

#weekly WISDOM

Why Employment Is Important During Recovery

This week's message of #WeeklyWisdom is brought to you by Alcohol & Drug Council of Tompkins County, proud partners of the Community Coalition for Healthy Youth. This week's message focuses on the importance of employment during recovery from substance use disorder.

Addiction is a chronic, often relapsing mental health disorder and disease. For many, the fear of relapse while in recovery can be a barrier and challenge. Individuals who have completed treatment and are now expected to return to family, friends and the rest of society may be excited to reenter the world of sober living while still worrying about how to avoid using again. Employment is a significant accomplishment and important part of a long-term recovery plan. Working can be a critical aspect to recovery and sober living.

There are a number of reasons why employment in recovery is so beneficial to the recovery process:

- **Stability:** Being expected to show up for work creates a stable lifestyle. The expectations of performing well on the job regularly and being on time can create a sense of consistency and routine that helps support recovery.
- **Self-Esteem:** One of the earliest casualties of substance abuse, addiction, and addictive behavior is a loss of self-esteem. During early recovery, one's emotional state is still fragile. Employment can help individuals regain a sense of self-esteem that may have been lost while using. Taking in the challenge of employment and being selected by employers over other candidates can help in rediscovering self-confidence. Individuals who struggle with a sense of purpose following the struggle of addiction may find it in the meaningful daily activities that come with holding a steady job.
- **Community Involvement:** Having a job comes with being part of a community. Employment in recovery brings individuals out into the community in a productive way; the work environment can be an important source of stability and healthy relationships.
- **Income and Normalcy:** Society expects individuals to make responsible choices and be able to manage their financial affairs. Taking care of financial responsibilities like rent and bills requires a source of income. Some individuals are unable to do so while using and receiving treatment. Simply knowing that you will be paid regularly can be a big motivational boost to ongoing recovery.
- **Self-sufficiency:** The feeling of being able to stand on one's own two feet is important. While in recovery, this may seem to be an elusive goal. Having a job to look forward to going to each day, helps by asserting intentions to re-establish self-sufficiency. Day by day, this helps improve the ability to take care of oneself.

There is no denying that having a job can be a powerful tool in helping you to live a happy, healthy and sober life. As such, Alcohol & Drug Council is excited to be part of the Healthy Workforce Network of Tompkins County, in partnership with College Initiative Upstate of Tompkins County, Challenge Workforce Solutions, OAR of Tompkins County, Tompkins Workforce New York, Tompkins Chamber, and Tompkins Cortland Community College. This program was developed to support members of the recovery community in returning to work and seeking additional education or training. This experienced and supportive network of professionals will work together to help individuals recovering from alcohol and/or substance use disorder to explore their potential and find the career path that is right for them!

If you are interested, please see the attached flyer for more information on the program and how to get in touch with us! We look forward to helping you see all the possibilities your future holds!



Our Community Partners: Alcohol & Drug Council of Tompkins County, Tompkins County Youth Services, TST BOCES Youth Development Program, Tompkins County Health Department, The Advocacy Center, Cooperative Extension– Tompkins County, Catholic Charities– Tompkins/Tioga