The Next Step . . .

. . . Toward a Better Life

How do I know when I am in recovery? Here are four signs:

- I can address problems as they happen, without using drugs or alcohol, and without getting stressed out.
- I have at least one person I can be completely honest with.
- I have personal boundaries and know which issues are mine and which ones belong to other people.
- I take the time to restore my energy—physical and emotional—when I am tired.

YOU CAN DO THIS.

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Introduction

This book is not a substitute for treatment. It will give you an idea of what to expect when you leave detox. It has suggestions to help you stay off illicit drugs and alcohol. Not all of the suggestions will apply to you. Just do what works for you.

Your next step is to go to substance abuse treatment. Treatment will help you recover and also help you with other needs. Ask the detox staff about treatment, or look on page 31 of this book. Beginning treatment as soon as you leave detox is best, but there is sometimes a waiting period. The treatment staff can help you until your treatment begins.

You may not be able to go to treatment. You should still get help staying off drugs and alcohol. Find a self-help or other community group for people in recovery, such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) or Narcotics Anonymous (NA) or other group (see page 32). If a spiritually-oriented program is important to you, try a faith-based organization (such as a church) that welcomes people in recovery. Going it alone is the most difficult way to stay away from drugs and alcohol. Get help.

Before you went to detox your drug or alcohol problem was in the driver's seat. Even after you finish detox, the factors that "drive" your substance use are still in place. Your substance use disorder is still there. The challenge you face now is to take back the steering wheel and begin to recover.

Recovery happens in stages. The first stage is the very big adjustment while your body and brain get used to not having drugs or alcohol. This stage is a very bumpy road to travel and can take four weeks or longer, depending on your habit. Methamphetamine and crack users may need several months to adjust.

Part 1 of this book helps you avoid drugs and alcohol while you make this adjustment. Part 2 is about longer-term recovery. When you have adjusted to being sober, and the road feels less bumpy, you will start longer-term recovery. You will set new goals, make better decisions, and plan your time. Part 2 will explain why these things are important and how they work.

YOU CAN DO THIS.

1. The First 30 Days

Detox is not a "cure."

Going through detox means you have taken a big first step in getting free of drugs or alcohol. However, detox is only the beginning. The drugs or alcohol may be gone from your body, but the people, places, and problems that led you to drug and alcohol abuse are still there.

Leaving Detoxification: Now What?

Perhaps you have been through detox before and you have doubts about staying sober and off drugs. You can do it. Many people go through detox more than once.

Maybe you tried to go it alone last time. This time, get help. Ask detox staff or look in the back of this book. Counselors can help you if you are struggling to stay sober or need to find better housing, leave a bad relationship, deal with anger, be a better parent, or find medical help.

Go to self-help group meetings. There is a list at the back of this book. These groups are a no-lose situation. They cost nothing, are available almost everywhere and any time, and you can find one that meets your ethnic and gender preferences. There is no waiting list. They know what you are going through. They know about resources such as child care and jobs. You have more choices and opportunities than you realize.

People, Places, Things: Steps to Take Now

There is no right way and no wrong way to stay sober and off drugs. Whatever works, works. The things that work best are those that help you deal with triggers. A trigger is anything that leads to using or drinking.

Many self-help groups use the acronym H.A.L.T. to describe certain triggers. You are more likely to use or drink when you are **H**ungry, **A**ngry, **L**onely, or **T**ired.

You are also more likely to use or drink when you are around the people, places, and things that were part of your old drug or drinking life.

Before you walk out of detox, plan now to stay away from anyone, any place, and anything that will cause you to relapse. For instance:

- Delete the names of the people you drank or used with from your cell phone, email, and other devices. Avoid the old crowd as much as you can.
- As much as you can, avoid the people who get you angry.
- Find good company. Ask your friends or family to help you stay sober.
- Ask detox staff about AA, NA, or other local self-help groups. There is also a list at the end of this book.
- Go to 90 meetings in 90 days.
- Map out different routes to avoid dealers and bars.
- Don't visit or meet someone if you know he or she has alcohol or drugs.
- Fill your refrigerator so you will always have something good to eat.
- Have someone who doesn't use clear the alcohol, drugs, and equipment from your home, car, and other places.
- Put away your cash, ATM, or credit cards if having money is one of your triggers. Shop with non-using friends or family.
- As much as you can, rest, relax, and sleep.
- Make a list of the bad effects alcohol or drugs had on your life, friends, and family. Be honest.

