

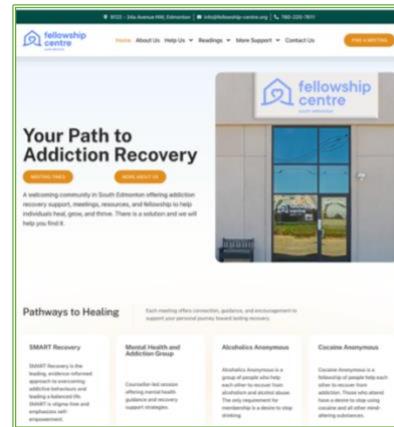
Fellowship Recovery Compass: December 2025



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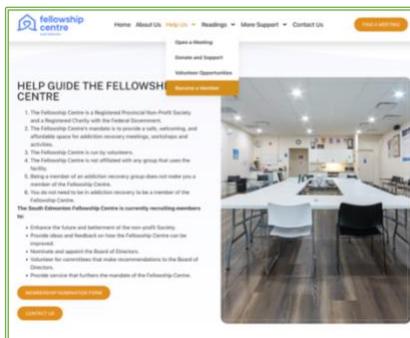
The Fellowship Centre has a New Website!

The Board of Directors is delighted and excited to have launched a new, improved, and much more professional website (at the same address). The intention of the new website is to improve digital service to current attendees and, also, to increase meeting attendance by attracting new people to the Centre. Note that there is now a section, **What People are Saying**. This section includes testimonials from those who attend meetings and events at the Centre. Write a testimonial about your experiences at the Centre and email it to info@fellowship-centre.org for possible inclusion on the website.



There is now a **Recovery Blog** which may strengthen the recovery of fellow travellers but may also benefit those considering beginning their journey of “recovery from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body” (Alcoholics Anonymous, page xiii). On the main menu, click on **Readings**, the dropdown menu includes links to the **Blog** and to past and current copies of the **Recovery Compass** (the Fellowship Centre’s monthly publication).

Importantly, there is a new menu item, **Help Us**. In the dropdown menu there are a variety of ways in which the recovery community and the community at large can contribute, directly and indirectly, to carrying the message of recovery including: **Open a Meeting, Donate and Support, Volunteer Opportunities, and Become a Member**.



Those wishing to become voting members of the Fellowship Centre should click the button to the **Membership Nomination Form** which, once complete and submitted, goes to the Board of Directors for consideration.



Since this is a new website, suggestions and corrections are most welcome.

Value of Making Amends

When we make amends, we get a whole new perspective on life. We shift our thinking dramatically. We become more focussed on *who we are* rather than *what we have*. The false-self (ego) was based on the notion *the more I have, the more I am*. We measured our worth in terms of our power, our real or imagined success, our knowledge, our jobs, our cars, our looks, our homes, our bank accounts. Our worth was measured by what we had, not by who we were. We lost sight of the importance of character and personal values and ethics.

When we make amends, we take corrective action which helps us feel better about ourselves by developing a more positive self-concept. We have often been described as egomaniacs suffering from an inferiority complex; despite our bravado, we haven't felt worthy of success or love. How could we be OK with ourselves when we had no regard for the well-being of others. We used and abused people in our lives to fulfil our needs, without any concern for what we were doing to them. We left a wake of destruction behind us with our self-will running riot.

MAKING AMENDS

1. ADMIT YOUR MISTAKE.

2. ASK FOR FORGIVENESS.

3. RECTIFY THE WRONG.

4. CHANGE THE BEHAVIOR.

Working the Steps helps us dispel the juggernaut of destruction that was the consequence of our false-self and our addiction. While the Steps helped stop these destructive forces, they also released positive forces such as our desire to be of value to others. This desire was always a part of who we are, but it laid dormant in our souls: there was no room for this desire to be expressed under the rule of the false- and addicted-self. By cleaning house, we cleared enough space for this desire to have a place in our lives. We want to be a positive force in our lives and the lives of others. This desire has become increasingly more important to us. We enjoy a new purpose in our lives: to be a value to the person who is still suffering from addiction. But this desire extends far beyond helping only those who still suffer from this disease. We want to make a positive difference in our families, in our communities, and in the world. We want to become a true citizen who makes his or her community a better place to live.

