

Recovery Ally

You Matter

This information is for anyone considering
a change in their substance use.



SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER
ALLY TRAINING HUB
Virginia Department of Social Services

Resources for Substance Use Disorders

This packet is meant to offer a starting point for anyone considering making a change in their substance use, whether reducing use, using in safer ways, or stopping all together. Resources change frequently. If you have an addition or correction, please let us know at Recovery@vcu.edu or 804.828.1663.

You Matter

Life can be really challenging at times. It is not unusual for people to feel hopeless, especially when substance use has been part of your journey. Hope is a powerful and confusing feeling to grasp onto when everything seems out of control and unchangeable. But it works, and even the smallest amounts can alter anyone's path.

We encourage you not to give up on yourself and your future. A past is exactly that, a past, and it does not define who you are. There are many people in our community who have lost hope only to find it in something big, small, or somewhere in between. There is hope for you too.

Getting care and support for a substance use disorder is one of the most challenging and courageous actions a person can take. People who struggle with substances often have a lot of shame about their use and the damage that it has caused in their life. Substance use disorders can cause a lot of damage, but there is amazing healing that is possible in recovery.

Pathways to Recovery

People take many pathways in their recovery and use many different resources as they make changes in their lives. These paths often include formal paths (treatment, counseling, recovery meetings, medication) or informal (family support, personal commitment, exercise, finding purpose etc.) Most people use many of these together to make changes in their lives. It's important to know that you can find a pathway to recovery that works for you.

Finding What Works

Choosing your own path to recovery can also mean deciding your own treatment options. There is no right or wrong way to recover, and different people need different levels of support in order to thrive. If you try to make some changes but still struggle, you may just need a different level of care and support to

make the changes that you want to make. For those who want or need a lot of support, there are recovery communities ready to encourage, inspire, and commend you on a daily basis. Once you connect with others that have been where you've been, it's incredible to see just how far from alone you really are. Don't be shy when it comes to reaching out. We have all desperately needed each other at some point too.

Not So Sure? Start Where You Are

Not sure about making a big change in your use right now? You are not alone in that either. It can start with small changes, and your safety is really important. Practicing harm-reduction strategies if you are still using substances can be a really important first step. We want you to know that you matter whether or not you jump into recovery. This is especially important if you are using opioids. Here are examples of changes you can make: do not use alone, always have Naloxone, take a tester shot, be extra careful when using in new environments, and use clean needles. These are strategies that reduce the risk of overdose or disease.

Ask Questions

Many parts of initial recovery are intimidating, complicated, and hard to understand. We urge you to ask questions about all of it. Think of it this way-everyone in recovery has had to be "new" once and was just as nervous and scared as the rest. It's normal and completely okay. There's power in information and you don't have to do it all by yourself. Our bottom line? You are not alone.

Please explore the resources available here and talk to a provider about what might be right for you.