- Make a list of the benefits of staying off drugs and alcohol. Add to this list every day—new people you have met, ways you are proud of yourself.
- Talk to a counselor about a better place to live. Having drugs in the neighborhood or house is a powerful trigger to relapse. So is an abusive living situation. If you cannot change your living situation, it is even more important to have lots of anti-drug skills to rely on.

Potholes Ahead

The biggest mistake you can make is to think you can simply go back to your life and not use drugs and alcohol. Staying sober takes a lot of hard work. The road ahead is full of potholes that can knock you off course.

Remember that your substance abuse is something that you once learned to do. Now that you have been through detox, you need to "unlearn" substance use and "relearn" how to live sober. You may be drug-free, but you are still on "automatic pilot." You could drink or use drugs without thinking about it.

To stay away from drugs and alcohol during this period, you have to *take action*:

- Use your anti-drugs/anti-drinks (explained in the next section).
- Practice new thinking, especially the reminder "I am a substance abuser and I must work to recover."
- Take small steps in simple, everyday matters.

Taking action will help you get through this phase in several ways. It gives you a growing sense of control over your life. Best of all, instead of trying to *not do* something, which is difficult, you can *do something else,* which is easier. The *something else* is your *anti-drug* or *anti-drink*.

Your "Anti-Drugs" and "Anti-Drinks"

An "anti-drug" or "anti-drink" is anything that helps you stay away from drugs or alcohol. It can be simple, like:

- Chewing gum or eating candy when you crave a drink.
- Calling your self-help group sponsor or a friend instead of going to places where you might use.
- Watching movies.
- Shooting baskets.
- Reading.
- Keeping pictures of your children in your pocket as motivation to stay away from alcohol and drugs.
- Joining a faith organization that supports recovery.
- Finding a new job that keeps you busy and away from others who use.

The more anti-drugs you have, the better. By doing your anti-drugs/anti-drinks, you can gradually shut off that automatic pilot and get back in the driver's seat. The people who are most successful in staying sober do two anti-drugs/drinks in particular: go to counseling and join a self-help group.

Practicing anti-drug activities doesn't mean you have to be busy. It can also mean mental activity such as prayer and meditation. There are many forms of meditation, including mindfulness training. Mindfulness training is taught in hospitals for stress and pain control. These mental exercises can help get you out of "automatic pilot."

Just like exercising a muscle, these anti-drug activities feel more natural with use. Use page 8 to make a list of your own anti-drinks/anti-drugs. Tear it out and keep it with you. Unless you are ready with a list of ideas to avoid alcohol and drugs, it will be too easy for you to start drinking or using again.

You may have a fear of falling into your old patterns, but this will not last. For now, your focus is on the next four weeks or so, and on avoiding the people, places, and things that are connected to using. Your impulses will feel less and less overwhelming over time.

What's Wrong With This Picture?

You may think that being sober means that everything will now be fine. Actually, the early days of abstinence can look and feel pretty bad.

Change, even good change, can be frightening. Because getting sober is a big change, it can also be a time of crisis. The changes of new abstinence are sometimes called the "trauma of recovery." Your life and the lives of the people around you were probably organized around your substance use. The sudden absence of your use can disorganize your life in a painful way.

The change you made by becoming sober also has a ripple effect on your family, friends, and co-workers. Getting sober creates chaos, just like the chaos created by substance use. Remember that the people around you:

- Do need your attention, especially your children. You must balance the needs of your children with your anti-drinks/drugs.
- Could think or say that they prefer you "on drugs."
- Might not understand the adjustments you are going through.
- Might have invested a lot of energy in taking care of you. Now that you are abstinent, they have to find other ways to relate to you.
- Might not understand all the things you need to do to stay sober and off drugs.
- Might try to control you to keep from relapsing.
- Might resent the upheaval the drugs and alcohol caused.

When I am confronted with drugs or alcohol, I will do this:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

6) _____

7) _____

8) _____

9) _____

10) _____

11) _____

12) _____

13) _____

14) _____

15) _____

16) _____

17) _____

18) _____

19) _____

20) _____

What Happens in Substance Abuse Treatment?

Not all treatment programs are alike, but most follow this general idea:

First, the counselor will ask you questions about your drinking or drug use, your physical health, and other issues in your life. This is called assessment. The counselor will use the answers to your questions to determine how to help you. Many counselors are in recovery and know what you are going through.