People in addiction inevitably suffer from low self-esteem and feelings of unworthiness which sabotage relationships with others. Because we let our false-self impose rules on us that are impossible to satisfy, we ended up feeling like we were not good enough. We lack the support of our own self-esteem, which makes us depend on the environment to support and validate us. Making amends corrects our feelings of unworthiness because we are doing the right thing, the thing that good people do. We root our self-esteem in doing the right thing because it is the right thing to do, not because it is going to get us external validation or support. By identifying those we have harmed and taking responsibility for the damage we have done, we create genuine self-respect and self-worth within ourselves.

Integrity can be defined as incorporating our convictions, our standards, our values, and our beliefs into the way we behave. Integrity is loyalty and action to the judgement of the conscience. It is through making amends that we demonstrate a loyalty in action to our real-self. The healthier we become, the less conflict we have between the various parts of ourselves. The less conflict we have, the greater our peace of mind. This is what is meant to be comfortable in our own skin. We work with ourselves, not against ourselves. We support ourselves, rather than sabotage ourselves. We respond from all of us, not just the part we think is acceptable. We act as a whole person. We act with integrity. We integrate the part of us that wants to be right with the part of us that has compassion. We integrate our basic need for togetherness and cooperation with our basic need to be ourselves and hold on to our individuality. This is why recovery is a process, not an event. There is always something to learn in recovery, always a lesson to integrate, always a next step in our emotional maturation and development. Amends promote self-awareness and responsibility and prompt taking more responsibility for ourselves in our lives.

Fellowship Library New Books

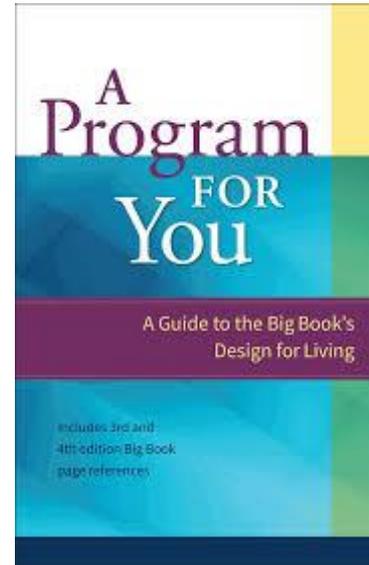
The Board of Directors recently allocated \$500 annually to the Fellowship Library to purchase books and audiovisual material. Consequently, the Fellowship Library has new books.

A Program for You: A Guide to the Big Book's Design for Living

In the years since 1939, the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous, has guided millions in their search for a design for healthy living free of addictive behaviours. Now, two old-timers share their years of intensive study of the Big Book, revealing the vitality of its message for those of us reading it today.

This celebration of the basic text of Twelve Step recovery breathes new life into the Big Book's timeless wisdom. Thoroughly annotated line and page, written with down-to-earth humor and simplicity, and providing a contemporary context for understanding, A Program for You helps us experience the same path of renewal that Bill W. and the first one hundred AA members did.

A Program for You leads each of us - newcomer or old-timer - to a deeper understanding of recovery as a way of life. As the authors tell us, "The better you understand the Big Book, the more it can help you."

