



## Path to Healing and Recovery

Tri County Recovery

Waterloo, Wellington, Dufferin Counties

SAA

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## What Recovery from Addiction Means

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There's a difference between recovery from addiction and sobriety, or merely abstaining from drug use. What is this difference? To begin with, not drinking or drugging or acting out is simply that: not drinking or drugging or acting out. It is defined in negative terms, the absence of doing something. By contrast, recovery from addiction is defined in positive terms: actually doing something. Of course, recovery requires that you never take that first drink or drug. But that not the end of recovery. It is the beginning. Recovery from addiction means so much more than abstinence.

As addicts, how many times have we tried to "white knuckle" our sobriety? White is the color of our knuckles as we clench our fists and hold onto something with desperation. When we say white knuckle sobriety, it means that we have not let go of our anger, fear or ego. It means that we are trying too hard to stay sober. It means that every day is a struggle. Every 24 hours, we try as hard as we can not to even think about drugs or alcohol, let alone use them. This takes so much time and energy that we end every day completely exhausted – but then we have to wake up the next day and do it all over again!

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Nothing in life – least of all our recovery from addiction – should feel like this much of a burden. Our only chance at being totally free from addiction would be to lock ourselves in a room until the end of time. Even then, however, our minds would continue to obsess over drugs and alcohol. But recovery means freedom from that obsession. Recovery from addiction is a state of being in which we are not only free from the shackles of our addiction, but also free from all other bondage that we've put ourselves in: bad decisions, bad relationships, uncomfortable thoughts and emotions, and true peace of mind.

Recovery from addiction occurs as a result of treatment and the 12 steps. To be sure, these things require hard work, too. Yet, they result in life far beyond what any of us could ever imagine. White knuckling your way through sobriety only results in more misery. So, the choice is yours. Behind one door is mere sobriety from drugs and alcohol. Behind the other door lies that, plus a world of endless possibilities.

