



**DSB**

Authentic Genuine

**HOW TO SUCCEED DURING  
RECOVERY FROM  
ADDICTION**



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**Bio:** Dr. B is the founder and Medical Director of Zephyr Medical Group, an outpatient medical clinic devoted to the full spectrum of care for substance abuse, with a particular and significant effort at correctly managing outpatient medication-assisted treatment for opioid abuse. Previous to private practice and business, he was a clinical professor of Emergency Medicine at the University of California at Irvine, and at UCLA/Kern Medical Center. In this role, he has trained dozens of medical students, researchers, and young physicians.



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***This handbook is for anyone, the substance user or others that are involved in a person's road to sobriety. Parents, other family members, significant others, friends, counselors, and the client/patient themselves. For variety of reasons, the client/patient may not be in a place to review this material at any particular time.***

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*Recovery is not a place or destination. It is a journey and process. It is a path of self discovery and getting to know yourself. Enchanting self discovery. A fresh look at the world and those around you. It takes courage, It is a road for heroes. Godspeed!!*

**DR. B**

During active drug use or when planning on getting sober, people rarely consider the recovery phase. At least not in a deep and planned way. Most of the focus is on stopping the substance(s) of abuse. Yet this stage of your road away from addiction may be the most significant stage for success. There is significant risk for return to use. This crucial and dynamic time period will impact your mental and physical health. Every area of your life is affected and plays a role. These include who you think you are, your relationships, what they mean to you, your spirituality, finances, employment, and much more. Most importantly, this is a time for high rates of relapse. This is mainly for 2 reasons:

- 01 Physiological craving and withdrawal (long after you think they do not play a role)
- 02 Global coping skills and mechanisms

## *It is all Overwhelming!!*

This handbook is meant as education and a guide for those going through or planning on going through this process. It should be useful at anytime you come across the ebook. But, the sooner you get to it the better.

It is not meant as medical advice nor does it replace professional medical or mental health. It is meant to supplement your road to long term sobriety through education. Thus to empower you with knowledge and increase your likelihood of success. In short, if followed carefully, the education should significantly increase your likelihood of success.

*Knowledge is Truly Power!*

**DR. B**

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## 01

**“FORMAL” DEFINITIONS**

Change your understanding of the whole process from discrete stages– detox, recovery etc to a dynamic and delicate balance. Let me put this another way:

*If you used one night after 3 months you did not relapse and there is no need to throw away all your gains. You may not even need to go into detox. But you need support and planning.*

**DR. B**

**Getting the picture?**

Things are not discreet little categories. The big picture is dynamic and complex. Here are a few simple definitions to help orient you on this road.

An episode of use is not a relapse, it is a lapse. Relapse is a consistent change in behavior Recovery is a process with ups and downs, equal in numbers to any chronic illness Relapse Prevention Models help as a framework of understanding and conceptualizing the process of being in recovery. This short e-book incorporates alot validated concepts from the Models in addition to clinical experience over many years.

One final thought in this section. Throw away the idea of shame and guilt as you go through this. All you are doing is falling into the trap of the stigma and misinformatin around substance abuse and recovery. Planning will be important as discussed below. But, do not expect things to go in a step by step fashion. If they do, great. If they don't, take what you have learned from the events, create a new plan if necessary, and soldier through. Remember, you are on a Hero's Journey!

# 02

## LETS DEFINE RECOVERY

Let's make this very simple as there is no agreed upon definition as to when "recovery" starts. It can be very confusing. Think of it as a process. The path is anything but smooth and entails deep changes in physical, cognitive, psychological, emotional, interpersonal, spiritual, financial, and socio-cultural aspects.

Don't get hung up on definitions. Don't beat yourself up. Ever! It is your journey!!

What ever road you are on in the initial stages (rehab, at home, etc) and dealing with the initial withdrawals it eventually transitions into recovery. Do not get hung up on what day and how long. It is a process!!



