

COPING MECHANISMS: Managing without Drugs or Alcohol

Coping without the use of an addictive substance is not an easy task, but it can be learned.

STEP
1

DISCOVER YOUR **TRIGGERS**

The first step is to uncover your personal triggers that make it difficult for you to maintain sobriety. It will be understandably difficult at first, because you may be fighting the impulse to numb or drown out your feelings.



STEP 1 TIP: **KEEP A JOURNAL**

Use a journal to record every time you feel like you might relapse. This can help you discover a patterns in the people, places, or circumstances that are triggering that you may not notice otherwise.

STEP
2

BUILD GOOD **RELATIONSHIPS**

When you become sober, the people in your life can either help you toward sobriety or lead you away from it and even put you at risk of relapse. You need to pick your friends and romantic partners carefully. It may be wise to take time away from people who do not fully support your sobriety.

STEP
3

DEVELOP A **ROUTINE**

Creating daily and weekly routines consisting of work, chores, family responsibilities, and other tasks on your schedule can provide much-needed structure for the newly sober. Sticking to these routines limits unpredictable events and emotions which can add to stress or be personal triggers.



STEP 3 TIP: **INCLUDE TIME FOR YOU**

Caring for yourself is very important, especially when trying to get sober. Be sure your routines leave room for hobbies, relaxation and self-care - including recovery meetings and/or therapy sessions - as needed!

STEP
4

PROTECT YOUR **MENTAL HEALTH**

Addicts and Alcoholics are two times as likely to suffer from several psychiatric conditions such as anxiety, depression, PTSD and bipolar disorder. Mental health problems can be a major trigger for relapse. If you're struggling, consider getting in touch with a certified counselor, therapist, social worker, or psychologist. Find someone you feel comfortable with and who you trust with your most private thoughts.

As you have likely discovered while getting sober, simply stopping the use of drugs or alcohol does not instantly lead to a carefree, productive life. You may be dealing with mental health issues, past traumas, and a lack of structure and purpose in your life overall. These steps are just a few of the tools that can help you on the path to recovery.