RECOVERY HEALTH SOLUTIONS

A Beginner's Guide to Recovery

If you've landed here, something has already shifted —maybe a moment of honesty with yourself, or a growing worry about someone you love. That's not nothing. That's actually the beginning. This guide is written for people who are brand new to the world of recovery, whether you're trying to figure out if there's a real problem, how to say something to a loved one, or what actually happens when you ask for help.

There's no shame in not knowing where to start. The recovery world has its own language, its own systems, and its own unwritten rules — and none of that gets explained when you're standing in the middle of a crisis. Consider this your plain-language starting point: no jargon, no judgment, just honest information to help you take the next step, whatever that step might be.

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How to Know If You - or Someone Else - Needs Help

One of the hardest parts of this whole journey is just figuring out whether there's actually a problem. Substance use exists on a spectrum, and most people don't wake up one day clearly on the wrong side of it. Instead, there's a gradual drift — from occasional use, to regular use, to something that starts taking up more and more space in a person's life.

The question isn't really **"how much?"** — it's **"what's the impact?"** Ask yourself honestly: Is substance use getting in the way of work, school, or responsibilities? Are relationships suffering? Has the person tried to cut back and struggled? Are they using more than they intended, or in situations where it's clearly dangerous?

Signs in Yourself

- Using more than you intended, more often
- Feeling guilty or ashamed but continuing anyway
- Trying to cut back and finding it harder than expected
- Substances taking up more mental space and time
- Withdrawing from people or things you used to enjoy

Signs in a Loved One

- Personality changes or mood swings tied to using
- Withdrawal from family or close friends
- Financial problems that don't add up
- Unexplained absences or secretiveness
- Physical changes: weight loss, sleep disruption, appearing intoxicated

ⓘ You don't need a dramatic rock-bottom moment to justify asking for help. If something feels off and it's been going on for a while, that's enough reason to start the conversation. Concern is a valid reason to reach out.

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Use, Dependence, and Addiction: What's the Difference?

These three words get used interchangeably, but they actually mean different things — and understanding the difference can help you figure out what kind of support is needed. Where someone falls on this spectrum shapes what type of help will be most effective.

1

Use

Using alcohol or other drugs, sometimes regularly, without significant consequences. Use becomes a concern when it starts causing problems — even occasional use can be dangerous in certain contexts, such as fentanyl-contaminated substances.

2

Dependence

The body has physically adapted to a substance. Stopping or cutting back causes withdrawal symptoms — shakiness, sweating, nausea, anxiety, or in some cases seizures. Dependence is a biological process, not a character flaw.

3

Addiction (Substance Use Disorder)

A chronic condition where a person compulsively uses despite real, ongoing harm to their life. It involves changes in the brain's reward and decision-making systems. Addiction isn't about willpower — it's a medical condition that responds to treatment.

Why does this matter? Because the level of care someone needs often depends on where they are on this spectrum. Someone who is physically dependent may need medical supervision to stop safely. Someone with a severe addiction may need intensive treatment. And someone in the early stages of problematic use might benefit most from counseling. Meeting people where they are leads to better outcomes.

Recovery Health Solutions (Brooklyn Park, MN) offers structured support through IOP, individual counseling, peer services, and mental health care for individuals at every point on this spectrum. Call (763) 425-5959 to learn more or get started

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What to Do If Someone Doesn't Want Help

This is one of the most painful places a loved one can find themselves. You can see clearly that someone is struggling. You want to help. And the person you love either doesn't see a problem, won't talk about it, or flat-out refuses support. It's exhausting and heartbreaking, and there's no perfect script that makes it easy.

The hard truth is: you can't force someone into recovery. Lasting change comes from within. What you *can* do is create conditions that make it more likely they'll reach for help when they're ready — and protect yourself in the meantime.

Express Concern Without Ultimatums (Yet)

Start by sharing what you've observed and how you feel — not accusations. "I've noticed you've seemed really down lately and I'm worried" lands differently than "You have a drinking problem."

Stop Enabling — Gently

Enabling means doing things that make it easier for someone to keep using without consequences. Stopping doesn't mean abandoning — it means not buffering reality. You can love someone and still hold a boundary.

Start Small with a RECOVERY Coach (CPRS)

A Certified Peer Recovery Specialist (CPRS) is someone with lived experience in recovery who can serve as a bridge. They can meet with your loved one informally, build trust, and help them take small steps — without the pressure of committing to full treatment.

Get Support for Yourself

Al-Anon, Nar-Anon, and SMART Recovery Family & Friends are free groups designed for exactly this situation. A therapist familiar with addiction can also help. You matter in this equation too.

