The 10 Principles of Recovery

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Recovery means finding your path to a meaningful life. It puts you in control of your life and helps you gain self-confidence and respect for yourself. You can use recovery for substance abuse and mental health problems such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

There are 10 principles of recovery. Place this list where you will see it every day, such as on the bathroom mirror.

1. Your recovery is self-directed. You find your way to recovery through personal control, good decision-making, and independence. The choices you make are yours and yours alone.

2. Your path is based on your personal needs, likes, and experiences. If you see your recovery as a lifetime journey, you'll be able to find the best physical and mental health.

3. Your recovery empowers you. You're the only person who can turn your decisions into actions.

4. Your recovery includes your mental, physical, and spiritual needs. It includes your family, friends, job, and community.

5. Your recovery will have ups and downs. It's not a step-by-step process. It's a lifetime process where you grow and build on your setbacks.

6. Your recovery is based on your ability to bounce back, cope, and make use of other talents. Value yourself and build on these strengths.

7. Your recovery includes support from others. Make friends and build relationships. Join groups where you can help others and find purpose for yourself.

8. Your recovery lets you respect yourself. Believe in yourself and meet your goals. Accept and take pride in what you can do.

9. Your recovery shows that you take responsibility for yourself. Find the courage to work toward your goals.

10. Your recovery gives you hope. You can overcome your problems.

Adapted from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2006). National Consensus Statement on Mental Health Recovery. Available online: http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content//SMA05-4129/SMA05-4129.pdf.