jobs While Undergoing Substance Abuse Rehabilitation

## GETTING BACK TO WORK

After finishing substance abuse and addiction rehabilitation, many patients are ready to get back to the normalcy of their everyday routine, which for many, includes going back to work. Getting back to work can be exciting and stimulating, but it can also be hair-raising for some recovering individuals. There are challenges, fears, worries and concerns, which may include one or more of the following:

- fear of gossiping employees
- coworkers acting differently
- exposure to coworkers who abuse drugs or alcohol
- stress because of job duties
- concerns over obstacles for career advancement

These are all common fears and worries that most anyone who completed a drug rehabilitation program would have. However, these concerns should not be an obstacle in preventing the return to work, whether that is a former job or a new employment.

The good news is that most substance abuse rehab programs teach lessons on how to positively cope with situations just like this. Going back to work is often the first instance where the recovering patient can put their coping skills into practice. Many employers allow employees to keep their jobs while undergoing substance abuse rehabilitation, provided they seek treatment before their addiction severely impacts their job performance.



# Tips for Re-Entering Workforce

“Recovering abusers find that they are more productive than they were before rehab.”



Working with a career counselor can help to devise an action plan for getting back to work

Adjust To Sobriety Before Returning To Work

- Get Rest
- Take Care Of Family Matters
- Get Your Mind On Track

Moderation is Key For Many Areas Of A Recovering Patient's Life, Including Work

Many recovering abusers find that re-entering the workforce provides the structure and challenge that they need. Some even find that they are more productive than they were before entering drug rehab. Others, on the other hand, have a more difficult time adjusting to getting back to work.

Whichever side a loved one falls under, these tips for re-entering the workforce should help them to better adapt to transitioning back to work.

## WORK WITH A CAREER COUNSELOR 1

Working with a career counselor who also specializes in substance abuse can help to devise an action plan for getting a recovering patient back to work. Vocational counseling and job skills training are both important aftercare components to support abstinence, according to the [National Institute on Drug Abuse](#).

## BE REALISTIC ABOUT WHEN TO GO BACK TO WORK 2

While some people are ready to return to work immediately after completing a residential inpatient rehabilitation program, others need to adjust to a life of sobriety before returning to the workforce. Each individual's recovery is unique, so it is best to tailor this decision on the patient's needs.

## CONSIDER A REDUCED WORKLOAD 3

Stress-induced cravings and work addiction tendencies can be mitigated with a reduced workload. It's important for recovery to stay challenged, but not so much so to the point of being overwhelmed. Moderation is key for many areas of a recovering patient's life, including work. Keep in mind, any position should include the ability to attend 12-step meetings or personal therapy sessions.



# Dual Diagnosis and Aftercare

“The addiction and the psychiatric disorder must be treated simultaneously.”



Dual diagnosis aftercare support groups are specifically tailored to the needs of individuals with co-existing conditions

An individual who has a drug or alcohol dependency in conjunction with a mental or behavioral disorder, such as depression, schizophrenia, or anxiety, personality or behavior disorder, is said to have a dual diagnosis. In order for the person to have the best chance at recovery, both the addiction and the psychiatric disorder must be treated simultaneously. This dual diagnosis treatment is necessary during the intensive rehabilitation stage and also in the aftercare phase.

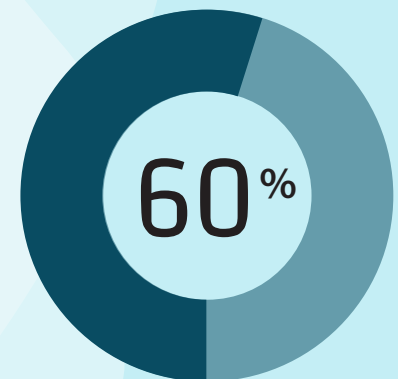
Did You Know? Nearly 9 million adults have co-existing disorders; meaning they have both a substance abuse condition along side a psychiatric disorder, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration.

## SUPPORT GROUPS

Dual diagnosis aftercare support groups are specifically tailored to the needs of individuals with co-existing conditions consisting of both substance abuse and psychiatric disorders. Because individuals who have co-occurring disorders have special challenges — such as difficulty focusing, anxiety, fear of social situations, low motivation, and more — they need specialized care and attention designed for their unique needs. For that reason, dual diagnosis aftercare programs not only address the addiction, but also the underlying disorder be it anxiety, depression, or some other behavioral disorder.

## FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

In addition to dual diagnosis aftercare support groups, family involvement is especially important for the recovery of individuals with co-occurring conditions, reports the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration.



About 60% Of Substance Abusers Suffer From A Mental Illness

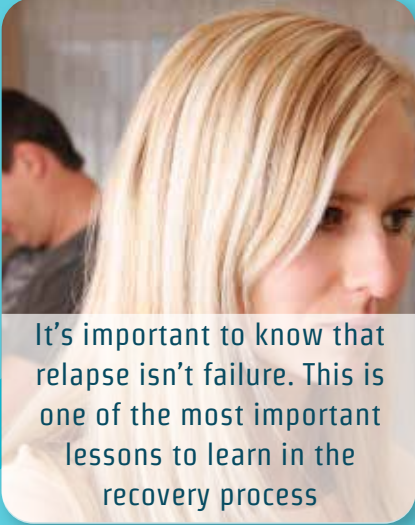
### Co-occurring Disorders Special Challenges Include:

- Difficulty Focusing
- Anxiety
- Fear Of Social Situations
- Low Motivation

Did You Know?  
Nearly 9 Million  
Adults Have Both  
A Substance  
Abuse Condition  
Along Side A  
Psychiatric Disorder

# ➤ Addiction Relapse - what to Do

"Find the path back to recovery as quickly as possible."