Together, you and the counselor will make a treatment plan. The treatment plan is a written outline of your goals and anti-drink/drug activities. It will also contain the "tools" you will need to help you stay sober. These can include:

- Help in identifying triggers (a trigger is anything that makes you crave alcohol or drugs).
- Relapse prevention training.
- Stress management.
- Self-help groups in which you are comfortable.
- Medicine for pain, cravings, or depression.
- Time or money management skills.
- Job skills.

Treatment has two goals. One goal is to help you stop using. The other goal is to help you relearn how to live without drugs or alcohol. It can take a long time for substance abuse to develop, and it can take a long time to relearn how to live without using.

- Might resent that you often leave for sobriety activities.
- Might find your unstable feelings difficult to deal with.

Your job is to stay focused on your anti-drugs/anti-drinks strategies. Where others are concerned:

- Let friends and family focus on their own adjustments.
- Stay positive. Even small changes toward positive thinking help yourself and others. Negative thinking helps no one.
- Go to AA or similar group meetings for encouragement from people who understand.

Drugs or alcohol caused many of your problems, but not all of them. Getting sober will not cure all of them. Now that you are sober, you are suddenly faced with problems in a new way. Let the bigger issues wait until you are feeling better. Stick to the daily problems so the most important things, like children, are taken care of.

More About the First 30 Days

Drug and alcohol use mixed up your thinking patterns. Now that you are detoxified, your brain needs time to adjust to life without chemicals. As this happens, you can have feelings that don't make any sense, such as:

- Feeling like you've been asleep for years and can't handle the simplest situation without "using."
- Feeling grief in letting go of your use.
- Feeling "stranded" and wonder "what now?"
- Feeling like you lost the friends or family who are still using.
- Feeling that sobriety is like punishment or being deprived.
- Feeling strange during ordinary activities because you have forgotten how to do things sober.

- Pain from other problems can suddenly resurface.
- You can have trouble thinking clearly.
- You might struggle with anxiety or depression.
- You might feel overwhelmed.
- You might "space out."
- Impulsive behaviors can pose a challenge.
- Your emotions can run to extremes with anger, self-pity, hopelessness, or defensiveness.
- It might be difficult to remember things.
- It can be difficult to commit to things.
- Your physical coordination might not work as well.
- You might have trouble sleeping.
- You might constantly stress about every aspect of life.
- You might feel numb or "drugged" with emotions—depression, anger, helplessness—just like when you were using.

These emotions mean your brain is recovering now that the alcohol or drugs are gone. During this time:

- Don't expect too much of yourself. Your physical coordination and ability to concentrate won't work as well for a while.
- Try to avoid doing things that could make you feel worse, like eating junk food or drinking coffee.
- Find humor in situations instead of feeling sorry for yourself.
- Remind yourself that your emotional state will get better soon if you stay sober.
- Get as much sleep as possible. Don't worry too much about sleep disturbances. You will sleep better soon.
- Eat well, including healthy snacks if you are hungry.
- Take vitamins to restore needed nutrition.

Cravings can occur at any time and are often triggered by events (such as New Year's Eve) or sensations (the smell of alcohol or cigarette smoke). Like your other symptoms, cravings will fade as the days and weeks go by.

You might dream that you are drinking or using drugs and wake up feeling high, or frustrated at not being high.

Feeling anxious or depressed for a short time can be a part of this bumpy road. However, if it lasts too long, you should get treatment. Section 4 of this book tells you how to find help.

Moving On

When does this adjustment period end? Give yourself at least a month. People who use heroin or crack may need 6 months.

As time goes by, you may notice that your head is clearer. Instead of fighting your impulses, you can relax and just go through your day. You can think about the weeks ahead, instead of just today. You are moving into longer-term recovery.

YOU CAN DO THIS.

2: Long-Term Recovery

Always look to a real goal in the near future.

As your brain and body get used to being without drugs and alcohol, you'll find that life feels better and you no longer feel overwhelmed. Instead of worrying about things that don't happen, you deal with problems as they come up.

You are getting along better with the people close to you, and you can be more open and honest. You have a better sense of what issues belong to you, and what issues belong to other people. You are enjoying yourself a little more and doing fun things.

It is time to adopt a long-term *recovery plan*. This plan involves:

- Setting new goals and the steps to get there.
- Improving your relationships.
- Learning more ways to handle situations without substance use.
- Learning to manage your time.
- Identifying your triggers and ways to handle them.

Your Recovery Plan

Why do you need a recovery plan? To be in recovery, you need to be *moving forward*. If you stop moving forward, the old patterns are waiting to take over again, ready to grab the steering wheel.