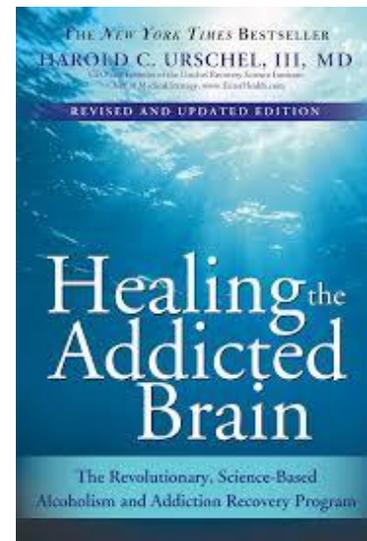


Healing the Addicted Brain

Addiction is not a moral failing or a lack of willpower. It is a disease of the brain that must be treated like any other chronic medical illness. Healing the Addicted Brain by Dr. Harold Urschel, a board-certified physician on addiction and founder of the Urschel Science Recovery Institute, combines the best behavioural addiction treatments with the latest scientific research on brain function, providing tools and strategies designed to overcome the biological factors that cause addictive behaviour. This proven approach triples the success rate of patients from 30% to 90% for those who seek help.

You will learn how to:

- Combat triggers and cravings
- Deal with difficult emotions
- Handle dual diagnoses
- Communicate with family
- Achieve health and nutrition in recovery
- Regain enjoyment and pleasure
- Maintain long-term recovery



Whether you or a family member or friend suffer from addiction, Healing the Addicted Brain offers you a comprehensive look at a new understanding of addiction and will arm you with the latest treatment information and ideas to beat this disease and achieve sobriety.

Relationships, Recovery, and Relapse

Because important relationships expose our emotional immaturity more than any other experience, relationship problems often contribute to relapse. The more a person means to us, the more trouble we have soothing ourselves when things are uncertain or when the person does not meet our expectations. When someone is important to us, it is hard to hold onto ourselves when we feel disappointing, threatened, or frustrated. When someone important to us doesn't behave according to our specifications, trouble starts and manifests itself in one of three ways: 1) we try to control the other to ensure that he/she will do our bidding; 2) we submit to the other person's will; or 3) we run away by emotionally stonewalling the other person or by ending the relationship entirely. All three of these manoeuvres are based on emotional dependency. At times, these tactics may provide a temporary solution to the pain, but the solution doesn't last long because it is unstable.

For example, expecting our partner to behave a certain way for us to feel good about ourselves will not work in the long run. Eventually, something will happen, and our partner will not meet our specifications or demands. For whatever reason, our partner will be unable to be there for us in the manner that we have come to expect. How we react to this disappointment, will help us identify the nature of our emotional dependency: the stronger our emotional dependency, the stronger our reaction to disappointment. We need to identify and deal with our emotional immaturity, and how it is controlling us, or the relationship will not survive. This is when relapse is most likely to occur.

Relationship problems don't necessarily indicate that something is wrong; quite the opposite may be true. Problems may indicate that something is right; we pick a partner who will cause a particular kind of trouble in our life. The trouble we encounter gives us an opportunity to take the next step in our emotional and spiritual development. Problems are gifts that need to be carefully unwrapped. If we put our problems into a healthy perspective, we will be well on our way to discovering a real solution.

Many of us lose sight of the fact that we are part of our relationship problems. We may waste time by focussing on the other people's behaviour, when focussing on our own behaviour is much more helpful. If we can't see our part, we can ask our partner – if we're open to what our partner might say. If we're not, we can ask a friend or sponsor to give us feedback on our relationship problems. If that person's feedback proves insufficient, we can turn to qualified professionals who specialize in relationships.

Ultimately, recovery is concerned with learning how to have healthy relationships. We can't have healthy relationships when we are emotionally fused with another person. Chronic emotional dependency will eventually destroy all the good in any relationship. There is hope, but it takes a commitment, an open mind, new information, and help from others. There is nothing like the challenges that come from relationships to help us take the next step in recovery.



Those who have an open heart have started the process of growing up and are rewarded with emotional sobriety. Emotional sobriety is the next step in recovery, and it is achieved by balancing our desire to please, and our desire to be ourselves. We achieve this by eradicating our absolute dependency on people, places, and things.

(Adapted from *Twelve Stupid Things that Mess Up Recovery: Avoiding Relapse through Self-Awareness and Right Action* by Allen Berger, pages 77-82)

Cannabinoid Hyperemesis Syndrome



Cannabinoid Hyperemesis Syndrome (CHS) is a condition characterized by recurrent episodes of severe nausea and vomiting in individuals who regularly use cannabis. First recognized in the medical community in the early 2000s, CHS has gained attention as cannabis use becomes more widespread, especially with the legalization of marijuana in Canada and many other regions.

