

How Recovery Happens for People With Substance Use and Mental Health Problems



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The pandemic highlighted behavioral health challenges. Fortunately, there is hope, and SAMHSA funds and promotes resources to help Americans walk in recovery.

Every day, Americans with substance use and mental health conditions embark on the path to recovery to regain their lives. The stakes have never been greater.

During the pandemic, fentanyl contributed to fatal overdoses surging to a staggering 107,000 over a 12-month period in 2021. Mental health problems have increased significantly, particularly among our young people. Americans from every background have been impacted.

But, there also have been gains — developments that inform my job as the director of the [Office of Recovery](#) at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and that give me hope for our nation's well-being.

An open dialogue

A cultural focus emerged during the pandemic: an increased willingness in society to discuss mental health and the importance of self-care. Whether via traditional or social media, more people have discussed how to remain connected to each other and their communities. Like never before, America is bringing behavioral health problems and the promise of recovery out of the darkness and into the light in both public and private forums.

And Americans are pursuing recovery. SAMHSA's annual National Survey on Drug Use and Health found in 2021 that 70% of adults (or 21 million Americans) who had had a substance use condition [identified as being in recovery](#), with two-thirds of adults (or 39 million Americans) with a mental health condition reporting they were in recovery.

We have also learned a great deal about what facilitates recovery. SAMHSA recognizes the following are key to supporting [recovery](#):

- **Health and Behavioral Health Care:** People need access to effective behavioral health — as well as primary health — treatment. SAMHSA's [Block Grants](#) support treatment and recovery support services nationwide.
- **Housing:** Having a stable and safe place to live. SAMHSA provides [programs to help prevent and end homelessness](#) among people with mental health and substance use conditions.
- **Purpose:** This includes employment, education, and other daily activities. SAMHSA supports people to [attain and sustain work](#), and the need to create recovery-friendly workplaces.
- **Community:** The critical need for connections and social support from others including family and peers. SAMHSA focuses on the needs for [family](#) and [peer support](#).

Tailored approach

Recovery is personal. We need tailored, individualized care and supports. SAMHSA leads efforts to promote [behavioral health equity](#), particularly for underrepresented and under resourced populations.

We also know traumas from a variety of sources — such as adverse childhood events, disasters, and violence — often precede mental health and addiction problems. SAMHSA works to [prevent and respond to trauma](#) and its effects.

Finally, we know the solutions to today's crises require the involvement of people with lived experience; those in recovery and their family members. They bring expertise and experience to help improve the delivery of care. SAMHSA recently issued a [Recovery Innovation Challenge](#) to identify innovation advancing recovery.

There is hope. Recovery is possible. People, when equipped with evidence-based treatment and recovery supports, are able to regain their lives and contribute to their families and communities. SAMHSA stands with everyone impacted by addictions and mental health conditions so that more people can begin their journeys and experience the promise and joy of recovery.

Need mental health support? Visit findsupport.gov.

Need treatment options for substance use or mental health disorders? Call 800-662-HELP (4357) or visit findtreatment.gov.

Are you struggling or in crisis? Call or text 988 or chat at 988lifeline.org