The point of a recovery plan is always to stay off drugs and sober. It does not have to be very detailed.

Getting help as part of your plan is a good idea. You might be carrying a heavy load of feelings that you have stuffed away all your life. If you have been "doctoring" your emotions with drugs or alcohol, then going without counseling, sponsor, or a group of peers will make it hard for you to stay sober.

Assessing Your Strengths

Rate each strength below using the following scale. Really notice what's good about you!

0 = Not at all; 1 = A little; 2 = Kinda, not always; 3 = Yes, that's me!

____Connecting with others. I connect with people and find friends easily.

____Creativity. I'm good at art, music, or _____.

____Politics. I take action and try to make a difference.

____Attractiveness. I am attractive and/or charming.

____Sense of humor. I can find fun and like to laugh.

____Survival skills. I am a survivor, I've done things that were difficult.

____Persistence. I can follow through and have a sense of will.

____Self-care. I take care of myself, my home.

____Physical ability. I'm good at physical activity or sports.

____Social support. I have people in my life who care about me and will help.

____Helping others. I'm good at caring for others who need my help.

____Self-esteem. I believe I'm a good person.

____Intelligence. I "get it" and have (mental/social and/or emotional) smarts.

____Ability to face my feelings. I can deal with painful feelings and manage them.

____Ability to communicate. I can say what I think and be assertive without hurting myself or others.

____Financial resources. I have money or other resources to help me overcome.

____Other strengths: _____

Source: Copied with permission from: Najavits, L.M. *A Woman's Addiction Workbook*. New Harbinger Publications, Oakland, CA.

Be sure to include medical and dental care in your plan. It will be easier for you to stay off drugs and alcohol if you are not in pain. Make sure your doctor, dentist, and other providers know about your recovery. It will help them care for you, especially if you need medicine for pain. If you need a doctor or dentist, ask your drug abuse counselor how to find one or look in section 4 of this book.

1. Setting Goals

After years of substance abuse, many people forget what some of their goals and joys once were. Others never had any goals. Use the list on page 14 to help you see your strengths. You might discover some you didn't know you had. Use the list to find ideas and develop goals.

Your goals should be clear and rewarding. They shouldn't be too hard or too easy. Ordinary, everyday goals keep your life moving forward and keep the old patterns from taking over.

They should include:

- A job or educational/vocational program.
- Social time with substance-free co-workers, friends, and family.
- Hobbies and recreation to organize free time.
- Completing parole requirements, if necessary.

Each goal should be broken down into steps. You should also have a timetable. For example, if your goal is to get some job training then the first step could be to find a program. Your timetable might be to find one in three months, in time to apply and be accepted. Another step would be to find out how much the program costs and make a plan to pay for it.

Ineffective goals

- **Just be strong when I am offered drugs or alcohol**
- **Make more money**
- **Don't get arrested for driving without a license**
- **Show my boss he's wrong**

Practical goals

- **File 4 job applications or resumes a week until I am employed or have a better job**
- **Find a basketball, soccer, or softball team to join**
- **Get involved at my kid's school**
- **Make a budget to get out of debt**
- **Open a savings account**

Goals can be of any size, including jogging or taking your children to the playground twice a week. The important thing is that your goals are rewarding and help you stay away from alcohol and drugs.

2. Making Good Decisions

At this point, you have been off drugs for a while. Your head feels better, but you could still be thinking in old ways. To stay in recovery, you need new ways of thinking, and better ways to make decisions.

Friends and family can help you with ideas for different ways to handle tough situations. So can counselors and members of your self-help group.

You can also think situations through on paper by making a kind of decision map. To do this, take a situation you often face, such as "boss yells at me for being late." Write it in the middle of a piece of paper. Draw a circle around it. Around the circle, add all the reactions you can think of. For instance:

- “I get mad and yell back.”
- “I apologize and work alone until I calm down.”
- “I quit and get drunk.”
- “I get mad but yell at my coworker.”

Draw a circle around each of these reactions, and connect them with a line to the first circle.

Each of these reactions leads to other things, such as:

- “I get mad and yell back” leads to “I get fired.”
- “I quit and get drunk” leads to “I get arrested for DUI.”
- “I apologize and calm down” leads to “my co-workers feel better toward me and my job is easier.”

Draw a circle around these and connect them to the cause.

You are making a map that allows you to see where your decisions take you (see the next page). Making a map of events and your responses can help you see what leads to drug or alcohol use. Better decisions can help keep you off drugs.

