

★ EXPANDED EDITION ★

Recovery Starter Pack

Twenty pages to steady your first steps

● 20 pages of worksheets & trackers

● 100% free to share

● Print at home

EVERY INSTITUTE FOR INTEGRATIVE RECOVERY

chapter21.org

Pattern • Purpose • Progress

Welcome — start where you are

Recovery is more than stopping. It is learning how to live.

If you're holding this pack, you've already begun. You don't need to feel ready, motivated, or certain. You only need to begin — one page, one day, one small choice at a time.

How to use this pack

- Go in any order. Start with whatever page speaks to you today.
- Write in it. Circle things. Cross things out. This is a workbook, not a test.
- One page a day is plenty. Small, steady steps beat heroic bursts.
- Keep it somewhere you'll see it — nightstand, kitchen counter, bag.

There is no wrong way to begin.

You don't have to do this perfectly. A skipped day isn't failure — just pick up on the next page.

Progress in recovery is measured in returns, not streaks.

Everything in these pages was designed by a licensed behavioral health professional who works with real people in real recovery. It's practical on purpose: less theory, more tools you can actually use at 11pm on a hard Tuesday.

Pattern • Purpose • Progress

The three moves underneath every page in this pack.

Recovery gets simpler when you can see it clearly. Everything here comes back to three ideas:

PATTERN

Notice what repeats.

Your triggers, your habits, your warning signs — they follow patterns. Once you can see the pattern, you can interrupt it. Pages 4–7 and 16 are pattern tools.

PURPOSE

Know what matters.

Recovery needs a "why" stronger than the craving. Your values, your people, the life you're building — that's the fuel. Pages 11, 12, and 18 are purpose tools.

PROGRESS

Take the next small step.

Not the whole staircase — just the next step. Track it, celebrate it, repeat it. Pages 4, 5, 13, and 17 are progress tools.

For me, the pattern I most want to change is:

Your First 7 Days

Small daily check-ins build big momentum.

Fill in one row each day — it takes two minutes. You're looking for patterns, not perfection.

Day	Sleep (hrs)	Mood 1–10	Craving 1–10	One win today

How to read your week

Low mood + low sleep + high craving often travel together. When you spot the pattern, you can plan for it — an early night, a call to someone safe, your rescue plan on page 10.

Your First 7 Days (continued)

Day	Sleep (hrs)	Mood 1–10	Craving 1–10	One win today
Fri				
Sat				
Sun				

END-OF-WEEK REFLECTION — 5 HONEST MINUTES

My steadiest day was _____ because _____.

The hardest moment was _____.

One thing I'll do differently next week: _____.

Celebrate the return.

Missed a day? That data still counts — note what got in the way. Every time you come back to the page, you're practicing the single most important recovery skill: returning.

Understanding triggers

Triggers are information — not failure.

A trigger is anything that sparks a craving or an urge: a feeling, a place, a person, a time of day. Triggers don't mean you're weak. They mean you're human with a nervous system that learned a pattern. Your job isn't to never feel triggered — it's to notice early and have a plan ready.

THE FOUR PLACES TRIGGERS HIDE

People	Certain friends, family tension, feeling judged or lonely around others.
Places & times	Friday nights, the old neighborhood, payday, holidays, boredom.
Emotions	Stress, anger, shame, sadness — but also celebration and relief.
HALT states	Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired. When your body is depleted, cravings get louder.

The 10-minute rule

A craving usually peaks and fades within about 20 minutes. You don't have to defeat it forever — you only have to outlast this wave. Turn the page for your personal trigger plan.

Trigger tracker

Name it. Spot the warning sign. Plan your move.

Fill one row per trigger. The example row shows how specific to get — vague plans don't work at 11pm, specific ones do.

My trigger	Warning sign	My plan
<i>e.g. Friday nights home alone</i>	<i>e.g. restless, scrolling, irritable</i>	<i>e.g. call my sponsor at 7pm</i>

Make the plan stupidly specific.

Not "I'll cope better" but "I'll text Marcus, walk for 15 minutes, and make tea." Write the name. Write the number. Future-you will thank present-you.

Riding the wave: cravings

Cravings peak and pass — usually within 20 minutes.

