

pathways to RECOVERY

Every person in recovery from a substance use disorder has a unique story about their path and the twists and turns that arose along the way. Recovery pathways are highly personalized, building on the strengths, needs and goals of each individual. This handout is designed to provide education about the many different programs that currently support recovery.

Different Pathways to Recovery

The following list is far from complete, but highlights some common pathways to recovery:

12-step Mutual-aid Societies.

Peer support groups which follow an approach based on fellowship and a higher power, such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous. Al-Anon and Nar-Anon also fall under this category, but are for those affected by another's substance use. Alateen and Narateen are similarly part of the Al-Anon and Nar-Anon Family Groups. However, they are intended for the concerned, teenage family member or friend.

Non-12-step Mutual-aid Societies.

Peer support groups that foster empowerment via science and education, without a higher power. Some examples are SMART Recovery, Women for Sobriety, LifeRing Secular Recovery and Secular Organizations for Sobriety.

Faith-based.

Approaches grounded in a religion or faith tradition such as Refuge Recovery, a contemporary faith-based program that follows principles of Buddhism.

Cultural Recovery.

Culturally shaped practices (e.g., traditional Native American sweat lodges).

Natural Change.

Ceasing drug or alcohol use on one's own, without formal therapy.

Holistic Medicine.

Therapies like yoga and meditation to treat the mind, body and spirit.

Medication-assisted.

Uses medication such as methadone or buprenorphine to treat opioid use disorders, and naltrexone for both alcohol and opioid dependency.

Treatment.

Refers to clinical care that varies by the following levels of intensity:

- Detox. Short-term care (one to five days) that treats the physical effects of withdrawal.
- Inpatient. Admission to a residential treatment facility for a minimum of 28 days, on average.
- PHP (Partial Hospitalization Plan). Typically includes five full days of outpatient treatment a week.
- IOP (Intensive Outpatient Program). Group and one-on-one treatment services, typically 9 to 12 hours a week.
- Outpatient. Usually one-on-one therapy that is scheduled weekly or on an as needed basis.

Transitional Living/Recovery Residencies.

Independent sober living environments that offer peer support for recovery outside of residential treatment programs.