

Summary

Recovery International and 12 Step programs offer distinct yet complementary approaches to recovery, enabling individuals to tailor their journey based on their needs and preferences. Only you know which meetings may work best for you, or if the two programs together may be the most helpful.

It is common for people with addiction issues to also have mental health challenges. Focusing on managing addiction issues in 12 Step meetings, and managing life's everyday stressors in Recovery International meetings, can provide deep and meaningful growth.

Attending both programs together can provide a strong network of support and more tools to help with recovery.

12 Step and Recovery International programs provide the inspiration, life skills and support to create lasting change, to enjoy happier, healthier and more peaceful lives.



Contact Us!



To learn more about Recovery International or how to attend a meeting, visit our website, call our main office, or attend a welcome meeting for newcomers.

Information about 12 Step meetings is available online at Wikipedia or for Alcoholics Anonymous, visit www.AA.org.

If you're currently not attending *any* meetings, which meeting you try may not be as important as taking that step to actually attend a first meeting. But remember that there are a variety of meetings and leaders. Find what works best for you!

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Recovery International and 12 Step Programs

Commonalities and Differences

Understanding peer-led
programs and approaches
for a brighter future



About

When seeking resources related to recovery, individuals often encounter Recovery International (RI) and 12 Step programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). Although the term "recovery" is frequently associated with addiction treatment, it also encompasses other health challenges.

Recovery International

Recovery International was founded by neuropsychiatrist Dr. Abraham Low in 1937. It uses cognitive-behavioral tools to assist participants in managing their thoughts, feelings, symptoms, and behaviors in dealing with life's common stressors. The program emphasizes self-help and personal responsibility, with members briefly reporting their experiences using Dr. Low's 4-Step Method.

12 Step Programs

The first 12 Step Program, Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), was founded by Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob Smith in 1935. AA encourages attending meetings to learn the 12 Step method focusing on living each day without the use of alcohol. There are currently 34 additional 12 Step recovery programs based on their original set of guiding principles, for recovery from addictive, compulsive or other behavioral problems.

Commonalities

- **Peer Support:** Both RI and 12 Step programs highlight the importance of peer support in the recovery process. They recognize the value of community, of learning with others who have similar struggles, and with people who may be at different points in their recovery journeys.
- **Personal Growth:** Both encourage personal growth by focusing on self-reflection and addressing underlying issues.
- **Confidentiality:** Both RI and 12 Step programs value confidentiality and respect members' privacy.
- **Peer-led groups:** RI and 12 Step meetings are run by volunteers who have personal experience dealing with the group's topic.
- **Teachings:** Both types of groups teach personal responsibility, the importance of self-help, and that recovering is possible, even if not easy. They also teach that consistency of practice is important. It takes time to recover.
- **Meetings:** Both programs have in-person, online and telephone options available for meetings throughout the week, so a meeting is available when needed.
- As **non-profit organizations**, donations are appreciated, but neither program ever turns away anyone based on ability to contribute.
- Both organizations aim to provide **non-judgmental** environments of support.

Differences

- **Structure:** RI uses a self-help, cognitive-behavioral approach, while 12 Step programs follow a specific set of steps.
- **Focus:** RI provides tools to manage daily stressors and improve one's mental health, while 12 Step programs provide tools specifically for addictive, compulsive and/or behavioral issues.
- **Meetings:** Most RI meetings are structured around practicing cognitive-behavioral techniques and a 4-Step Method. Each 12 Step group is autonomous, with varying meeting styles and different types of meetings (open, speaker, literature, topic, etc.).
- **Sponsorship:** 12 Step programs offer sponsors to guide members through their steps. RI offers peer support through 5-minute phone calls or texts.
- **Religion:** RI is secular, while 12 Step programs incorporate spirituality and references to a "Higher Power." All faith traditions, including those not practicing any, are welcome to both organizations.
- **Sharing:** RI encourages less details to more quickly get to learning and practicing the 4-Step Method. 12 Step meetings often have longer sharing.
- **Leadership:** RI provides training of all new leaders with ongoing leadership training. RI leaders are encouraged to serve as long as they are able. 12 Step leaders are strongly encouraged to rotate leadership and their service is generally time-limited.