

Finding Friends After Addiction Rehabilitation

Establishing a sober community is an imperative step toward recovery.

By [DeAnna Jordan](#), Contributor Feb. 10, 2017, at 6:00 a.m. US News – Health

[Finding sobriety](#) can be a challenging process in and of itself. Fighting to work toward being clean, working on becoming a better version of yourself and working on mending relationships is a lifelong process. However, it can also bring up intense feelings of isolation, both in physically coping with their sobriety and emotionally, desperately feeling unable to connect with others. Completing sobriety thus poses a unique question to a newly sober addict: "How do I make friends sober?"

Many relationships formed prior to [rehabilitation](#) can be considered toxic – friends that consisted of a recovering addict's drug dealer and perhaps even other "friends" that used with the addict prior to his or her treatment. It's important to note that these "friendships" were, in fact, never friendships at all. Rather, they were relationships of convenience – the addict and his or her "friends" were merely the demand with the dealer being the supply. Once that demand has dried up, the relationships that once were become obsolete.

In sobriety, an addict can feel like he or she has been abandoned by not only the "friends" they once had, but also by the substance itself. The void previously filled by an addiction is now a black hole. This despair and loneliness can further be met with potential feelings of wanting to relapse. Unfortunately, a relapse doesn't resolve feelings of loneliness. In dealing with these feelings, the only solution is a connection.

Establishing a sober community is not only a healthy step in resolving feelings of loneliness, but also an imperative step toward recovery. At New Method Wellness, we place a heavy emphasis on our extended aftercare program because we understand the powerful impact of continued support after recovery. [Community engagement](#) is encouraged both during and after the recovery process, and this provides a space for our clients to find that support system they need.

How exactly does one find friends in sobriety? Below are four key steps in taking action to find true, meaningful connections post-rehabilitation:

1. Determine the type of person you want to be.

Sobriety provides you with a fresh start. Though your loved ones may not as easily forget the up's and down's of [addiction](#), you have an opportunity to set out on a journey of self-discovery that can lead to repairing these relationships. In order to differentiate a good friend from a bad friend, you must first determine your morals, your boundaries and the qualities on which you want to build your sobriety.

It may be easier to identify the qualities you exemplified in your addiction and ask yourself the question: "Do I really want to live my life this way, sober?"

When you take an honest inventory of yourself, noting the positive characteristics you want to embody, you are easily able to identify these qualities in others.

[See: [7 Types of Friends You Need to Break Up With.](#)]

2. Listen to others when they speak.

Addiction tends to bring selfishness and self-centeredness to the forefront of the addict's behaviors. This selfishness becomes a survival strategy, making it more difficult to relinquish in sobriety.

The hardest, yet most powerful tool in sobriety is the [act of listening](#). You can learn a lot when you listen to others; their goals, traits they hold near to their hearts, the quality of their sobriety and so on. When I treat clients at New Method Wellness, I always assign a listening task, which generally suggests making a mental note of five things they learned this week about their peers in our inpatient sober living home.

Listening is a powerful tool in determining with whom you want to spend your time. When you listen, you give a person the opportunity to share a part of themselves, which is the only way to determine whether you want to invite this person into your sober tribe.

[See: [How to Find the Best Mental Health Professional for You.](#)]

3. Watch their actions.

While listening is important, actions speak louder than words. As humans, we have the liberty to say anything we want about ourselves. We can fabricate stories or over-embellish parts of our lives for reasons only our ego knows. Living a sober lifestyle (treating the mind, body and spirit) on a daily basis is the only way an addict has the reprieve from alcohol and drugs. For this reason, it's crucial to ensure that your sober tribe not only talks about quality sobriety, but also pursues quality sobriety on a daily basis.

[See: [7 Health Risks of Binge Drinking You Can't Ignore.](#)]

4. Accept that sober friendships are a case of trial-and-error.

As with everything in life, we have to live and learn. Sometimes, you can do all the right things in pursuit of [friendship](#): determine the qualities you want to embody, listen to others, keep an eye out for their actions and still end up in an emotionally draining friendship.

This has happened to everyone in sobriety at some point or another. It will probably continue to happen throughout your sobriety.

As you learn to live a sober life, you will encounter many things you don't know how to do, and you will learn to do them effectively and efficiently. That is the [beauty of sobriety](#): You have the world at your fingertips.