

SUBURBAN JUNKY, INC.

What to do After Rehab

We would like to think that completing a drug rehab will "fix" the addiction. However, the disease of addiction is incurable, but manageable. It is imperative to have an after-care plan before graduating from treatment. Relapse is a reality no matter how much one thinks they have a handle on their disease and most likely occurs within days of walking out of the facility to years. Most addicts and alcoholics who relapse do so within the first 18 months. Some tools to consider when building your after-care plan is transitional-living, extended treatment, and 12-step programs. Speaking with counselors, therapists, family members and peers with a substantial amount of sobriety can help in learning how to maintain recovery. It is best to build the after-care plan before leaving the facility so the recovering addict can be prepared for certain situations and know how to keep themselves safe.

Find and stay in aftercare.

When you maintain a long and intense commitment to aftercare therapy and 12 Step meetings, you will discover the support you need to stay sober and you will be in an environment of people who have been through the nightmare of substance abuse. Aftercare will help keep you focused and it will help keep you grounded. One of the most accurate predictors of relapse is overconfidence and a minimization of aftercare. Those that are realistic and seek aftercare therapy and participate in 12 Step groups have the greatest success rate of sobriety.

Keep busy.

You have decided not to hang around the people that you hung out with before you went to treatment because you do not want to be around drugs and alcohol. This is a great step but it could leave you feeling lonely. Call your sponsor when you feel that you want to use out of boredom, restlessness or loneliness. Many recovering addicts do not know how to spend their time without using. Making friends in aftercare and picking up new, safe hobbies can help pass the time as you adjust to a sober life. Also, finding employment can help keep you busy and it will help with feelings of self-worth as you make wise decisions.

Take care of yourself.

There are many things that can trigger a craving. Being hungry, angry, lonely or tired can induce a craving that you might not be expecting. Taking care of your body and soul will help preempt risks. Eating right, getting enough sleep and keeping a list of sober friends can help you take care of yourself.

Follow your relapse prevention plan.

You worked very hard on this plan while you were in treatment and you have mentally prepared for many different situations that might lead to relapse. Use your plan diligently the first year and you will find that it will help you out of many situations. Recovering addicts that ignore the recommendations of their plans and ignore the triggers and situations that may bring about relapse are asking for trouble. Your prevention plan is an important key to recovery and it should be

followed explicitly.

If you slip and use again, don't fall back into full-blown abuse.

Relapse can happen to even the most diligent of those recovering. Staying sober is a life-long commitment and program of action and if a relapse does occur, do not come down so hard on yourself that you accept defeat. Feelings of regret are powerful but you must not fall back into destructive habits. If you do slip, call your sponsor and discuss why you used, what the triggers were and how you are feeling.

Listen to the suggestions from the rehab you were in.

Drug and alcohol treatment rehabs specialize in teaching addicts how to live without drugs. They have vast amount of knowledge and guidance based upon what has worked for their clients and what has not worked. Be mindful of what they say and take it to heart. Rehab facilities want their clients to stay sober after leaving treatment and they offer tangible, good advice.

Talk to your parents.

It does not matter if you are a teen or young adult. Open communication with family, especially parents, is an effective way of ensuring that you make healthy choices after treatment. Let your parents know how you are feeling. Maybe you are bored or lonely or stressed. All feelings, including the good ones, can trigger a relapse. By talking with your parents, you are not only developing this relationship but with support from them, you will make sound, healthier decisions.

Develop a support network and safety net.

As soon as you leave treatment, you should begin to participate in an aftercare program. Aftercare programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous can help you deal with and resist temptation. You will begin to learn from your own mistakes and from the mistakes of others as well. You will most likely get a sponsor whom you are to call whenever you find yourself in a situation that tempts you. This network will be an extended family to you and they will be there to help catch you when you stumble or fall. You will discover that you are stronger than you think.

If you are in school, go and speak to your advisor.

There are most likely other students that have been to treatment and getting in touch with these students can help you to meet new, sober peers. You're friends are most likely still using and you do not want to be around people like that. Making new friends will help you to discover a sober life. You can also seek a safe haven with teachers or advisors. Many will allow you to spend time in their classrooms or offices when you feel weak or when you feel alone. They can also provide guidance for you as you readjust to sobriety.

Use the techniques you learned in treatment.

You most likely learned skills for dealing with peer pressure and triggers while you were in rehab. Use these and any other skill you learned to help you when you end up in situations that are tempting. You have practiced and now you need to do what is best for you. If you feel that you need more help with coping, call your sponsor. Rehab is not a quick fix because recovery is a life-long process. Seeking and being dedicated to aftercare therapy is one of the best things you can do to remain sober. Talking to family and developing a support system will also help with your journey. No single suggestion can ensure you will always stay sober, but an individualized mix of the suggestions plus what you have learned from treatment can give you valuable tools for life-long

sobriety.

*** Courtesy of The Hills Treatment Center**

****Courtesy of Northbound Academy**