

Recovery Definitions and Developmental Stages

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I. SAMHSA. (2011). New working definition of recovery from mental disorders and substance use disorders. Available at www.samhsa.gov/recovery

Recovery from alcohol and drug problems is a process of change through which an individual achieves abstinence and improved health, wellness, and quality of life.

II. Georgia's Recovery Definition, Guiding Principles and Values. (2013). Georgia Recovery Initiative. Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities. Available at <http://dbhdd.georgia.gov/georgia%E2%80%99s-recovery-definition-andguiding-principles-values>

- ✓ Recovery is a deeply personal, unique and self-determined journey through which an individual strives to reach his/her full potential. Persons in recovery improve their health and wellness by taking responsibility in pursuing a fulfilling and contributing life while embracing the difficulties one has faced.
- ✓ Recovery is not a gift from any system. Recovery is nurtured by relationships and environments that provide hope, empowerment, choices and opportunities.
- ✓ Recovery belongs to the person. It is a right, and it is the responsibility of us all.

III. Bety Ford Institute Consensus Panel. (2007). What is recovery? A working definition. *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment*. 33, 221–228.

Recovery from substance dependence is a voluntarily maintained lifestyle characterized by sobriety, personal health, and citizenship.

- Sobriety = abstinence from alcohol and all other non-prescribed drugs
- Personal health = improved quality of physical, mental and spiritual health, including independence
- Citizenship = living with regard and respect for those around you; often achieved and sustained through peer support groups

Early sobriety = 1–11 months
Sustained sobriety = 1–5 years
Stable sobriety = 5+ years



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IV. Dennis, M. L., Foss, M. A., & Scott, C. K. (2007). An eight-year perspective on the relationship between the duration of abstinence and other aspects of recovery. *Evaluation Review*, 31(6), 585-612.

On average, recovery is continued another year by:

36% of people with 1-11 months in recovery = Early recovery stage

66% of the 1-3 year group = Sustained recovery stage

86% of those with 4-7 years = Stable recovery stage