3. Managing Time

Being in recovery means always moving forward. To move forward, you need to think differently about time. This involves two things.

1. Learn to mark time by the clock and the calendar, not by drug-using or drinking events. If you often say things like “that was the time I got high and…” then you are using a drug event to mark time.

Divide the day by the clock, not “before I start drinking” and “after I start drinking.” Telling time with drinking or drug-using events is part of your substance use disorder. You need to change that pattern. When you talk about the past or any other subject, mention dates or times instead of alcohol or drug use.

A Sample Decision Map

2. You used to spend most of your time and energy on using. You need to fill that time with other things, and not just do nothing. Get a small calendar or notebook. Fill it with your goals and ways to use your free time. Fill your days with a job and other activities that will keep you sober, and keep drugs and alcohol from taking over again.

Using your time wisely also helps you avoid anger and other emotions that lead to use. Good use of time helps you fulfill your responsibilities. You can avoid trouble with the people around you by being reliable.

Buy an appointment book or a calendar. Even a pad of paper is okay, as long as you stick to your schedule.

Look at your goals and the steps you need to take to get there. Fill in the steps in your calendar or appointment book. Be sure to schedule relaxing times. You do not need to be busy every minute. You should not feel controlled by the clock. But you should use your time in ways that help you with your goals and avoid substance use.

Some helpful schedule suggestions:

- Go to meetings. Attending face-to-face or even online self-help groups will help you fill time, stay sober, and meet people who are in recovery.
- Go to religious services. Recovery can have a spiritual side, and it can be helpful to find a religious group with whom you are comfortable.
- Becoming a workaholic is not a good way to stay off drugs. If you overwork to fill up time, you may get so tired that you use drugs or alcohol to relax. Or you may be lonely when work is over. The extra money can be a trigger to “treat yourself” to drugs or alcohol.

- Remember your anti-drugs/anti-drinks. They can help you fill your time by giving you positive things to do.
- Your calendar/appointment book can also help you track your progress. After a while, you can flip through earlier pages and see yourself growing a new, drug-free life.

4. Relationships

While you have been getting used to being sober, others have been getting used to the new you. Your relationships will show this ripple effect.

People You May Have Hurt

People may think you can't be trusted. This attitude can be discouraging. You might say to yourself, "If everyone thinks I'm going to get high, then I might as well get high." Don't let other people's attitudes offend you. Pay attention to your own work on staying sober. Their attitudes will change with time.

If people are angry with you, then you can feel anger, too, or some other emotion that you are not ready to handle. If you used to turn to drugs when you were angry or upset, then you need a plan for these situations. If possible, walk away and do something else until you calm down. Look at your anti-drug/anti-drink list. Don't let the situation trigger a relapse. Use a decision map to think about how to react in a better way.

Give the rules on the next page to your friends and family to help them while you begin your recovery.

Al-Anon's rules for living with a person with a substance use disorder:

- **Do not suffer because of the actions or reactions of other people.**
- **Do not allow yourself to be used or abused in the interest of another's recovery.**
- **Do not do for others what they should do for themselves.**
- **Do not manipulate situations so others will eat, go to bed, pay bills, etc.**
- **Do not cover up for other's mistakes or misdeeds.**
- **Do not create a crisis.**
- **Do not prevent a crisis if it is in the natural course of events.**

As you get more stable, others will have more confidence in you. This can have a surprising side effect. As your children or spouse trust you more, they might get more honest with you. They might be more open with their feelings. This can be hard to deal with. Let these conflicts provoke a change for the better in your relationships.

Consider going to assertiveness training, anger management, or other classes. Encourage your family to get help for themselves, such as a self-help group or a counselor.

People You Used With

Others who are still using might not like the changes in you. They can feel rejected or guilty about their own behavior. Dealers don't want to lose your business. A third of people in recovery relapse because of pressure from others.

- Remember that those who offer you drugs or alcohol, even friends or family, are not doing what's best for you.
- Say no immediately, in a way that is convincing.

- Practice saying no with another person, such as “No, thank you, but I’ll have a cup of coffee” or “No, I’m not using any more, it’s causing me too many problems.”
- Don’t say something that suggests they can ask again, like “maybe later” or “I’m on medication.”
- Suggest something else to do, such as a movie or a walk.
- Do not allow the conversation to remain on drugs. Change the subject. Counselors call this “drug refusal training,” and you might want to get help if saying no is a problem for you.

