



“For it is in giving that we receive.”

Francis of Assisi



»» SUCCESS STORIES

My sobriety is the #1 thing in my life every day. I have my family back in my life. My kids had once told me if I didn't get help that they were not going to come around anymore. I was also no longer allowed at family gatherings at my parents or even my grandparents' homes. Today I can host these events at my new house, and every one of them will show up with smiles on their faces.

BILL M., ALUMNUS

HOPE FOR THE HOLIDAYS

“I went into treatment in December of 2017. I had just gotten my second DUI in six months and after praying for any kind of guidance, I just knew I needed to go to treatment and get some help because I was unable to get a handle on my situation alone.

I believe that God brought me to Valley Hope because it just fell into place perfectly. I was SO upset that I would be in treatment for Christmas and miss Christmas morning with my son.

However, I encourage anybody that is feeling that way during the holidays: yes, it wasn't awesome to miss Christmas morning with him, but what I gained from completing my treatment first gave me so much more.

Don't leave treatment early; you will gain so many more holidays and moments with your family and only have to give up one. It's a good trade off and so worth it!”



MY FIRST SOBER HOLIDAY: TIPS FOR SUCCESS



RECOVERY SPOTLIGHT: Q&A with Katelyn M.

How has sobriety improved your life?

KM: Long-term constant sobriety has changed my life in so many ways. I've learned how to be an excellent daughter, a caring wife, and a nurturing mother.

Do you have any advice to give?

KM: I learned so many things in treatment. Treatment was a much needed break from life where I was really able to sort out the things that I needed and didn't need in my life. My advice to anyone who finishes treatment is to find a 12 Step fellowship that you can feel a part of. That's when the work really matters!

How have you supported others in recovery?

KM: I am an ACTIVE member of a 12 Step program. I have a sponsor and I sponsor other women. I also really enjoy service work. One of the first things I did straight out of treatment was diving into service work. This allowed me to meet and befriend people in the fellowship easily, and it kept me out of my head.



Early in your sober journey, the holidays can be a daunting process. However, millions of people successfully make it to January 1st each year with their sobriety intact – and they have fun getting there. Following a few best practices can help you navigate the holidays successfully and start the New Year even stronger in your recovery.



It's Okay to Just Say No

Office parties, family gatherings, neighborhood celebrations, New Year's Eve with friends – your first go-round of staying sober during the holidays may require you to skip annual events that involve open bars or a heavy focus on alcohol consumption. You are free to skip a year and focus on yourself, specifically on your health and well-being. The best way to manage triggers is to avoid them altogether, especially early in recovery. Keep building on your recovery foundation and reevaluate the party invites next year.

Have a Party Plan

If you do attend a party where drinks are served, prepare yourself for the event. Walk through potential party scenarios and how you will react. Plan your arrival and departure, who you will spend time with – and who you will not. Bring your own or select a festive nonalcoholic option, and have an exit or even escape strategy if you start to feel anxious. Make sure you have your own transportation so that you can leave quickly if you feel uncomfortable. Call your sponsor before the party and walk through the plan. And, bring the address of the nearest AA meeting, just in case. Having a plan will help you stay focused on your desired outcome.

Treat Yourself

Celebrate your sobriety by indulging in the best that the holiday season has to offer – in moderation. Enjoy the sweets and comfort foods. In addition to the gift of recovery, give yourself the gift of a spa day, new shoes or tickets to a holiday performance or movie. Bring friends from your recovery community. Be sure to take care of your emotional and physical health by getting regular exercise. You will feel good and work off those extra Christmas calories.

Treat Someone Else

Skip the party and head out to help others. There are countless opportunities to serve your community during December. Homeless shelters, recovery programs, community toy drives – volunteer to help others this season and stay out of your head. Participate in charitable giving or adopt someone who could use some holiday hope and cheer. Use the opportunity to engage deeper into your AA or recovery support group. Keep a check on your sober friends and offer support. Do something that is good for humanity and your recovery this season.