Sometimes people need to see the real consequences of their use before something shifts. That doesn't mean you have to watch passively — it means you can hold boundaries, stay connected, and be ready to help when the window opens. Professional interventionists can also help families navigate this in a structured, compassionate way. When your loved one is ready to take that step, programs with rolling enrollment mean they can start as soon as they're ready, without a long wait.

Recovery Health Solutions (Brooklyn Park, MN) offers rolling enrollment in our IOP — meaning your loved one can start as soon as they're ready, without a long wait. Call (763) 425-5959.

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How to Start the Conversation

Bringing up substance use with someone you care about is genuinely hard. Most people either avoid it for too long or say something in a moment of frustration that puts the person on the defensive. How you start the conversation matters almost as much as what you say.

The goal of the first conversation is not to solve the problem — it's to open a door. You want the person to feel heard, not attacked. You want to express care, not catalog their failures. Keep it short, stay calm, and pick a time when they're sober and you're not mid-argument.

> "I love you and I've been worried. I've noticed some things lately that concern me, and I just wanted to check in. You don't have to have all the answers — I just wanted you to know I'm here and I'm not going anywhere."

✓ Do This

- Choose a calm, private moment
- Use "I" statements ("I've noticed," "I feel worried")
- Stay focused on behavior, not character
- Express love and offer support
- Be ready to listen without fixing

Avoid This

- Bringing it up during a fight
- Starting with accusations or labels
- Threatening consequences you don't mean
- Bringing up everything at once
- Expecting one talk to change everything

If they get defensive or shut down, that's okay. Plant the seed and step back. What you said doesn't disappear — people often come back to those conversations later, especially when they're struggling. The fact that you said something at all matters more than you know.

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Quick Call Guide for Difficult Conversations

When emotions run high, a few steady phrases can help keep the conversation calm, grounded, and safe. Use this guide as a quick reference to reduce escalation, show care without pressure, and stay connected in the moment.

When Things Feel Calm	When They're Angry or Feel Betrayed	When They're Emotional or Confused
• Hey, I'm so glad to hear your voice. • You've been through so much, and I'm really proud of you. • You don't have to explain everything right now — I just want you to know I'm here. • You're safe now, and that's what matters most. • I'm really proud of you for calling. Let's talk again soon, okay? I love you.	**Acknowledge:** I can hear that you're upset. This has been really scary and overwhelming. **Validate:** You have every right to feel angry. I know it must have felt like a huge loss of control. **Explain:** We were scared and just wanted you to be safe. **Affirm:** Even if you're mad at me, I still love you and I'm here. **Leave open:** I'll be here when you're ready to talk again.	• You sound like there's a lot on your mind. It's okay — take your time. • That sounds like a lot to carry. I'm glad you called. • You're safe right now. Try taking a deep breath with me. • You're not alone — we're still here and we love you. • I know this is a lot, but I'm proud of you for reaching out.

Use these phrases as a starting point — adapt them to your own voice. Breathing together over the phone is powerful: "Let's take one slow breath together — in through the nose... and out slowly."

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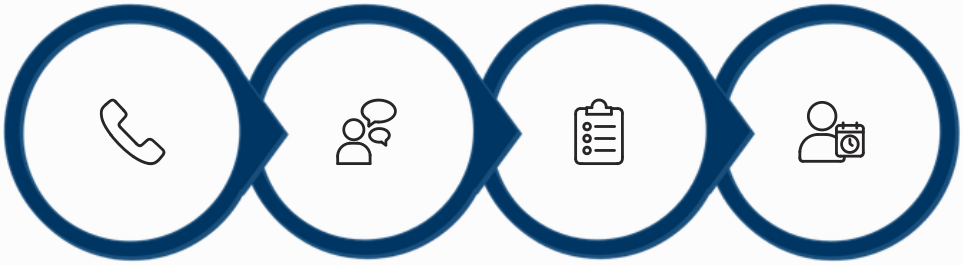
What Happens When You Reach Out for Help

A lot of people hesitate to reach out because they don't know what happens next — and the unknown is scary, especially when you're already overwhelmed. Here's a plain-language walk-through of what the process typically looks like when you contact a treatment program.



When you first reach out — whether it's calling a national helpline or talking to your primary care doctor — you'll typically be asked some questions about your situation. This is called a screening or assessment. It's not a test. It's a conversation to help match you with the right level of support.

What You'll Typically Be Asked

- What substances are involved
- How long this has been going on
- Any physical health or mental health concerns
- Your living situation and support system
- What kind of help feels right to you

What Comes Next

Based on your assessment, you'll be recommended a level of care — this might be outpatient counseling, an intensive day program like IOP, a residential program, or medication-assisted treatment. You don't have to accept the first recommendation blindly — it's okay to ask questions and advocate for what feels workable for your life. Many people are surprised by how straightforward this step is.