Urge surfing is simple: instead of fighting the craving or obeying it, you observe it like a wave. Notice where you feel it in your body. Watch it rise. Watch it fall. It always falls.

YOUR WAVE WORKSHEET — USE IT MID-CRAVING

Right now, the craving feels like (where in my body? how strong 1–10?):

For the next 20 minutes I will:

1.

2.

3.

When the wave passes, I will remind myself:

Ideas for your 20 minutes

Cold water on your face • walk around the block • 4-7-8 breathing • call or text one safe person • hold ice • step outside and name 10 things you see • play one full song and just listen.

Your coping menu

Build it now. Use it on autopilot later.

When you're struggling, decisions are hard — so make them now, while you're clear-headed. Pick at least 3 favorites in each column. This becomes your personal menu for hard moments.

- ☐ Walk for 10 minutes
- ☐ Cold water on face
- ☐ Stretch or shake it out
- ☐ 4-7-8 breathing
- ☐ Hot shower
- ☐ Hold something cold

My #1 pick: _____

Calm my body

- ☐ Name it to tame it
- ☐ 5-4-3-2-1 grounding
- ☐ Write for 5 minutes
- ☐ Read my "why" list
- ☐ One small tidy-up
- ☐ Listen to one full song

My #1 pick: _____

Steady my mind

- ☐ Text my safe person
- ☐ Call my sponsor
- ☐ Go to a meeting
- ☐ Sit with someone safe
- ☐ Ask for help directly
- ☐ Share honestly in group

My #1 pick: _____

Reach out

Put your menu where cravings can't hide it.

Screenshot this page. Stick it on your fridge. Save your top 3 in your phone notes. A coping menu only works if you can reach it faster than the craving reaches you.

My 5-minute rescue plan

Fill this in now. Keep it close.

This is your emergency card for the moments when thinking clearly is hard. Fill it in with a calm mind — then trust it with a stormy one.

■ MY 5-MINUTE RESCUE PLAN ■

1. **Pause and breathe:** in 4, hold 4, out 6 — three rounds.
2. **Text or call** _____ (name + number)
3. **Change my scene:** go to _____
4. **Do one thing from my coping menu:** _____
5. **Remind myself:** "This wave will pass. I've survived 100% of my hard days."