CHS usually develops in three phases. The **prodromal phase** is the first stage, where individuals may experience mild nausea and stomach discomfort. This phase can be easily overlooked or mistaken for other issues. The second stage is the **hyperemetic phase**, where patients suffer from intense and persistent vomiting, often leading to dehydration and weight loss. A unique behaviour seen in CHS patients is the need to take hot showers or baths, which often provide temporary relief from symptoms. The final stage is the **recovery phase**, which occurs after stopping cannabis use. During this phase, symptoms typically ease up, and individuals return to their normal health.



Recent research has improved our understanding of CHS, its causes, and its effects. Studies show that CHS is more prevalent in individuals who use cannabis daily or several times a week. A 2023 study published in the *Journal of Clinical Gastroenterology* found a significant increase in CHS cases, especially among younger adults and those using high-potency cannabis products such as vaping.

The exact cause of CHS is still uncertain, but several ideas have been proposed. One theory suggests that long-term cannabis use might disrupt the body's natural systems that regulate nausea and vomiting. Another idea is that regular use could make the body less responsive to cannabis, leading to increased symptoms. Additionally, some people might be genetically more likely to develop CHS, but more research is needed to confirm this.

Managing CHS typically requires stopping cannabis use, which often leads to symptom improvement. Staying hydrated is essential, especially for those experiencing severe dehydration from vomiting, and some may need IV fluids to help. While anti-nausea medications can provide temporary relief, they may not always work well for CHS. A supportive approach, including nutrition advice and emotional support, can also be beneficial, as dealing with CHS can significantly affect one's mental health.

As cannabis use becomes more widespread, it's vital for both users and healthcare providers to understand CHS. Educating users about the potential risks of long-term cannabis use can aid in the early recognition and management of symptoms. Healthcare professionals as well as family and friends should be proactive in asking about cannabis use when anyone presents with unexplained nausea and vomiting.

Key Statistics on CHS in Alberta Emergency Rooms

- **Rate Increase:** Following the legalization of cannabis in 2018, the rate of CHS-related emergency room visits in Alberta urban centers increased from 15 per 100,000 people to 21 per 100,000 people. In 2020, this rate jumped further to 32 visits per 100,000 people across all age groups.
- **Youth Impact:** Among young people aged 16 to 24, the rate of visits was substantially higher, climbing to 600 per 100,000 individuals.
- **Admissions:** In one study within the Calgary Health Region, 16% of CHS-related emergency department visits resulted in hospital admission.

Emotional Sobriety and the Sacred Wound

Our quest for emotional sobriety returns us repeatedly to the same goal: finding ways to hold onto ourselves. We are either supportive of ourselves or critical of ourselves. Our false-self is based on a set of absolute standards. If we don't behave as we *should*, we punish ourselves by feeling shame or self-hatred. The false-self is a tyrant. It controls our actions and demands perfect adherence to its rules. We must *surrender* to shatter our reliance on our false-self. This process has been referred to by Bill W. as *deflation at depth*. Here are some of the major personal transformations of recovery that begin with the shift:

- The false-self is focused on having; recovery is concerned with being.
- The false-self wants control; recovery is about letting go of control and trusting the process.
- The false-self wants perfection; recovery is about progress.
- The false-self rejects our true-self (higher power) and alienates us from it; recovery is focused on renewing our relationship with our lost true-self (higher power).

When we buy into the idea that we should be perfect, we hold ourselves to an impossible standard. Our thinking process might go something like this: “Now that I possessed the powerful principles of the 12 Steps, I can finally make myself perfect.” We mistake the gift of recovery for a tool to sculpt our idealized self. Finally, we can become perfect. We can be that person that we think we need to be to be loved. Even though we know that most people can never be perfect, we somehow feel that we are different. In recovery we can be perfect. Maybe you can't, but I can't.

