

How Does Suboxone Fit Into Recovery?

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Patients and family members should remain aware that suboxone by itself is NOT recovery. For suboxone to have a therapeutic recovery effect, it must be accompanied by support group attendance and ongoing counseling.

Because suboxone assists the patient in feeling "normal", it is easy to believe that addiction is in remission. Addiction is a chronic disease with psychological, social, spiritual, medical, and biochemical components. When any addict quits using and is attempting to maintain abstinence from the chemical, they must replace the chemical with healthy living skills or eventually they will return to using (relapse).

It is also crucial to keep in mind that recovery involves complete abstinence from other mood altering drugs, including alcohol. The exception might be certain medications prescribed by your medical doctor. However, it is still crucial that patients take responsibility for their own recovery by informing their medical doctor and making sure that their doctors understand addiction.

Many people at the beginning of the recovery process mistakenly believe that their last drug of choice was "the problem", or that they have a problem with a specific drug or class of drugs only. It is extremely important that you understand cross-addiction. Simply, cross-addiction involves substituting some other drug (or in some cases, some other behavior) for the drug of choice.

Chemical dependency involves the continuing use of chemicals to deal with (or not deal with) life's problems despite the fact that the chemicals are the source of many of those problems. Recovery begins with abstinence of mood altering drugs. Early recovery is fragile and extremely vulnerable to relapse. Relapse is a process that involves an unconscious return to old thinking, old feelings, and old behavior. If new thinking, new feelings, and new behavior have not been fully integrated, relapse looms heavily over the newly recovering person like a dark cloud. Relapse, a return to using, often involves believing that you can use a drug that wasn't your last drug of choice without negative consequences. This substituted drug, often alcohol, then becomes your new drug of choice. Or, the substituted drug sets off cravings that lead to a return to the drug of choice that precipitated treatment in the first place.

Recovery is more than abstinence from mood altering drugs. It is about learning to live life on life's terms. Its about developing living skills, including emotional intelligence, and becoming fully functioning in all avenues of one's life. There is no drug or medication that can grant you living skills or emotional maturity/intelligence.