Maintain Your Recovery Routine

Be sure to stay on your schedule as best you can. The holidays can throw schedules into chaos. Be mindful to keep your meeting schedule, church if you attend, and self-care routine including meditations or workouts. Keeping your daily routine on track will help you stay focused on recovery. Stay connected to your sponsor and recovery community.



The Holidays and Recovery: Five Tips for Family Members



What can family members do to support a loved one's recovery from addiction to drugs and alcohol, especially during the holidays? With so many seasonal triggers and distractions, the holiday season can be especially challenging for loved ones new to sobriety and their families. Many family members attempt to take on personal responsibility for protecting their loved ones to ensure they make it through the holidays sober and committed to their recovery journey.

However, although addiction is a family disease and family support is important to a healthy recovery program, it is important for family members to understand that the commitment to recovery rests solely on the loved one.

Still, there are steps that family members can take to create a safe, healthy space for loved ones in recovery to celebrate the season.

Keep in mind that sometimes the best practices for supporting your loved one in recovery can be counterintuitive. That is why seeking treatment and care for yourself can often be the most beneficial way to help your loved one and the entire family. In the meantime, consider these five best practices as you make plans for this Christmas:

1. Keep It Simple

Don't make overtly "special arrangements," but be mindful of your loved ones in recovery as you make your holiday plans. Value their feedback and respect that some holiday events may be unappealing to them, especially the first time. Be considerate of your loved one's schedule, such as their AA meetings or recovery group events and plan your family gatherings accordingly. In addition, when making plans, focus on the smaller, intimate family customs and skip the more extravagant activities. This will relieve some pressure and generate more meaningful experiences for the family to reconnect and renew.

2. Communicate

Engage your loved one in recovery in the planning process. The worst approach is to go through the holidays with your loved one positioned as the elephant in the room. Have an open discussion about their needs and expectations to help avoid surprises and unnecessary triggers or conflicts. More authentic and meaningful family experiences could evolve from the involvement of your loved one. Recovery can often inspire new perspectives and ideas that benefit everyone.

3. Embrace Peace

The holidays naturally elevate our emotions at almost every level. Even when a loved one finds recovery, family members can trigger relapse by exhibiting past fears, losing patience with the process and even applying an abundance of pressure and suspicion. Avoid this escalation. Inform and educate the family about addiction, treatment and recovery. Removing stigma can prevent such behaviors. Set the tone for your holiday season by embracing peace. Take necessary steps to create a lighter, peaceful environment that will benefit everyone and foster a happy, healthy experience.

4. Offer Space

Your loved one may want to skip your annual neighborhood gathering or the big family dinner. Maybe they need a few minutes of privacy to meditate or call their sponsor. Do not take any such requests personal. These are necessary and normal actions in their recovery. Provide a designated space for loved ones to retreat to when needed.

5. Get Creative

Introduce new traditions that relieve seasonal pressures and better engage the family. Recovery is an opportunity to refresh holiday planning with intentional planning that leaves an impact beyond the season. Don't be afraid to think outside the box. Challenge the family to exchange handmade gifts or even deliver their gifts to a family in need. You can reduce financial stress and add deeper meaning to the spirit of giving. Schedule a brainstorm session and invite your loved one in recovery to be a part of the planning.

DISCOVER EVENTS, MEETINGS + RENEWAL DAYS

valleyhope.org/events



“Thank you Valley Hope for giving me the gift of my son.” – Sarah

This is just one of the messages we have received in connection to the GIFT OF RECOVERY Drive this year. Donations received to the drive helps recovery become a reality. Your gift (1) helps patients to remain in treatment, (2) gives loved ones the opportunity to participate in family programming, and (3) provides assistance for immediate patient needs.

The drive is in full swing, and we are excited to see the results. At this time, we have received \$115,000 in donations to help and support patients in their recovery.

Your first gift is matched by a Challenge Grant!

By supporting this drive by January 31st, your gift is matched by this year's CHALLENGE GRANT. When you make a \$100 gift, the CHALLENGE GRANT matches with an additional \$100. Your \$100 gift becomes \$200 to support Valley Hope patients.

To make a donation, please use the enclosed envelope or visit valleyhope.org/donate to make your donation online.

On behalf of those we serve,



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