In recovery we learned the power of paradox. One important paradox is that our wounds let grace and spirituality enter our lives. In recovery, our weaknesses become strengths. Admitting our powerlessness helps us find a better source of strength. Embracing our imperfections helps us find our true-self. Surprisingly, that true-self may prove to be better, much better, than the idealized one we were trying to perfect. Bill W. is quoted as saying, “Recovery is dependent upon a spiritual experience that is set on a pedestal of hopelessness.” It is quite paradoxical that something as wonderful as recovery grows out of something so dark and foreboding as helplessness and hopelessness. Hopelessness, however, becomes the catalyst for recovery. Our wound becomes a *sacred wound*. It is our sacred wound that allows us to help others who are suffering from addiction.

Self-acceptance helps us witness our own imperfections without collapsing into self-recrimination or self-hatred. Humility allows us to feel some sympathy for our suffering, which is necessary before we set ourselves on a more constructive path. Learn to say to yourself, “Of course I made a mistake, or had a lapse in my program, or experienced a failure, or did something stupid. I am imperfect and it's not a crime. I made a mistake, but I am not a mistake.”

There's a danger with this approach. If we use the “Of course” to justify rotten behaviour, we are really playing a trick on ourselves and others too. This tool is to help us learn from our mistakes, not to justify them or avoid taking responsibility for them. In actual practice, accepting ourselves as we are does not encourage undesirable behaviour, but reduces the likelihood of it reoccurring.

What would it look like if we respected our anxiety but did not give it privilege? The first thing we would do is not treat our feelings as an infallible guide to the truth. We check our feelings to see if they were based on reality or imagined. We'd stop empowering our anxiety.

(Adapted from the work of Allen Berger, leading expert in recovery science)

Emotional Sobriety and Self-Soothing

Emotional sobriety includes learning to care for ourselves and our self-esteem rather than depend on others to take care of us. Another way of understanding this process is to think about it as *maintaining a relationship with ourselves*. We need to think of ourselves as someone to be loved, cherished, respected, and cared for - someone who deserves the same attention as we would devote to an intimate partner. We often treat ourselves far worse than we would treat anyone else. We react to hurt or disappointment by criticizing ourselves, hating our vulnerability, and abandoning ourselves - things we'd never do to a friend. If we seek emotional sobriety, we can no longer tolerate these self-destructive habits. We can no longer let emotional fusion make us dependent on others for soothing.

One of the primary benefits of self-soothing is enhanced emotional regulation. When faced with overwhelming emotions, individuals often find it challenging to think clearly or make rational decisions. Self-soothing techniques can help reduce the intensity of these emotions, allowing for a more balanced perspective. By calming the mind and body, individuals can respond to situations more thoughtfully rather than react impulsively.

Self-soothing is also crucial for managing stress. Chronic stress can have detrimental effects on physical and mental health, leading to conditions such as anxiety, depression, and cardiovascular diseases. Engaging in self-soothing practices can lower stress levels, reducing the risk of these health issues. Techniques such as deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, or engaging in hobbies can provide immediate relief from stress, promoting overall well-being.

When individuals can self-soothe, they are often better equipped to navigate their relationships. Emotional distress can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts with others. By practicing self-soothing, individuals can manage their emotions more effectively, communicate their needs clearly, and respond to others with empathy. This can lead to healthier and more fulfilling relationships, both personally and professionally.

Self-soothing also promotes a sense of independence and self-reliance. By learning to manage one's emotions, individuals can reduce their dependence on external sources of comfort, such as friends, family, or substances. This empowerment fosters confidence and self-esteem, enabling individuals to tackle challenges with a greater sense of agency.

How to Self-Sooth: Practical Techniques

One of the simplest and most effective self-soothing techniques is deep breathing. By focusing on slow, deep breaths, individuals can activate their body's relaxation response. A common practice is the 4-7-8 technique, where one inhales for four counts, holds the breath for seven counts, and exhales for eight counts. This method can help calm the nervous system and reduce anxiety.