5. Spotting and Stopping a Relapse

It takes a long time for new skills and patterns to take hold. Don’t let your guard down. You are in a battle for your life, and you must beware of an ambush.

A slip is a single episode of use. Think of a slip as information, a signal that something is not working. Think about what happened, and figure out what changes are needed.

A relapse, on the other hand, is a return to more-than-once use. If you relapse, it is important to get back on track again. The sooner you stop a relapse, the better. You will eventually succeed. Don’t discourage yourself, “I blew it so why should I continue trying?” All-or-nothing thinking, self-blame, and other negative reactions will not help you get back on track. Negative thinking only makes relapse easier and abstinence harder.

Signs of a Possible Relapse

- A dream in which you drink or use can be a warning. Think about what you are doing and how you might be drifting toward use.
- People often relapse when they feel better and more in control: they think that moderate use is okay. This thinking often leads to relapse.

- Daydreaming about the fun you had while using is a sign of relapse.
- Finding yourself talking about old times (sharing "war stories") can also signal a relapse about to happen.

Suggestions to Prevent a Relapse

- Call a counselor or sober friends.
- Leave the situation and walk or jog around the block a few times.
- Eat or distract yourself with a book or movie.
- Tell your friends and family to stop you when you talk about the fun you had while drinking or using.
- Make a list of the good things about your new life, such as better relationships, success at work or school, looking better, or time and money for hobbies.
- Stop yourself from daydreaming about the fun of drug and alcohol use, and think about the downside.
- If you have already relapsed at least once, think of how it happened. What can you do differently this time?

"Just be strong and say no" is not enough to handle the situations you will face. Use page 24 to write down the ways you could relapse, and come up with a strategy to handle them. Make a copy to keep with you.

6. Knowing the Stumbling Blocks

The "Looking Good" trap

The "looking good" trap refers to the fact that you are getting healthier. You look much better. No one would guess by your appearance that you have a substance use problem. Other people can tempt you to slip or relapse. You might also begin to doubt that you have a drug or drinking problem. Don't let the mirror fool you. Remind yourself that your looks improve faster than your ability to stay sober.

- **People who offer or provoke me to use:**

  _____

  _____

  _____

  How will I respond to them?

  _____

  _____

  _____

- **Places where I used:**

  _____

  _____

  _____

  How will I avoid them?

  _____

  _____

  _____

- **Times when I used:**

  _____

  _____

  _____

  What will I do instead?

  _____

  _____

  _____

- **Situations that encourage relapse (parties, having cash):**

  _____

  _____

  _____

  How will I handle them?

  _____

  _____

  _____

Money

Paydays can be a big stumbling block. Some people binge when they get their paycheck, especially if it is the first paycheck they have had for a while. As paydays approach, you must plan how to get your paycheck deposited and bills paid without spending it on drugs or alcohol. If money is one of your triggers, don't carry any until you are stable in your abstinence. Arrange for direct deposit of your paycheck if possible. If you need to, take a friend or family member with you when you go shopping.

Dealers and other users know when checks arrive and might come looking for you. Plan ways to avoid them.

Thinking Patterns

To keep recovery going, it is important not to trick yourself. Don't romanticize your past life. Don't expect your desire for drugs or alcohol to go away quickly. When you have cravings, use "healthy thinking" to help yourself through the moment. For example, stop and remind yourself of the pain that drugs caused you. Review the good things about being sober.

Don't talk about the fun of substance use. Ask your friends to interrupt you when this happens. Don't listen when others talk about the fun of use. Change the subject or walk away for a moment.

You might even find yourself doubting you have a drug problem. If that happens, put it to a test: Go to an AA or similar meeting and listen to their stories. If they sound like yours, you will be reminded how sneaky your addiction is.

Other Substances

Stay away from drugs you didn't have a problem with. Your chosen drug may have been crack, but you should also stay away from ice, marijuana, alcohol, and anything else that can trick you into using again.

Triggers and Cravings

Cravings can suddenly come back after three or six months. However, they may quickly fade to a low level again. Practice your anti-drugs/anti-drinks until they do. Even without cravings, your triggers can still ambush you. You always need to be aware of the people, places, and things that can cause you to relapse.

Emotional Issues

- Some people experience severe depression and anxiety in the months after detox. If depression or anxiety gets in the way of your recovery, you should get treatment.
- Anger often leads to relapse. Situations that can cause anger, especially giving or receiving criticism, need careful handling. Take a class in anger management or assertiveness training, and plan time to avoid conflict.
- If you have experienced physical or emotional abuse, staying away from drugs and alcohol will be even more difficult. Find a counselor trained in treating trauma.
- If you are in an abusive relationship, it will be very difficult for you to stay sober. Abuse and drug use go hand in hand. Get help.

