



Quick Start Guide

The Recovery Book: Answers to All Your Questions About Addiction and Alcoholism and Finding Health and Happiness in Sobriety

How To Use The Recovery Book

Newcomers, start here: *Are you new to recovery? Or just thinking about sobriety, but not sure how to get started?*

- Start by reading Chapter 1, Welcome to Recovery. Learn about the disease of addiction and how it might have affected you. Answer the questions in *Are You an Alcoholic or Addict?* (p. 3). Read about the serenity that a life in recovery can offer you (p. 7).
- Next, read Chapter 2, Your Recovery Plan. Learn more about what is needed to move into recovery and how the Recovery Zone System can help you make a plan.
- Answer the *Are You Ready for the Red Zone?* questions in Chapter 3 (p. 26).
- If you're ready for recovery, keep reading. Chapter 3 gives a broad overview of what you'll need to do in the next few months. Chapter 4 will help you think about any lingering roadblocks. Chapter 5 will help you explore treatment options, and when you're ready, Chapters 6–14 will help you learn about other aspects of recovery, such as detox, fellowship meetings, relapse prevention, relationship repair, health, and more.

Solidly sober, start here: *Do you have a solid recovery (at least eighteen months) underway?*

- First, learn about the Recovery Zone System. Read pages 17-23, and then see the *Are You Ready* questions for the Yellow and Green Zones (pp. 356 and 448). Answer the questions honestly. Where are you in recovery? Which Recovery Zone? Are you ready for the Yellow Zone (rebuilding your life) or do you need more time in the earlier Red Zone?
- If you're ready for the Yellow Zone, read Chapters 16 and 17 (especially the *Living Your Life, Healing Your Brain* summary on pp. 358-360) to learn what you need to do now.
- If you're ready for the Green Zone, read Chapters 21 and 22 (especially the summary on pp. 450-451) to learn about maintaining your recovery and reaching out to help others.
- Read Chapters 1 and 2 to learn more about addiction and recovery (including new brain science behind recovery) and building a solid recovery plan. Learn how to use the Recovery Zone ReCheck, a relapse prevention tool (pp. 19-21).

Family, friends, and community leaders, start here: *Are you concerned about a loved one or members of your community?*

- Start by reading Chapters 1 and 2: *Welcome to Recovery and Your Recovery Plan*. You'll learn about the disease of addiction and how it affects the brain and decisionmaking. The *Are You an Alcoholic or Addict* questions on page 3 can help you determine if someone really does need help. You'll also learn about what it means to "live in recovery" and what it takes to get there. The Recovery Zone System (pp. 17-23) in particular can help you to understand that recovery is a life-long process; it doesn't happen overnight.
- Then turn to Chapter 26, *For Friends and Family* (p. 538), to learn about how addiction affects the entire family and what you can (and can't) do to help someone. Be sure to read *Getting Help for Your Loved One*, starting on page 543.
- If you are ready to look at treatment options, read Chapter 5, *The Many Roads to a Lifetime of Sobriety*. It reviews all options, while Chapters 6-9 give more details on each.

Health professionals, start here: *Are you a health professional who helps people struggling with addiction?*

- Start with Chapter 1, *Welcome to Recovery*, to learn more about the disease of addiction, how it affects the brain and body, and how recovery can heal the brain. *Are You an Alcoholic or Addict?* on page 3 will help you determine if someone really does need help.
- Read Chapter 2, *Your Recovery Plan*, to learn about what your patients need to do to get into recovery, and how the Recovery Zone System can help them build a solid recovery.
- If you have patients who are ready to move into sobriety, read Chapter 3, *Stop: Activate Your Recovery*, to help them navigate the early days of recovery.
- To help patients build a treatment plan, read Chapter 5, *The Many Roads to a Lifetime of Sobriety*. It reviews all options, while Chapters 6-9 give more details.
- To learn about the physical and mental health issues that can occur in various stages of recovery, read Chapters 13, 20, and 24. Chapter 25 covers options for quitting smoking.
- Be sure to read about the very serious risks of medication in recovery; see *Medication Concerns*, pp. 290-293 and 475-481.
- Also see *Nondrug Approaches to Common Medical Problems*, starting on page 494 (especially *Pain Control*, p. 513).
- Help your patients learn how to find good health information online; refer them to *Calling Dr. Google: How to Find Good Health Information*, pp. 286-290.
- If you run a recovery group, you may want to assign sections or chapters as reading homework. The entire group can then discuss the material the following week.

The Recovery Book: The Recovery Zone System

The Recovery Zone System is a road map for a life in recovery. It gives clear guidelines on when and how a person in recovery can address various areas of life—treatment, fellowship activities, relationships, education, career, finances, recreation, and health—now that he is striving to put his life back on track. It helps him to know when he is ready to move forward in each of those areas. And it helps him to see when he might need to move *back* for a bit, to avoid a relapse.

The Recovery Zone System divides life in recovery into three distinct Recovery Zones: Red, Yellow, and Green. It also includes the Recovery Zone ReCheck, a relapse prevention tool, and TAMERS, a device for helping your brain heal.

The Recovery Zones (pp. 17-18; chart, pp.22-23)

- **The Red Zone: Stop. Activate your recovery.** For the first eighteen months or more of recovery, focus first and foremost on saving your life. Nothing else is as important.
- **The Yellow Zone: Proceed with caution. Build your life.** Once you have a solid eighteen months or more of sobriety, you'll move into the Yellow Zone, where you can put your energy into building the life you deserve and making your existence more fulfilling.
- **The Green Zone: Go. Celebrate your life.** After you have a few solid years of sobriety and have rebuilt your life, you'll move into the Green Zone. Then it's time to celebrate your life, do what you can to live a long and healthy life, and help others find recovery.

The Recovery Zone ReCheck (pp. 18-21)

The Recovery Zone ReCheck is an easy-to-use relapse prevention tool. It only asks you to take a focused inventory once a month or so, answer some basic questions, and then take action based on your answers.

Your Brain in Recovery: TAMERS (pp. 11-13)

TAMERS is a simple device that helps people in recovery remember what they need to do—every day—to use the power of neuroplasticity to heal their brains.

- Think about recovery, **T**alk about recovery
- **A**ct on recovery, connect with others
- **M**editate and **M**inimize stress
- **E**xercise and **E**at well
- **R**elax
- **S**leep

The Recovery Book: Table of Contents & Chapter Highlights

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