

Maintaining Sobriety During COVID-19

Addiction is often seen as a disease of isolation because it impacts people's ability to form and maintain healthy relationships. Much of treatment and recovery takes place in a group setting. Dealing with isolation can be challenging for people in addiction recovery and may heighten feelings of stress, worry, and anxiety. All of these feelings can trigger substance use. Although the current guidelines to stay safe from COVID-19 are asking us to *physically* distance ourselves from others, we can still remain *socially* connected with our supports in order to stay well.

RELAPSE PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Avoid Triggers

Negative emotions can be triggers for relapse, so it's important to focus on what you can do to improve your mental health and stay positive during this time.

- Limit exposure to social media and the news. Get information from reliable sources:
 - Florida Department of Health Coronavirus Website: <https://floridahealthcovid19.gov/>
 - Broward County Department of Health: <http://broward.floridahealth.gov/>
 - CDC Coronavirus site: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- Take care of yourself and your physical health.
- Write in a journal.
- Try a new hobby or activity.
- Structure your day by maintaining a schedule and routine to keep busy.
- Stay connected to your support system with phone calls and video chats.

Stay Involved in Therapy and Support Groups

Social distancing doesn't have to mean social isolation. Participation in group meetings can reduce feelings of loneliness and help prevent relapse.

- Recovery support groups like Alcoholics Anonymous are meeting online. Online group meetings can't take the place of face-to-face meetings, but they can help you stay connected to your support network.
- If you participate in individual and group counseling, don't stop attending your sessions. Many treatment providers are able to offer telehealth services, so you can continue to receive the care you need.
- Even in times of uncertainty, one thing you can control is your sobriety. Make recovery your priority. If you are currently in treatment, continue to participate. Don't be afraid to seek help if you relapse or your mental health symptoms worsen.

Personal Recovery Plan

Recovery plans provide people who are experiencing cravings with a specific set of concrete strategies to decrease risk. Be sure to update your existing recovery plan based on the COVID-19 guidelines. You can use the questions below to assist you in updating/developing your new plan:

1. List the personal triggers that put you at risk for using.
2. How will you address each trigger?
3. How will you increase your self-care?
4. What coping skills will you learn or improve on and how will you do this?
5. List your relapse prevention strategies.
6. List additional commitments that will help you stick to your recovery plan.
7. List the consequences you agree to accept, should you break any of the above promises.

Be sure to share your relapse plan with your supports!

ONLINE RESOURCES

Staying connected during the COVID-19 pandemic is one of the best things you can do for your mental health. Fortunately, technology and online resources make it easy to interact with people. Online meetings, forums, and chat apps are a great way to engage with other people, including those who are also in recovery.

Organizations

Florida Narcotics Anonymous (NA):
<https://naflorida.org/meetings/>

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)
Intergroup: <http://aa-intergroup.org/>

Cocaine Anonymous (CA)
Intergroup: <https://ca.org/meetings/>

Marijuana Anonymous (MA):
<https://ma-online.org>

Smart Recovery:
www.smartrecovery.org, click on
"online community."

InTheRooms: <http://intherooms.org>

Reddit Recovery: Virtual hang out
and support during recovery:
https://www.reddit.com/r/REDDITO_RSI_NRECOVERY/

LifeRing (Secular Recovery):
<https://www.lifering.org/online-meetings>

Recovery Dharma: peer-led organization that
supports recovery from addiction using
Buddhist practices and principles:
<http://recoverydharma.online>

Women for Sobriety: Dedicated to helping
women discover recovery from Substance Use
Disorders: <https://wfsonline.org/>

Life Ring- Practical experiences and
sobriety support:
<https://www.lifering.org/online-meetings>

Moderation Management: behavioral change
program and national support group for
people concerned about their drinking and
wish to make positive lifestyle changes:
<http://www.moderation.org/online/listserv.html>

You can explore more options from
the Substance Abuse and Mental
Health Services Administration via
<https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/virtual-recovery-resources.pdf>

Mindfulness Meditation Resources

- 10-minute guided meditation:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sJH6_ZbgeWQ
- www.mindful.org
- Refuge Recovery:
<https://refugerecovery.org/meditations>

Relaxation Techniques

- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
<https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheet/progressive-muscle-relaxation-script.pdf>
- Tai Chi
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZxcNBejxlzs>
- Visualization Exercises
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r-zXv7aYYqY>

Articles

Shatterproof: "How I'm Coping with COVID-19 and Social Isolation as a Person in Long-Term Recovery" provides helpful suggestions:
<http://bit.ly/shatterproof-coping>

The Chopra Center: "Anxious About the Coronavirus? Here Are Eight Practical Tips on How to Stay Calm and Support Your Immune System." <http://bit.ly/Chopra-calm>

Recovery Bloggers

- <https://www.thefix.com/my-top-10-recovery-blogs>
- <https://www.healthline.com/health/best-alcoholism-blogs-of-the-year>
- <https://thisnakedmind.com/top-25-recovery-bloggers/>

Support Groups for Loved Ones

Al-Anon is 12-step based and focus on loved ones who have alcohol use disorder.
<https://al-anon.org/al-anon-meetings/electronic-meetings/>

Learn to Cope hosts an online support forum for families, friends, and loved ones who have someone in their lives who is struggling with addiction: <https://www.learn2cope.org/>

Apps to Support Recovery

Wellness Recovery Action Plan® (WRAP®) is a simple and powerful process for creating the life and wellness you want. Discover simple, safe, and effective tools to maintain wellness and develop a daily plan to stay on track with your life goals. Identify what throws you off track and develop a plan to keep moving forward, and gain support and stay in control even in a crisis.
<https://mentalhealthrecovery.com/wrapapp/>

Mood Tracker allows you to monitor your moods on six pre-loaded scales (anxiety, stress, depression, brain injury, post-traumatic stress, general well-being). You rate your moods by swiping a small bar to the left or to the right. Notes can be recorded to document daily events, medication changes and treatments that may be associated with mood changes.
https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.t2.vas&hl=en_US
<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/t2-mood-tracker/id428373825>

Nomo allows you to track your sober days with your own sobriety clock. It helps you refocus during a weak moment with a distraction feature. It also helps to keep you accountable by allowing people you choose to access your sobriety clock data.
<https://saynomo.com/>

AA Big Book Free app is a great way to have access to the full text of the AA Big Book on the go. It is free to use and it allows you to make notes and bookmark meaningful passages. It also helps you find meetings in your area.
https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.goodbarber.aabigbookfree&hl=en_US

The quitSTART app is a free smartphone app that helps you quit smoking.
<https://smokefree.gov/tools-tips/apps/quitstart>

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www.drugtreebroward.org