## 03

## MEDICATION ASSISTED TREATMENT VS NO MEDICATION (MAT)

Some people may ask if this recovery workbook applies to MAT route vs no MAT. We can take this even further. Does what is said here matter if we are dealing with opioids vs stimulants vs alcohol etc. Even more complex is today's landscape of substance abuse which is polysubstance.

### **Does any of the above matter?**

The short answer is no, but with some caveats. In general, if you follow the advice regardless of the substance or number of substances involved you should increase your chances of success, once you transition into the recovery phase. Still, you will have to pay attention to more issues psychologically and physically, but it is all the same road, with different timelines.

*The more important issue is your approach to "detox", or very early stages of your road!*

The particular extra nuance is this: If there are opiates involved, the MAT road will 100 percent make all of this much easier. I say this with full clinical confidence.





# 04

## RECOVERY PLANNING

*In preparing for battle..... planning  
is indispensable*

**D. EISENHOWER**

We Have all heard about the value of planning. There is certainly some truth to that here, if at the same time you are flexible and ready for changes. In planning your success in recovery you will be better off if certain things are in place. This applies at any time but the ideal would be before you even get to the recovery stage. Truly, the sooner you understand these concepts in place the easier things will go.



## Mental Health

Established diagnosis - If you have any mental health diagnosis that are present, we call these comorbid conditions. These, if not managed correctly, may significantly contribute to a relapse. They may be the very reason you used drugs in the first place. Coming off the substance may in different ways exasperate comorbid mental health issues or make you much more sensitive to a exaggerated response. Some comorbidities are are the following:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Schizophrenia
- Bipolar disorder
- PTSD
- CPTSD
- Mood Disorders

These are just labels that may have been used.

If you have a therapist and a positive relationship established make sure you communicate with them. They need to know details of you being in recovery and the timeline.

If you do not have a regular therapist, but do have a established diagnosis from you should establish care and communicate the expected timeline of things. ie - going into detox, quitting day, when you will be out etc

If you do not have a therapist and do not have a established diagnosis, I strongly encourage you to establish care with one and explain your planned course of action.

### **What if I am going into detox or PHP and sober living?**

Although you may find some good therapist in that traditional established continuum - I still encourage you to establish care outside with in someone who is aware of the process in general and gets to know you.

The most critical aspect of this is long term continuity of care, including your liking the therapist and the therapist being knowledgeable, sensitive, and compassionate.





## Medical health

Medical conditions, especially chronic ones, can also heavily impact this process. Especially if you are on medication, which also may need adjusting. Few examples include:

- Thyroid disease
- Chronic pain
- Other hormonal and endocrine issues
- Traumatic brain injuries
- Autoimmune disorders

This list is too long. It is critical that your provider and you have an honest conversation, your medications do not stop flowing in a timely manner, and you follow up with them on a regular basis.

If you have not established care and do need regular medication, establish care. Again, the medical doctor needs to be knowledgeable, accessible, and empathetic.

If you are going to detox and IOP route with sober living, many people depend on the doctors provided. Try to avoid that route for many reasons.

The most critical aspect of this is long term continuity of care, including your liking the doctor and the doctor being knowledgeable, sensitive, and compassionate.

*I cannot stress enough the importance of establishing continuity of care in all stages of addiction treatment with the right provider*

**DR. B**

**Know your why:** Find your “why,” and the “how” will take care of itself.

Recovery from drugs and alcohol can be an overwhelming process. Individuals often question their ability to succeed through self-doubt, limiting beliefs, past failures, and a general lack of confidence in how they will be able to overcome the obstacles in their way. Knowing your “why” is one of the most critical components to succeed in the recovery process. Take some time and think of why you want to begin the recovery process. When you have identified your why, make it a part of your conscious thought process. Your why is the only thing that has the transformative power to help you navigate and overcome any obstacles that the recovery process may put in your way.

**Commitment:** Commitment is defined as the motivation and enthusiasm to continue doing something, after the initial excitement and willingness has worn off.