It's important to know that relapse isn't failure. This is one of the most important lessons to learn in the recovery process

Help, in Relapse Often Comes in The Form Of:

- Mentor
- Friend
- Family Member
- Sponsor

The Sooner Action Is Taken To Get Help, The Better The Chance Of Mitigating The Relapse

Relapse happens in the recovery process. It's especially difficult for a family member or concerned friend watching someone they love go through the recovery process go into relapse. It may even feel as though they are taking a step back for each and every step they take forward. The key, however, is to do whatever it takes to keep them taking those steps forward. In the case of addiction relapse, these are the things you must do to help someone you love find the path back to recovery as quickly as possible.

## KNOW RELAPSE ISN'T FAILURE

First and foremost, it's important to know that relapse isn't failure. This is one of the most important lessons to learn in the recovery process. Relapse is part of recovery. Very few people who are addicted to drugs or alcohol recovery completely on the first try. Parents, spouses, friends and family members of drug abusers may be at the end of their ropes and feel like treatment was the last shot, but a relapse doesn't mean that the treatment was a failure.

## GET HELP

Help, in situations like this, often comes in the form of mentors or sponsors. However, there are times when medical professionals may be needed – especially in instances where medically supervised detox is necessary. Sponsors and mentors, though, provide an experienced view of the recovery process. They've been there and know that recovery is a process, sometimes a long one, that has its share of ups and downs.

On the other hand, sometimes it takes re-entering a treatment program or attending an Alcoholics or Narcotics Anonymous meeting.

Takeaway - The important point is to take action following a relapse. The sooner action is taken to get help, the better the chance of mitigating the relapse in terms of severity and length.



Special Concerns – Continue with Aftercare Therapy  
– UNCOVER the Cause of Relapse  
– Adjust Relapse Prevention Strategy

“drug addiction should be treated like any other chronic illness.”



Identifying the trigger makes it easier to remove the trigger and the temptation to return addiction

## CONTINUE WITH AFTERCARE THERAPY

Did You Know? Relapse for drug addiction is between 40 and 60 percent compared to 30 to 50 percent for those with Type 1 diabetes, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse. “Relapse rates for drug-addicted patients are compared with those suffering from diabetes, hypertension, and asthma. Relapse is common and similar across these illnesses (as is adherence to medication). Thus, drug addiction should be treated like any other chronic illness, with relapse serving as a trigger for renewed intervention,” reports the [National Institute on Drug Abuse](#).

**Takeaway** - If the drug abuser isn't actively involved in aftercare therapy, it's time to strongly encourage participation.

## UNCOVER THE CAUSE OF RELAPSE

There are many different common relapse triggers. It's important to dig down and find the precise trigger for this instance of relapse before making major adjustments to treatment plans that are in place. Identifying the trigger makes it easier to remove the trigger and the temptation to return to the path of drug abuse and addiction. Caveat: Keep in mind, however, that there are many different triggers. Do not dismiss others in the future because this was the trigger for this particular instance of relapse.

## ADJUST RELAPSE PREVENTION STRATEGY

A relapse into addiction indicates that the current strategy for preventing relapse is not adequate to the task. Now is the time to explore other options and different approaches to prevent future relapses. Albert Einstein gave a brilliant explanation of insanity as “Doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.” When one method of treatment for prevention proves it is no longer effective, it is not time to double down and renew efforts for the same strategy. It's time to throw something new into the mix.

Consult with counselors, support groups, and local treatment centers to find an effective alternative strategy for [relapse prevention](#), advises the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

Relapse Is Common And Similar Across These Illnesses:

- Diabetes
- Hypertension
- Asthma

A Relapse Into Addiction Indicates That The Current Strategy For Preventing Relapse Is Not Adequate To The Task



# Know it's Not the End of the World

“Relapse isn’t the end of the world. It’s not even the end of recovery.”



Support and love is the most important part of the treatment process for people struggling with addiction.

Relapse isn’t the end of the world. It’s not even the end of the recovery process either. In many situations, it’s an important part of the recovery process. Don’t panic. Don’t give up on the loved one working through addiction. Become proactive and make changes to the treatment plan with an eye on long-term recovery. Then follow the wisdom of those who have been there before and take one day at a time.

Takeaway - Support and love is the most important part of the treatment process for people struggling with addiction. No matter how much they fight the recovery process, and the people around them, they need to understand how much they are loved and know that they have the support they need to take each step of their journey to recovery – especially in the days and weeks following a relapse.

Reading this Recovery and Beyond Drug Rehab Guide is a smart first step by making you an educated advocate on behalf of your family member or loved one in continuing with a successful recovery beyond substance abuse rehab.

The [RehabCenter.net](http://RehabCenter.net) referral service can help you find the most effective aftercare treatment plan for your loved one’s recovery and

Don't Give Up On The One Working Through Addiction



Reading This Recovery And Beyond Drug Rehab Guide Is A Smart First Step

Get the help you need



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