Getting Help

Remember, "detox" is not "cure." Before you leave detox, enroll in substance abuse treatment or another source of help as a way to start your new life. Help for staying sober can come from:

- Substance abuse counselors.
- Case managers.
- Vocational counselors.
- Housing advocates.
- Mental health counselors.
- Trauma/abuse specialists.
- Outreach workers.
- Psychiatrists, psychologists, or social workers.

There is overlap in these job types. Detox staff may or may not provide substance abuse counseling. Many counselors also do case management. Some mental health counselors can help you get over abuse.

Both outreach workers and case managers provide referrals, and case managers can also help with housing or a job. Most of them can help you escape an abusive relationship. There are more resources listed in section 4. Take advantage of everything you can to stay away from alcohol and drugs.

How do I know when I am in recovery? Here are four signs:

- I can address problems as they happen, without using drugs or alcohol, and without getting stressed out.
- I have at least one person I can be completely honest with.
- I have personal boundaries and know which issues are mine and which ones belong to other people.
- I take the time to restore my energy—physical and emotional—when I am tired.

YOU CAN DO THIS.

3. Legal Issues

Your drug or alcohol use may have gotten you into trouble with your employer, your landlord, or the police. If you stay off alcohol and drugs and stay in treatment, the law gives you some protection to help you recover. But that help is limited, and you have to do your part.

Disability/Treatment

A substance use disorder (or any other disorder) does not qualify as a disability by itself. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) will not protect you if you make, sell, or use illegal drugs. However, the ADA gives you some protection if you are recovering from a substance use disorder. In most cases, the protection applies only if you are in recovery or in treatment.

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is similar. It gives certain employees the right to take unpaid leave when needed for a serious health condition, including substance abuse. However, the leave must be for treatment. Missing work because of drug or alcohol use does not qualify for leave.

Housing

People who abuse drugs or alcohol can be evicted and banned from Section 8 or other public housing. This ban may last 3 years. However, if the person successfully completes a treatment program and stays off drugs and alcohol, a housing agency may be able to shorten or lift the ban.

Parole

If you are on parole, it is important that you finish your term of supervision in the community. One of the goals of parole is to change old drinking and drug-using patterns. Parole also adds structure to a person's life with work and other requirements. This structure helps prevent relapse. Most people in recovery who violate parole also relapse.

For More Information

A 16-page booklet called "Know Your Rights" is available from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA]. This brochure explains the ways the law will and won't protect people recovering from a substance use disorder. **To get a copy, you can go to the Internet** (http://partnersforrecovery.samhsa.gov; click on "resources").

This publication can be ordered from SAMHSA' s Publications Ordering Web page at:
http://store.samhsa.gov/product/Are-You-in-Recovery-from-Alcohol-or-Drug-Problems-Know-Your-Rights/PHD1091

This publication can also be downloaded from SAMHSA' s Publications Ordering Web page at:
http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content//PHD1091/PHD1091.pdf

Or, please call SAMHSA at 1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727) (English and Español).

These Federal agencies also accept complaints and have information on disability-based discrimination:

- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission: call 1-800-669-4000, or contact a local Equal Employment Opportunity Officer through the blue pages of your local phone book.
- Department of Labor: both the Wage and Hour Division and the Civil Rights Center handle discrimination complaints. Call the Federal Information Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339 and ask for the Civil Rights Center.
- Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Contact a local HUD office (usually listed under "housing" in the blue pages of the phone book), call 1-800-669-9777.
- Department of Justice. The Department of Justice only deals with physical disability issues, such as wheelchair ramps, handicap-accessible restrooms, etc. Call 1-800-514-0301.

Local libraries often offer access to the internet if you want to find help online.

Finding Treatment

Treatment for substance abuse:

- The U.S. Government's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) sponsors an online "treatment finder" at http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov. If you type your town or zip code into the space on the screen, you will receive a list of treatment centers nearby.
- You can also call the toll-free national referral helpline at 1-800-662-HELP (4357) to learn about local treatment centers.
- You can write to SAMHSA. SAMHSA offices are located at 1 Choke Cherry Road, Rockville, MD 20857.
- Local substance abuse treatment clinics are listed in the yellow pages under "Drug Abuse."
- Treatment clinics are listed in the blue (local government) pages of the phone book under "Health Department," "Human Services," or "Social Services."

