

# Enough Already!:

## A Guide to Recovery from Alcohol and Drug Addiction (Sobriety Checklist)

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In over 20 years of working with people addicted to alcohol and drugs, I have seen many people succeed, and fail, in getting sober and staying sober. There are easily identifiable reasons for these successes and failures in recovery. In a nutshell, those who are able to stay sober follow the recipe for recovery, and those who continue to relapse don't. When I say *recipe*, I am not talking about what the author thinks is a good idea for recovery. I am talking about what most people who have experience working in recovery, and those who have personal success in recovery, recommend. The information presented here is mainstream information regarding sobriety – much of which you may already be learning in treatment.

You have made an excellent start by entering a treatment program – most people don't make it that far. Since you will eventually complete that program, it is recommended that you learn to use the 12-step programs for recovery support on an ongoing basis. This guide will help you do that.

The Sobriety Checklist on the reverse side of this page will help you get started working a 12-step program and allow you to track your progress. As you complete each task, simply place a “✓” in the box next to each item you complete. This provides a very nice visual of your progress. My hope for you is that, by the time you have completed your treatment program and this checklist, you will have put into place a recovery program that will provide the basis for your long-term recovery.

### Sobriety Checklist Guide

**12 Step Meetings:** Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), Narcotics Anonymous (NA), Cocaine Anonymous (CA), Marijuana Anonymous (MA), Crystal Meth Anonymous (CMA), and similar organizations are all examples of 12-Step programs. Such programs use the 12 Steps, which were originally written for the AA program. These steps have been the key to a life without drugs and alcohol for millions of people around the world.

For now, you need to get started with **meeting attendance** as soon as possible. Meetings can be found by simply calling the central office of the program of your choice and asking where and when the local meetings are held. The local telephone numbers for Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous can be found in the phone book. You might also get the numbers from your counselor in rehab. You will want to call to get a meeting scheduled and attend one as soon as possible. At these meetings, you will hear what others have done to achieve successful recovery. This is also where you continue developing your **sober support system**.

At the first meeting, pick up a **meeting directory** so you can plan which meetings you will go to next. The most common suggestion regarding the number of meetings a newcomer should attend is **90 meetings in your first 90 days**. If you have recently made a decision to begin a program of recovery, such a commitment might seem overwhelming to you. It was helpful for me to apply the commonly used phrase in AA, “One Day at a Time.” Using this principle, instead of “90 in 90,” it becomes just a meeting today. So all you have to do to keep this commitment is to attend a meeting today! Worry about tomorrow's meeting tomorrow. If you really think about it, an hour and a half out of your day for something so important should not be asking too much of yourself.

**Developing a 12-Step sober support system** of peers is very important in recovery and attending the same meetings every week (same Monday meeting, same Tuesday meeting, etc.) will enable you to do that. One of the essential components of recovery is having others you can reach out to when you are feeling uncomfortable and/or in danger of relapse.

**Sponsorship:** A sponsor is a mentor or guide in the program who will help you along in your sobriety. A sponsor makes suggestions regarding how to work a good program based on his or her own experience. He or she will also provide support during difficult times in sobriety, take you through the basic text of your 12-Step program of choice, and help to guide you through the 12 Steps. I recommend getting a sponsor within your first 30 days of recovery. You want to find a sponsor whose sobriety looks good to you. It follows that if you do what he or she did, you will achieve the brand of sobriety that attracted you to your sponsor. You also want a sponsor with at least two years sober, has worked the steps, and is of the same sex.

**Phone calls** to your sponsor and other members of your sober support system are vitally important. You *must* have others involved in your sobriety if you are to succeed. The more phone calls you make, the better your chances are at continued sobriety. You especially need to call someone when you are feeling as if you want to use, or are feeling particularly stressed or bothered about something. Phone calls that aid in sobriety must be made to other recovering people. Non-recovering people cannot fully understand what you go through as a recovering addict.

**Sharing at meetings** is another very important suggestion because it is a good way for people to get to know you so you can build your sober support system. Don't worry if you feel you don't have anything to share. A very acceptable share is as follows: “Hi. My name is Bob and I'm an alcoholic. I have “x” days of sobriety. I don't really have anything to share, but someone suggested that I share at meetings so that's what I'm doing.” You will be amazed at the results of such a simple share. People will introduce themselves to you after the meeting and likely provide support and maybe even their phone number.

**Reading 12-Step literature** is another essential tool for recovery. Along with learning how to utilize 12 Step programs to help you get and stay sober, such reading also keeps you in a recovery state of mind and steers you toward new recovery behavior. You can purchase the “basic text” at your program of choice which is typically entitled by the name of the program, i.e. *Alcoholics Anonymous*, *Narcotics Anonymous*, etc. Many groups simply use *Alcoholics Anonymous* - the text of the original 12-step program and commonly referred to as the “Big Book.” In the first 164 pages, you will find the entire AA program. Another valued book in the fellowship is *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (1981), commonly known as the “12 and 12.” In this book, the 12 Steps are broken down to give a better understanding of how they work and how to work them.

**Meeting commitments** are recommended as well in early recovery. People take commitments for such things as set-up, clean up, coffee person, treasurer, literature person, secretary, and greeter, among others. One benefit of taking a commitment is that, if there is a time that you're feeling lazy or unmotivated to go to a meeting, you go anyway because others are counting on you to be there to fulfill your commitment. In my experience, even if I go for that reason alone, I am always happy I attended.

**Morning routine:** Many recovering alcoholics start their day with some prayer, meditation and/or by reading a morning meditation book like: *24 Hours a Day*, *A Day at a Time*, or *Daily Reflections*. For each day of the year, these books provide a brief passage about a given aspect of recovery, a meditation topic, and a prayer. This is a great way to start your day on a spiritual and positive note. It reminds you that your most important task for that particular day is to stay sober.

**Having fun** is an often overlooked, but crucial element of recovery. If you don't take the time to have fun in sobriety, your addicted mind will tell you, “Heck, at least when I was out there using I had a little fun.” This leads to resentment about your recovery and eventually to relapse. Developing hobbies, or re-engaging in old ones, is a good way to create fun in your life. If you are having difficulty coming up with ideas on how to have sober fun, asking people with time in sobriety what they do for fun will be helpful.

**May you find peace and serenity in your sobriety!**