

# HEROES

IN RECOVERY

## BREAK THE STIGMA:

A Grassroots Movement to Inspire & Celebrate Recovery

Seeking the addiction and mental health help one needs is a heroic act. It's often the hardest thing a person will do in his or her lifetime, and support from family and friends can make all the difference. But many Americans misunderstand mental illness and the impact that drugs and alcohol have on the brain, and these misconceptions have built a stigma that can prevent many from seeking the help they need. Learn how to dispel the stigma and encourage others to embrace an open and honest recovery.

### THE TREATMENT GAP

21,600,000

10.6%

21.6 million Americans need treatment for a drug or alcohol problem

Yet only about 2.3 million people receive treatment through a specialized facility

### MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT ADDICTION & RECOVERY

#1

Addiction is a choice.  
the FACTS:



Drugs and alcohol induce changes in brain function, including eroding self-control & decision-making ability

10x

Drugs flood the brain with up to 10x more dopamine than natural rewards, thereby reducing the person's ability to experience pleasure without them.

#2

Addiction is a sign of poor character.  
the FACTS:

Addiction is a psychological and medical disorder.



40-60% of one's vulnerability to addiction may stem from genetic factors.

#3

Professional treatment won't help.  
the FACTS:

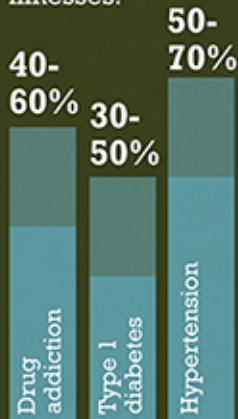


Recovering addicts have a 40% increased chance of finding and keeping a job after treatment.  
+10 yrs Recovery increases life expectancy. It is estimated that alcohol abuse shortens life expectancy by about 10 years.

#4

Relapse is a sign of failure.  
the FACTS:

Drug abusers relapse at similar rates as those with other chronic illnesses.



### SOCIAL MOVEMENTS DISPELLING STIGMA



Founded:  
1982

Goal: Promoting openness and awareness about breast cancer to make way for research, education, screening, and treatment.



Founded:  
1988

Goal: Dispelling the myths about HIV and sharing the stories of those living with HIV/AIDS.



Founded:  
1997

Goal: Reducing the stigma and silence associated with cancer by empowering survivors and their families to share experiences with their communities.



Founded:  
2011

Goal: Celebrating heroic efforts of those who seek the addiction and mental health help they need by sharing their stories. Removing the shame, isolation, and social stigma faced by people in recovery.

### 5 WAYS YOU CAN HELP A FRIEND OR RELATIVE

1

Recognize the symptoms, which may include:

- Neglecting responsibilities
- Risky behavior
- Mood swings, depression, or other mental health problems

2

Tell them they are NOT alone:

- 10% of American adults are recovering from drug or alcohol addiction
- That's 23.4 million adults who have overcome addiction!

3

Help them find a treatment program

4

Advocate against widespread stigmas about drug and alcohol abuse



Join with them to seek out and celebrate stories of recovery

Visit [heroesinrecovery.com](http://heroesinrecovery.com) to read inspiring stories of recovery — and to share your own.

It takes a heroic effort to maintain recovery day in and day out. Find the inspiration to take that first step with the help of Heroes in Recovery.

SOURCES  
<http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/nationwide-trends>  
<http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/science-addiction/drugs-brain>  
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<http://www.drugfree.org/newsroom/survey-ten-percent-of-american-adults-report-being-in-recovery-from-substance-abuse-or-addiction>