



Beyond Parody: National Recovery Month

by Ty Bechel
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I believe it is fair to say that drug and alcohol addiction affects the individual, family and friends, and the community. As I have expressed in previous articles, society has been quite foul, sometimes malicious to the population that struggles with drug and alcohol addiction, which affects an estimated 23.5 million Americans. Most people don't know this, but September is National Recovery Month and sharing testimonies, successes, and pathways used to find balance and a healthier way of living should be shared in every social media timeline, every dinner table, and every mandatory staff meeting at work.

Addiction is a human malady that has been around for centuries and isn't going to go away by someone sharing their opinion on social media that someone would be better off locked up in prison for their entire lifetime. We are dealing with a medical condition that needs our help, and the recovery rates could increase with much-needed healthcare reform and a more supportive and understanding community. 23.5 million is a staggering number, but don't let that deter you away from those that do find success in recovery.

How many of you reading this have someone you know that is struggling with drug or alcohol addiction? How many of you reading this have someone you know that is active in a recovery lifestyle and have done a 180-degree turn in their life and are healthy once again? I can bluntly tell you from personal experience drug and alcohol addiction SUCKS! It is one of the most self-defeating phenomena I have ever experienced. But millions are recovering, and we should encourage those that are struggling not to give up and realize that recovery is real. There is a saying in the recovery community that is repeated frequently, "Don't give up 5 minutes before the miracle happens."

The Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) defines recovery as a process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential. Those that may not know could be curious about how someone recovers. There are many different pathways, and the most well-known pathways to recovery are the 12-step model, like Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA).

Though AA and NA are the most widely used and known, there are plenty of different ways to recover. Some pathways to recovery are Celebrate Recovery, SMART Recovery, Refuge Recovery, Recovery Dharma, Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP), and many more. The SMART Recovery defines its program on its website as a self-management and recovery training that is a global community of mutual support groups. Refuge Recovery is defined as a recovery society grounded in the belief that Buddhist principles and practices create a strong foundation for a path to freedom from

addiction. Some individuals turn to their church, synagogue, or mosque and find healing through devoting their life to service to volunteer and help others. Some individuals turn to physical and mental wellness pathways, like exercising and meditation.

Alcoholics Anonymous reported in 2019 that they had 125,557 groups spread out globally with over 2 million members. From Narcotics Anonymous' 2018 Membership Survey that had over 28,000 participants, the average length in *clean time* (long-term recovery) is 11.41 years.

You can hear testimony from Alex about his journey through recovery and what it means to him found at Amare's Facebook [here](#). Or you can visit Recovery Uncensored and hear Ty's (not me) story of using drugs for 25 years and how he turned his life around [here](#). Recovery is not a parody; real people are finding ways to turn their lives around a day at a time.