Mindfulness practices, such as meditation, can also be powerful self-soothing tools. These practices encourage individuals to focus on the present moment without judgment, helping to create a sense of peace and clarity. Even a few minutes of mindfulness each day can significantly impact emotional well-being. Guided meditations, available through various apps and online platforms, can be particularly helpful.

Engaging in physical activity is another effective way to self-soothe. Exercise releases endorphins, which are natural mood lifters. Whether it's going for a run, practicing yoga or dancing, finding an enjoyable form of exercise can provide an outlet for pent-up emotions and stress.

Creative expression such as drawing, writing or playing music can also serve as a form of self-soothing. These activities allow individuals to channel their emotions into something tangible, providing a sense of accomplishment and relief.

Spending time in nature can be incredibly soothing. Whether it's a walk in the park, hiking in the woods, or simply sitting in a garden, nature has a calming effect that can help alleviate stress and promote well-being.

Finding Happiness in Sobriety

Addiction changes the brain in a way that limits your ability to feel happy. In time, and with sobriety, the brain heals and learns to send the right cues again. Like most things learned, it takes practice. Happiness won't automatically return in your sobriety. If you've been looking for happiness, take charge. You can change it with your thoughts, choices and actions.

Invest in relationships

- Surround yourself with happy people. Being around people who are content boosts your own mood.
- Friends and family help you celebrate life's successes and support you in difficult times.
- Let people know that you appreciate what they do for you or even just that you're glad they're part of your life.

Express gratitude

Gratitude is more than saying "thank you." It's a sense of wonder, appreciation and thankfulness for life. Make a commitment to practice gratitude.

- Each day, identify at least one thing that enriches your life.
- When you find yourself thinking an ungrateful thought, substitute a grateful one. For example, replace "My sister forgot my birthday" with "My sister has always been there for me in tough times."
- Let gratitude be the first and last thought of the day.

Find your purpose

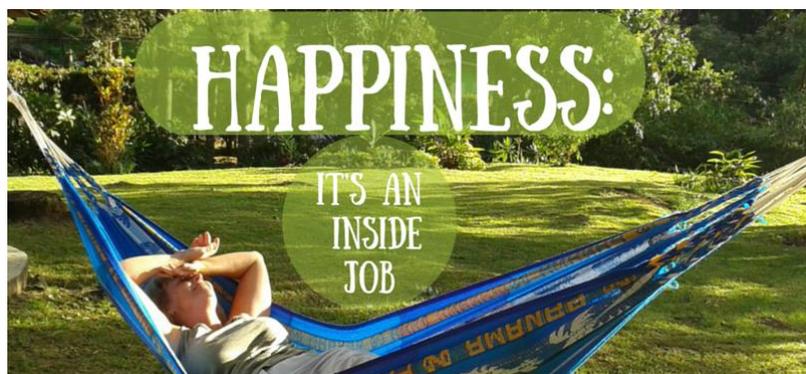
People who strive to meet a goal or fulfill a mission are happier than those who don't. Having a goal provides a sense of purpose, bolsters self-esteem and brings people together. Are you engaged in something you love? If not, ask yourself these questions:

- What excites and energizes me?
- What are my proudest achievements?
- How do I want others to remember me?

Live in the moment

Don't postpone joy waiting for a day when your life is less busy or less stressful. That day may never come. Instead, look for opportunities to savour the small pleasures of everyday life. For instance, driving a child to school. It could be considered a chore or task but savour the candid conversation and enjoyed the company on the drive together. Focus on the positives in the present, don't dwell on the past and forget about worrying about the future.

Today is the day.



Comfort Makes Everything Better

With comfort comes nurturing, genuine acceptance, and love. Comfort doesn't involve any expense. It comes from the heart. It goes right to the heart. Look at how much better you feel when you receive comfort, when you comfort yourself, when you allow the universe to comfort you. Look at how those around you respond when you give comfort. A comforted person feels renewed healed, genuinely okay. When you're comforted, the pain and stress that has awakened you each morning dissipates. You open your eyes and feel happy to be here. Happy to be you. Happy to be clean and sober. You know, really know, that all is well. Finally, you feel safe.