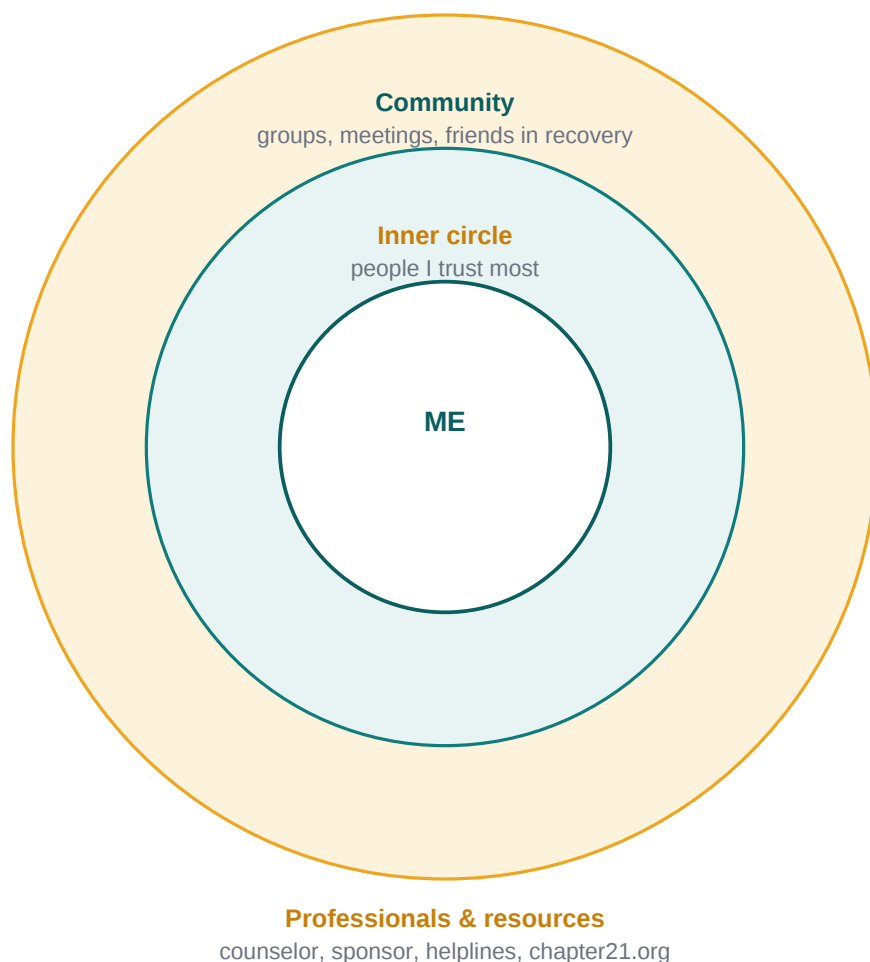
Signed: _____ *Date:* _____

Tip: take a photo of this card and set it as your phone's lock screen for the first 30 days. Future-you deserves every advantage.

Your support system map

Recovery is a team sport.

No one recovers alone — and asking for help is a skill, not a weakness. Map the people and resources around you, from closest to broadest.



Inner circle — names:

Community — names / meetings:

Professionals & resources:

One brave step this week:

Who do I want to be?

Values are your compass when cravings are loud.

Circle or check the values that matter most to you. Then pick your top 5 and give each one a tiny action — values only work when they touch your calendar.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ☐ Honesty | ☐ Family |
| ☐ Health | ☐ Freedom |
| ☐ Creativity | ☐ Kindness |
| ☐ Courage | ☐ Stability |
| ☐ Growth | ☐ Humor |
| ☐ Service | ☐ Peace |
| ☐ Independence | ☐ Loyalty |
| ☐ Faith | ☐ Adventure |

MY TOP 5 VALUES — AND ONE SMALL ACTION FOR EACH

1. Value: _____ One small action this week: _____
2. Value: _____ One small action this week: _____
3. Value: _____ One small action this week: _____
4. Value: _____ One small action this week: _____
5. Value: _____ One small action this week: _____

Why this works.

Willpower asks "how do I resist?" Values ask "who am I becoming?" The second question is stronger — it turns recovery from a fight into a direction.

Daily check-in

Two minutes every morning. Photocopy this page and use it daily.

Consistency beats intensity. A short daily check-in keeps you honest with yourself before the day gets loud.

Date:

Sleep last night (hrs / quality 1–5):

Mood right now (1–10):

Craving level (1–10):

Today's intention (one sentence):

One thing I'm grateful for:

One person I'll connect with today:

My plan if a craving shows up:

Make it a ritual.

Same time, same spot, same two minutes — coffee, check-in, go. Rituals carry you on the days motivation doesn't show up.

HALT — the 60-second check

Hungry? Angry? Lonely? Tired?

HALT is the oldest shortcut in recovery for a reason: most cravings get dramatically louder when your body or heart is running on empty. When an urge hits, run HALT first. Fix the depletion, then decide.



Hungry

When did I last eat? Was it real food?

I'll eat: _____



Angry

Am I holding frustration, resentment, or stress?

I'll release it by: _____



Lonely

Have I connected with anyone today?

I'll reach out to: _____



Tired

Did I sleep? Am I pushing past empty?

I'll rest by: _____

Most cravings aren't emergencies — they're messages. HALT teaches you to read the message instead of obeying the urge.

Sleep and recovery

Protect your sleep and your sleep protects your sobriety.

Early recovery and good sleep are best friends — and poor sleep is one of the most common relapse setups. You don't need perfect sleep. You need a rhythm.

FIVE SLEEP RULES THAT ACTUALLY HELP

- Same wake time every day — even weekends. This anchors everything.
- No screens for the last 30 minutes. Read, stretch, or breathe instead.
- Cool, dark, quiet room. Your nervous system is relearning rest — help it.
- Cut caffeine after noon. It has a longer half-life than your cravings.
- If you can't sleep after 20 minutes, get up, do something calm and dim, then try again.