Recovery Health Solutions (Brooklyn Park, MN) offers a straightforward intake process with rolling enrollment. Call (763) 425-5959 to get started.

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Do You Need a Referral to Start Treatment?

Short answer: usually no. Many people assume they need a doctor's referral to access substance use treatment, the same way they might need one for a specialist. In most cases, that's not how it works. You can often call a treatment center, a counseling clinic, or a helpline directly and get the process started without going through another provider first.

Call Directly

Most treatment programs accept self-referrals. You can call a treatment center directly and ask about their intake process — many offer rolling enrollment so you can often start right away.

Use a Helpline

SAMHSA's National Helpline (**1-800-662-4357**) is free, confidential, and available 24/7. They can connect you to local Twin Cities resources without a referral and help you understand what level of care might fit your situation.

Talk to Your Doctor

Your primary care provider can prescribe medications like buprenorphine for opioid use disorder directly — no referral required in most cases. They can also help coordinate a warm handoff to outpatient treatment.

Check Your Insurance

If you have insurance, call the number on the back of your card to ask what's covered. The Affordable Care Act requires most plans to cover substance use disorder treatment at the same level as other medical care. No insurance is not a dead end — sliding-scale and state-funded options exist.

The Affordable Care Act requires most insurance plans to cover substance use disorder treatment at the same level as other medical conditions. You have legal protections here.

Recovery Health Solutions (Brooklyn Park, MN) welcomes self-referrals from individuals, families, and community providers. Call (763) 425-5959 — rolling enrollment means you can often start right away.

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What If You're Not Ready to Quit Completely?

This is one of the most important things to understand about modern recovery: **you don't have to want to stop entirely to get help.** The idea that a person has to "hit rock bottom" or declare total abstinence before they deserve support is outdated and, frankly, has cost lives. Where you are right now is a valid place to start.

There are many reasons someone might not be ready for full abstinence. They may be scared of withdrawal. They may not believe recovery is possible for them. They may still be weighing whether their use is really a problem. They may just want to use more safely in the meantime. All of these are understandable human responses — and all of them can be met with real help.

Start with a Recovery Coach (CPRS)

A Certified Peer Recovery Specialist (CPRS) is someone with lived experience in recovery who can meet you where you are — no commitment required.

Recovery coaching is a low-barrier first step that doesn't require you to be ready for formal treatment.

Reduce how much or how often you use

Cutting back is meaningful progress — even small reductions in use reduce risk and build a foundation for change over time.

Avoid high-risk situations

Not using alone, having a safety plan, and knowing where naloxone is kept are all harm reduction steps that matter and save lives.

Start a conversation without committing to anything

You can call a treatment program or helpline just to talk. Many harm reduction models meet you wherever you are in your journey — no commitment to abstinence required to begin.

Get connected to a counselor who won't judge you

One-on-one counseling with a Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor (LADC) can help you explore your options in a safe, private setting — at your own pace.

Recovery Health Solutions (Brooklyn Park, MN) offers Recovery Coaching (CPRS), **harm reduction support**, and outpatient counseling. Call (763) 425-5959.

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Understanding Harm Reduction

Harm reduction is the idea that people deserve support and protection even when — *especially* when — they're not ready or able to stop using substances. At Recovery Health Solutions, we understand that recovery is not a one-size-fits-all journey. Each individual arrives with unique experiences, goals, and readiness for change. Harm reduction does not imply a lack of structure or accountability — it means we meet individuals where they are, while actively promoting safer choices, skill development, and forward momentum.

Reduce Risks & Harms

Reduce the risks and harms associated with substance use through education, awareness, and practical strategies.

Build Coping Strategies

Build safer, more effective coping strategies that support emotional regulation and mental health.

Develop Life Skills

Develop practical recovery and life skills that are applicable beyond treatment and into daily living.

Strengthen Mental Health

Strengthen emotional regulation and address underlying mental health needs through therapy, medication management, or ARMHS.

Increase Stability

Increase stability in areas such as housing, relationships, and daily functioning.

Sustainable Pace

Move forward at a pace that is both realistic and sustainable — for some, that means abstinence; for others, it starts with reducing use or building stability.

Our approach is grounded in respect, honesty, and clinical support. We recognize that setbacks may occur, and when they do, we respond with increased support rather than punishment. Clients are not discharged for struggling — we work together to understand the situation, adjust the plan, and continue progressing.

Recovery Health Solutions (Brooklyn Park, MN) is one of the only treatment facilities in the Twin Cities offering a true harm reduction model — meeting clients where they are without judgment. Call (763) 425-5959 to learn more.