Anyone can start something, but not many people finish what they start. Let alone finish it with integrity and all the way through accomplishing their desired goals. It is easy to be committed to change when you are experiencing negative consequences because of alcohol or drug use. The key to success is can you and will you remain committed to that change when the consequences have subsided? Make a firm decision to change and stick to it. Recovery requires dedication and perseverance.

**Seek Support:** Asking for help is not a sign of weakness, if anything, it is a demonstration of strength.

Surround yourself with a supportive network of friends, family, therapists, or support groups. Having people who understand and encourage you can make a significant difference. There is a significant value in finding others in life who know and can show you the road to succeed in recovery. There is no need to do it alone.

**Set Realistic Goals:** People overestimate what they can accomplish in a month, and underestimate what they can accomplish in a year.

It is common that those who begin the recovery process, put an undue burden of stress on themselves to set goals and achieve personal and professional goals that they have neglected as a result of their alcohol and drug use. This is a dangerous process because rarely if ever, are we able to achieve these goals in a short period of time. This unrealistic expectation leads to frustration, discouragement, and inevitably disaster. Break down your recovery journey into smaller, achievable goals. Celebrate each milestone to stay motivated. When setting goals it is critical to remember the following: Your direction is more important than your speed.

**Develop Coping Strategies:** Alcohol and drugs were not the problem, they were simply the solution to a problem.

Individuals who use substances experience a significant relief and comfort from the effects alcohol and drugs. They often use to cope with psychological, emotional, and physical discomfort. However, due to characteristic of tolerance and withdrawal that are hallmarks of addictions, the coping skills and the solution to their problems, becomes a bigger problem with continued use. Learn healthy ways to cope with stress, triggers, and cravings. This might include mindfulness techniques, hobbies, exercise, or relaxation methods.

**Address Underlying Issues:** If you do not heal from your past wounds, you will bleed all over those who did not cut you.

Identify and address any underlying issues contributing to your struggles. Examples of underlying issues that are commonly seen or experienced by those who use drugs are alcohol are traumatic life events, dysfunctional family upbringings, mental health diagnosis, unresolved grief and loss, etc. Addressing there might involve therapy, counseling, or medical treatment.

**Practice Self-Care:** Self-care is not a luxury, it is a necessity.

Self-care is often confused with doing things that require money such as getting a massage or taking a vacation. Those are acts of self-care, however they are not required to achieve the benefits required for success in the recovery process. The best way to incorporate self-care is to ensure that each day you take some time to do something for your body, something for your mind, and something for your spirit. Take care of your physical, mental, and emotional well-being. This includes getting enough sleep, eating healthily, exercising regularly, and engaging in activities that bring you joy.

**Stay Accountable:** Accountability is the glue that holds together your commitment and the results you are seeking.

There will come a time in your recovery that you will not want to do the things that you know you need to do. This is a natural process that happens to all human beings when trying to do implement change in their lives. This is where accountability becomes critical for success in the recovery process. Hold yourself accountable for your actions and choices. Keep track of your progress and be honest with yourself about setbacks.

**Learn from Relapses:** The lessons in life will continue to repeat themselves, until you internalize, understand, and learn that lesson.

Relapses are a common part of recovery for many people. Instead of letting them derail you, use them as opportunities to learn and grow stronger. It is through perceived setbacks that we gain the insight, perspective, and knowledge to grow and evolve. Embrace these experiences in your life and learn to “fail forward.”





**Maintain a positive outlook:** When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change.

The power of your perspective and how you view you view the various stages of your recovery process, will dictate your ability to stay focused, commitment, and ultimately succeed in your pursuit for recovery. Stay positive and believe in your ability to overcome challenges. Celebrate your successes and be kind to yourself during setbacks.

**Re-write your story:** You have the ability to change your story. If and when you do, you will be able to change your life.

You are not your story. You are not your past. You are not your addiction. You are not your anxiety. You are not your depression. You are not your trauma. You are not the your circumstances. If you learn to internalize and accept what you just read, you will gain access to an opening that will be the catalyst to success in your recovery. We look forward to supporting you in your healing, recovery, and transformation journey.

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recovery, and transformation journey.**

