



Family Recovery Plan

A free recovery resource from Stepwise Recovery

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STEPWISE RECOVERY

Family Recovery Plan

Working together to support recovery and protect your own wellbeing

Recovery from addiction is a family matter. When one person is in recovery, the whole family shifts. This plan helps you move together—honestly naming what's needed, what's possible, and what boundaries protect you all. It's a working document you'll return to, revise, and lean on when things get hard.

1. What Each Person Needs to Stay Well

Recovery isn't only the person in treatment. Everyone in the family carries strain, old hurt, and real needs. This section names those needs without blame. When families focus only on the person in recovery, others burn out. You can't support someone from an empty cup. Naming needs isn't selfish—it's honest.

Fill in for each family member (including the person in recovery)

- Name and relationship
- Sleep and rest needed
- Time that is yours alone
- Physical activity or movement
- Social connection outside the family
- Clear roles and responsibilities
- One thing others could do to help you most

2. Communication Agreements

How you talk together—or don't—shapes everything. This section sets ground rules that are kind but real.

Core agreements for our family

- We speak honestly, not to hurt but to be heard. Silence and secrets grow the addiction problem.
- We don't weaponise shame. Guilt signals something's wrong; shame shuts people down. We aim for accountability, not contempt.

- We don't discuss recovery when dysregulated. If someone's angry, scared, or intoxicated, conversations can wait.
- We listen without immediately fixing. Sometimes someone needs to be heard, not solved.
- We ask before offering advice. Do you want thoughts, or do you need to vent?

Define specific agreements

Record what you'll do instead of arguing, how someone signals they feel unheard, and what topics are too hot to discuss right now (but you'll revisit later).

3. Support vs. Enabling: What We Mean by Each

The line between helping and enabling is real but often invisible. Support means offering help that builds capacity, not dependence. It means letting people experience natural consequences so they learn. It means being honest even when it's hard, protecting your own wellbeing, and believing recovery is possible without making it your job.

What we will do (support)

- Offer help that builds their capacity
- Let them experience natural consequences
- Be honest about what we see and feel
- Protect our own wellbeing
- Attend our own support if we need it
- Believe recovery is possible without making it our job

What we will refuse (enabling)

- Shield them from real results of their choices
- Lie to protect them or to protect ourselves
- Give money, housing, or care without clear agreements
- Take on their responsibilities
- Stay silent about concerning behaviour to keep the peace
- Make their recovery our job

4. Early-Warning Signs and the Wobble Plan

Recovery isn't linear. People slip, relapse, or struggle without using. This section names what you're watching for and what you'll do. When someone wobbles, you name it directly without judgement, ask what they need, check safety, and connect with their support team.

Signs we're struggling (even without using)

- Isolation from people or activities

- Sudden mood changes or emotional distance
- Missing commitments or appointments
- Lying or secretive behaviour
- Returning to old friendships or places

If there's active use again

We pause blame—relapse is common in recovery, not failure. We ask: are you safe right now? If not, 999 or A&E.; We contact the agreed person (sponsor, counsellor, GP). We hold the boundary: I love you, and I can't help you use or hide it. What happens next is up to you and your support team. We don't bail them out of consequences unless life is at immediate risk.

If we're in crisis

- Samaritans (24/7, free): 116 123
- NHS 111 (non-emergency health): 111
- Childline (under 19): 0800 1111
- Emergency services (life-threatening): 999

5. Self-Care Commitments

You can't pour from an empty cup. This section is about filling yours. Recovery is not a family-only job. Everyone needs to tend their own wellbeing.

What I commit to do for myself

- Physical care: sleep, food, movement, health checkups
- Emotional support: therapy, time with trusted people, rest
- Spiritual sustenance: whatever grounds you—nature, faith, creativity, art
- Asking for help when I need it
- Checking in with these commitments every (week/month)

6. Our Support Networks

Recovery isn't a family-only job. This section maps who's in your corner—professional services, fellowship communities, and people you trust.

Professional support to identify

- GP (for health, referrals, crisis)
- Counsellor or therapist for the person in recovery
- Counsellor or therapist for a family member
- Sponsor or peer support (if relevant)
- Addiction service or community mental health

Community and fellowship (if relevant)

- Al-Anon or Nar-Anon (for families)
- AA, NA, or other twelve-step fellowship
- SMART Recovery or CRAFT
- Faith community or local group
- People you trust to be honest and non-judgemental

7. Family Crisis Plan

If everything feels like it's falling apart, this is your anchor. Create clear steps for overdose, self-harm, or breakdown.

If there's overdose or immediate danger

- Ring 999 or go to A&E; immediately
- Tell emergency services relevant information (allergies, substances, medical history)
- Ring agreed contact (sponsor, counsellor, or trusted person)
- Gather family and return to this plan

If family relationships break down

- We won't make permanent decisions in the heat of the moment
- If someone needs space, we respect that and stay in touch
- We seek family counselling or mediation if things feel broken
- Disagreements about recovery don't mean we abandon each other

Staying with this plan

Recovery changes. People get stronger. This plan isn't fixed—it's a conversation you return to regularly. Review and update every month or quarter, after a crisis, or whenever someone says this isn't working anymore.

Remember

You're not responsible for anyone's recovery but your own. You can love someone with addiction and protect yourself. Both are true. This plan is how you do both.

If you need more support, speak to your GP, call 111 (NHS non-emergency), or contact an addiction service in your area. Samaritans: 116 123 (24/7).

Keep going — you're not alone

This resource is one of a full library of free tools, worksheets and reading at **stepwiserecovery.com/resources** — take what helps and leave the rest. These tools are designed to sit alongside fellowship programmes, meetings and sponsorship — never to replace them.

The Stepwise Recovery Guides

Substance-specific recovery guides written by people who've recovered — for cocaine, ketamine, families, young people, and children. Free preview chapters, no email required, at **stepwiserecovery.com/guides**

Our 1-in-10 Pledge

For every ten guides sold, we donate one to someone who can't afford it — through treatment centres and prison recovery programmes.

Need help right now?

Samaritans: 116 123 (free, 24 hours) · FRANK: 0300 123 6600

Narcotics Anonymous UK: 0300 999 1212 · SHOUT: text 85258

Childline (under 19s): 0800 1111 · Nacoda: 0800 358 3456