Treatment for medical, dental, and mental health disorders:

- Detox facilities can give you information about local medical, dental, and mental health clinics.
- Look in the blue (local government) pages of the phone book under "Health Department," "Human Services," or "Social Services."
- Health professionals are also listed in the yellow pages by title ("Physicians," "Dentists," etc.).

- There is an online mental health treatment finder at http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov. If you type your town or zipcode into the space on the screen, you will receive a list of treatment centers nearby.
- SAMHSA offices are located at 1 Choke Cherry Road, Rockville, MD 20857, and their main Web site is http://www.samhsa.gov.
- If you are in crisis, SAMHSA's suicide hotline is 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

*Staying Sober**

Detox facilities should be able to provide you with a list of local resources, including these:

AA (Alcoholics Anonymous)
A.A. World Services, Inc.
P.O. Box 459
New York, NY 10163
212-870-3400
AA is a voluntary, worldwide fellowship of men and women who meet together for recovery through the 12 Steps. AA membership is free.

AA Grapevine
P.O. Box 1980
Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163-1980
1-800-631-6025
The Grapevine has printed and other AA material. Most can be found online.

*Note: Inclusion of resources on this list does not signify endorsement by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Alcoholics Victorious
Westview Business Center
620 Mendolssohn Avenue, #105
Golden Valley, MN 55427
612-593-1791
A part of the Institute for Christian Living, AV meetings use both the 12 Steps of AA and the AV Creed.

CALIX
2555 Hazelwood Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55109
651-773-3117; 1-800-398-0524
A Catholic-oriented supplement to Alcoholics Anonymous.

Dual Recovery Anonymous™ (DRA)
Dual Recovery Anonymous Central Office Service
P.O. Box 8107
Prairie Village, KS 66208
(toll-free) 1-877-883-2332
DRA is a 12-Step self-help fellowship of men and women who meet to support each other in recovery from emotional or psychiatric illness and chemical dependency.

Faces & Voices of Recovery
1010 Vermont Avenue, #708
Washington, DC 20005
202-737-0690
A national campaign of individuals and organizations that support local recovery efforts.

Hopelinks
http://www.hopelinks.net
A Web service of Macwon's Inc., the Hopelinks Site provides recovery information and self-help resources for anyone trying to stay abstinent.

JACS
850 Seventh Avenue
New York, NY 10019
212-397-4197
The Jewish Alcoholics, Chemically Dependent Persons and Significant Others Foundation (JACS) is led by volunteers and is a supplement to AA.

National Asian Pacific American Families Against Substance Abuse (NAPAFASA)
340 East 2nd Street, Suite 409
Los Angeles, CA 90012
213-625-5795
NAPAFASA is concerned with substance abuse in Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and other Pacific Islander families. NAPAFASA helps with research, education, and other activities.

Narcotics Anonymous (NA)
P.O. Box 9999
Van Nuys, CA 91409
818-773-9999
Narcotics Anonymous sprang from AA.

National Black Alcoholism & Addictions Council (NBAC)
5104 North Orange Blossom Trail
Suite 207
Orlando, FL 32810
NBAC is an organization where people can exchange ideas, offer services, and promote treatment on behalf of African Americans.

National Association of State Alcohol/Drug Abuse Directors (NASADAD)
Your States's official alcohol and other drug abuse (AOD) authority is likely a member of NASADAD, and is responsible for the effective and efficient administration of treatment and prevention systems.

Salvation Army
The Salvation Army promotes a specific religious message in all of its activities. If you are compatible with this religious message, the Salvation Army offers treatment and many other resources including help with housing and job training without discrimination. To find a program in your area, look in your phone book or go online and use the program locator in their Web site.

SMART Recovery™
7537 Mentor Avenue, Suite 306
Mentor, OH 44060
1-866-951-5357
SMART Recovery™ (Self-Management And Recovery Training) teaches clients to change self-defeating thinking, emotions, and actions; SMART Recovery™ offers free face-to-face and online mutual help groups.

Women for Sobriety
P.O. Box 618
Quakertown, PA 18951
215-536-8026
Women for Sobriety is both an organization and a self-help program for female alcoholics.

Job Training

Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE)
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-7100
202-245-7700
The OVAE, U.S. Department of Education, runs job training programs through different State agencies. The OVAE Web page has links to programs that are available locally.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
SAMHSA
www.samhsa.gov • 1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727)

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