When many of us were young we ran to a loving adult to make a skinned knee feel better, a bruised ego better. Now we're grown, but there's another source of comfort – our program of recovery and our recovery community. And these truly do make us feel better, provide healing, connection and comfort.

Comfort heals. It brings joy to the spirit. Comfort renews power and vitality. Comfort opens you up like the sun unfolds the petals of a fragrant and beautiful flower. Simply put, comfort makes you and those around you happy.

Trust Each Step

Stay present for each step in your journey. We don't go from one place to another in a gigantic leap. We get there in increments, by going through each feeling, each belief, each experience one step at a time. Sometimes when we pray for miracles, what we're really praying for is help in skipping steps, for shortcuts. The simple act of acceptance, of returning to each step of our path, can often bring us the miracle we need. Then we see the truth. The real miracle is always available to each of us: it's the miracle of acceptance. We can go where we want to go, one step at a time.

Stay present for each step of your journey. Trust each stage. Many things are possible for you if you accept that the fastest way is one step at a time.

Go for the Ride

Not all sections of the road we travel are smooth, paved, easy riding. We may prefer the smooth sections of the highway, but sometimes the road gets rough. And the rough section can go on for kilometers. That's okay. It doesn't mean you've lost your way. It doesn't mean the rough section and bumpy spots will last forever. You're still on your path. Relax. Get ready, for you just may be in for the ride of your life. Don't try to ignore the bumps or pretend they're not there. Not all roads are paved and smooth. Not all roads are meant to be. Slow down a bit if you need to, but don't stop.

Accept each part of your journey as it comes. Let each stretch of your path be what it needs to be.



(Adapted from Journey to the Heart by Melody Beattie)

South Edmonton Fellowship Centre

<https://fellowship-centre.org> 9122 34A Avenue NW, Edmonton 780-220-7811

WEEKLY IN-PERSON MEETINGS

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	7:00 AM Alcoholics Anonymous	7:00 AM Alcoholics Anonymous	7:00 AM Alcoholics Anonymous	7:00 AM Alcoholics Anonymous	7:00 AM Alcoholics Anonymous	
10:30 AM Alcoholics Anonymous (Women)		10:30 AM Alcoholics Anonymous				10:00 AM Alcoholics Anonymous
12:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous	12:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous	12:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous	12:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous	12:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous	12:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous	12:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous
1:30 PM Alcoholics Anonymous					1:30 PM SMART Recovery	2:00 PM Gamblers Anonymous
3:00 PM Mental Health and Addiction				2:30 PM Overeaters Anonymous		4:00 – 6:00 PM Welbriety
6:00 PM Cocaine Anonymous		7:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous	7:00 PM Cocaine Anonymous		7:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous	7:00 PM Sex Addicts Anonymous
	7:30 PM Alcoholics Anonymous (Men)					

WEEKLY ONLINE MEETINGS

SUNDAY 1:30 PM	Sunday Afternoon Meditation is a 60-minute online meeting focused on guided meditation and meditation training. ZOOM MEETING ID 862 5658 4606 PASSCODE 899182
SUNDAY 3:00 PM	Mental Health Support for Addiction is a 60-minute online meeting facilitated by a Canadian Certified Counsellor. ZOOM MEETING ID 895 8810 8041 PASSCODE 577206
WEEKDAYS 7:00 AM	Sunrise Weekdays Group offers online A.A. meetings Monday through Friday. Start your workday with the program. ZOOM MEETING ID 899 6946 5894 PASSCODE 912107
FRIDAY 1:30 PM	Self-Management and Recovery Training (SMART Recovery) is a 60-minute online meeting based on psychological approaches for those seeking an alternative to 12-Step addiction recovery support. ZOOM MEETING ID 815 5962 9907 PASSCODE 357546