7-NIGHT SLEEP LOG

Night	Bedtime	Wake time	Quality 1–5	Notes

Watch the pattern.

After a week, compare this log with your mood and craving scores on pages 4–5. Most people find their hardest days follow their worst nights — that's a pattern you can plan for.

My warning signs

Relapse starts long before the first use.

Relapse is a process, not an event. It usually whispers first — in thoughts, feelings, and small behaviors — weeks before anything happens. Check the ones you've noticed in yourself, then write your personal top 3.

In my thinking

- ☐ Romanticizing past use ("it wasn't that bad")
- ☐ Thinking I can handle "just one"
- ☐ Planning around opportunities to use
- ☐ Telling myself I don't need support anymore

In my feelings

- ☐ Irritable or resentful for no clear reason
- ☐ Numb, flat, or checked out
- ☐ Overwhelmed and hopeless about the future
- ☐ Bored and restless with sober life

In my behavior

- ☐ Skipping meetings, check-ins, or routines
- ☐ Isolating from supportive people
- ☐ Poor sleep and skipped meals
- ☐ Reconnecting with old using contacts or places

MY PERSONAL TOP 3 WARNING SIGNS

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

When I notice them, I will: _____

If you slip

A slip is data. Shame is the real relapse fuel.

Let's be honest: slips happen. What matters — what actually determines your future — is what you do in the 24 hours after. Shame says "you're broken, why bother." Responsibility says "that happened — what do I do now?" Choose responsibility.

Shame says

"I'm a failure."

"I'll never change."

"Might as well keep going."

Responsibility says

"That was a choice I can learn from."

"One slip doesn't erase my progress."

"What do I do in the next hour?"

YOUR 3 RESTART STEPS — DO THEM TODAY

1. Tell someone.

Text, call, or tell one safe person what happened. Secrets keep slips alive; honesty ends them.

2. Learn one thing.

What was the trigger? The warning sign you missed? Write it here:

3. Restart your routine.

Do tomorrow's check-in tonight. Lay out the next right thing — a meeting, a walk, a call. Recovery was never about never falling. It's about how fast you get back up.

Read this when you need it most:

"You have survived 100% of your hardest days so far. This one will not be the exception. Begin again — gently, today."

My 30-day intentions

Not resolutions. Intentions — with a tracking plan.

Big goals fail quietly. Small intentions, tracked visibly, succeed loudly. Choose 3 intentions for the next 30 days. Make each one so small it feels almost too easy.

1**Intention #1**

My intention: _____

How I'll track it: _____

Who can support me: _____

2**Intention #2**

My intention: _____

How I'll track it: _____

Who can support me: _____

3**Intention #3**

My intention: _____

How I'll track it: _____

Who can support me: _____

Examples of right-sized intentions

"Walk 10 minutes daily" beats "get fit." "Text my sponsor every Friday" beats "stay connected." "In bed by 11pm" beats "fix my sleep." Small is a strategy, not a compromise.

If you're in crisis

You don't have to face this alone. Not for one more minute.

If you're thinking about harming yourself, if a craving feels impossible, if everything hurts — reach out right now. Reaching out is the bravest thing on this page.

Call or text 988

US Suicide and Crisis Lifeline — free, confidential, 24/7

Text HOME to 741741

Crisis Text Line — free, 24/7

Or call 911 if you may act on these thoughts.

You matter. Your next chapter needs you in it.

TELL SOMEONE TODAY

Write the name of one person you could call right now — and their number. Don't wait for a crisis to fill this in.

A note from Avery:

"Asking for help is not the opposite of strength. In my work with hundreds of people in recovery, the ones who reach out are the ones who make it. Be one of them."

What's next?

You've just worked through twenty pages of real recovery tools. That took courage — give yourself credit. And here's the good news: this is only the beginning.

Keep going with Chapter 21

Full 10-page printable workbooks on every topic in this pack — relapse prevention, coping skills, triggers, sleep, values & more.

chapter21.org

Find the complete collection on Etsy at [shop Chapters21](https://shop.Chapters21)

Know someone who could use this? Send them this pack — it's free to share, and you never know whose first step it becomes.

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