Visit us online for more **free resources** or to **learn how we can help**.

RECOVERY Health Solutions is a **co-occurring Intensive Outpatient Program** (IOP) in the **Twin Cities** (Brooklyn Park, MN), supporting **Substance Use Disorder** and **Mental Health** together. We offer *8 integrated services* with a harm reduction approach.

WWW.RECOVERYHEALTHSOLUTIONS.ORG **Phone:** (763) 425-5959 **Email:** Info@recoveryhealthsolutions.org

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What to Expect in Your First Week of Treatment

Starting treatment can feel intimidating, even when you've made the decision to go. A lot of people walk in not knowing what to expect — and that uncertainty alone can make it harder to show up. Here's a plain-language look at what the first week often looks like in a structured outpatient program.

Step 1: Intake & Assessment

1

You'll be welcomed, fill out paperwork, and have an in-depth conversation about your history and needs. You'll meet with a counselor. New clients receive a brief one-on-one orientation covering program expectations and foundational materials.

Step 2: Getting Oriented

2

You'll learn the schedule, meet other people in the program, and begin to understand daily life in the group. You receive personal materials with worksheets, guided reflections, and coping tools you'll use throughout the program.

Step 3: Beginning the Work

3

Group sessions begin in earnest. You engage with the structured curriculum through educational videos, guided discussions, journaling prompts, and skill-building activities. Colored pencils are provided to support grounding and focus during sessions.

Step 4: Building Your Plan

4

Individual check-ins help you begin building a personal recovery plan. Connections to additional services — counseling, recovery coaching, ARMHS, or housing support — are discussed based on your individual needs.

You made it to the first day. That took more courage than most people will ever understand. Keep going — one day, one hour, one moment at a time. The people around you, staff and peers alike, are there to walk alongside you.

Recovery Health Solutions (Brooklyn Park, MN) offers a structured IOP with a personalized recovery curriculum, individual check-ins, and connections to recovery coaching, ARMHS, and housing support. Call (763) 425-5959.

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About Recovery Health Solutions

BROOKLYNPARK,MINNESOTA SERVING THE TWIN CITIES

Recovery Health Solutions is located in **Brooklyn Park, Minnesota**, and serves individuals across the Twin Cities metro area who are seeking support for substance use and mental health challenges. Our Intensive Outpatient Program provides structured outpatient addiction treatment and group therapy through a **comprehensive 182-page recovery curriculum** integrating Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), relapse prevention, nervous system regulation, and trauma-informed education.

Program Schedule

Monday – Thursday

Morning Group: 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Optional lunch provided at 12:00 PM
Afternoon Group: 12:30 PM – 3:30 PM
Optional lunch provided at 12:00 PM
Rolling enrollment — start when you're ready, no waiting for a new session cycle.

Additional Services

- Outpatient Group Therapy
- One-on-One LADC Counseling
- Recovery Coaches (Certified Peer Specialists)
- Mental Health Therapy
- Adult Rehabilitative Mental Health Services (ARMHS)
- Treatment Coordination
- Housing Stability Support
- Medication Management Support

182

Page Recovery Curriculum

A structured workbook each client keeps, designed for active engagement and long-term use beyond treatment.

12

Core Recovery Topics

From orientation and emotional regulation to relapse prevention, DBT skills, and building a life in recovery.

4

Days Per Week

Monday through Thursday, with morning and afternoon group options to fit your schedule.

Visit us online for more **free resources** or to **learn how we can help**.

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Contact & Referral Information

Recovery Health Solutions welcomes referrals from **case managers, probation officers, social workers, hospitals, treatment providers, shelters, and community organizations** throughout the Twin Cities. Our team works closely with referral partners to help individuals access the level of care that best supports their recovery and stability. Individuals may also self-refer — no referral from another provider is required to get started.

📍 Location

8590 Edinburgh Centre Drive
Brooklyn Park, MN 55443

Accessible from Minneapolis, St. Paul, Coon Rapids, Maple Grove, Plymouth, Brooklyn Center, Fridley, Champlin, Blaine, Anoka, and surrounding Twin Cities communities.

📞 Phone

(763) 425-5959

Call to ask about enrollment, schedule a brief intake conversation, or make a referral for someone you serve. Our team is here to help you navigate next steps.

✉️ Email

info@ recoveryhealthsolutions.org

Reach us by email for general questions, referral submissions, or to request program information for clients, families, or partner organizations.

Our program is designed for adults (18+) seeking structured support for substance use and mental health while continuing to live in their community. Rolling enrollment means individuals can join at any point — there is no need to wait for a new cycle to begin. Wherever someone is in their journey, we are here to walk alongside them every step of the way.