



Recovery Compass October 2026

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THE FELLOWSHIP CENTRE INVITES YOU TO

GLOW BOWLING & SUPPER

 **Bonnie Doon Bowling Lanes**
8330 82 Avenue, Edmonton

 **October 17, 2026**
6:00 – 8:00 p.m.



2 HOURS OF 5-PIN GLOW BOWLING

SUPPER INCLUDES
A large pizza, one pitcher of pop
and a large party platter for
each pair of lanes.

TICKETS ONLY
\$10

☆ *All are welcome—including family and friends!* ☆

Spiritual, Not Religious: Finding a Higher Power in Recovery

Twelve Step recovery is often described as a spiritual program rather than a religious one. This distinction is important because many people arrive in recovery carrying discomfort, anger, confusion, or painful memories connected with organized religion. Some may have no religious beliefs at all. The Twelve Steps do not require membership in a church, acceptance of a particular creed, or belief in anyone else's definition of God. Instead, they invite each person to develop an understanding of a Higher Power that is personal, meaningful, and helpful in recovery.

Spirituality in Twelve Step programs is less about doctrine and more about connection. It can mean recognizing that we are not alone, becoming willing to ask for help, and accepting that our own unaided willpower has not always been enough. Addiction often isolates us and convinces us that we must manage everything ourselves. Recovery begins to loosen that isolation by connecting us with other people, spiritual principles, and a source of strength beyond our individual ego.

For some members, a Higher Power is the God of their religious tradition. For others, it may be the recovery group, the collective wisdom of the program, nature, love, truth, or the principles contained in the Steps. Some people begin simply by believing that the group possesses a strength and wisdom they do not yet have. The program allows this understanding to grow and change over time. There is no requirement that every member use the same language or arrive at the same conclusion.

This freedom is supported by tolerance. We respect each member's conception of a Higher Power because recovery is deeply personal. No one benefits when spiritual beliefs become a source of argument, pressure, or judgment. We may share what has helped us, but we do not insist that others believe as we do. Our task is not to convert one another. Our task is to support one another in staying sober and building healthier lives.

Tolerance also requires humility. We acknowledge that we do not possess all the answers. We may feel strongly about our own beliefs, but that does not make another person's understanding less valid. A member who prays, a member who meditates, and a member who finds spiritual strength in the fellowship may all be practising the same essential principle: becoming willing to rely on something greater than self-centred fear and control.

In daily recovery, spirituality is expressed through action. Honesty, willingness, forgiveness, service, gratitude, compassion, and responsibility are spiritual practices. We demonstrate our beliefs not merely through words, but through how we treat others and how we respond to difficulty. Each time we ask for help, admit a mistake, attend a meeting, support another member, or choose acceptance over resentment, we strengthen our spiritual life.

A Higher Power does not have to be perfectly understood before it can be helpful. Recovery asks only for openness and willingness. We are free to seek, question, learn, and grow. By remaining tolerant of each member's spiritual path, the fellowship becomes a place where everyone can belong and where recovery can take root.

Playing Games and Self-Deception

Many of us in recovery spent years deceiving ourselves, avoiding the truth, and making excuses. If we are honest, we may see that we play games to gain approval, avoid responsibility, protect our self-esteem, or seek emotional support. These games keep us stuck and prevent personal growth. Here are some common examples.

Helpless Harry



Helpless Harry - Harry acts as though he cannot think for himself. He constantly seeks advice and approval before making decisions. By appearing helpless, he gets others to take responsibility for his choices. As a result, Harry never learns to trust himself or grow.

Self-Effacing Sam



Bertha Bear Trap - Bertha's goal is to prove she is right. She asks for help or advice but then rejects every suggestion. Her real aim is to make others feel frustrated and powerless. Deep down, Bertha struggles with those same feelings herself.

Self-Effacing Sam - Sam apologizes for everything and constantly puts himself down. He acts as though he is always wrong, inadequate, or incapable. This often leads others to reassure him and build up his self-esteem. Because he appears humble, people rarely challenge him.

Spiritual Sally - Sally hides behind spirituality to avoid dealing with problems. When conflicts arise, she acts morally superior and blames others for not being spiritual enough. Instead of examining her own behaviour, she focuses on everyone else's shortcomings.

Next Time Ian - Ian always promises to do better in the future. He excuses poor behaviour by saying, "I'll do better next time." These promises allow him to avoid accountability in the present. Because he never honestly faces his actions, real change rarely happens.

Next Time Ian



Do It My Way Jeff - Jeff believes he knows what is best for everyone. He pressures others to follow his advice because he has more recovery or sobriety experience. While he is quick to point out others' faults, he often overlooks inconsistencies in his own behaviour.

Nothing Will Work Norman - Norman expects the worst. He lowers his expectations to protect himself from disappointment and failure. His negativity keeps him from recognizing his strengths and potential. As a result, he misses many of the rewards and opportunities recovery offers.

Nothing Will Work Norman



These games prevent growth, damage relationships, and keep us emotionally immature. Recovery requires honesty and a willingness to face uncomfortable truths. The reward is greater freedom, healthier relationships, and a more authentic life.

Adapted from Allen Berger, Twelve Stupid Things That Mess Up Recovery (pp. 67–77). (Based on the writing of Allen Berger, Twelve Stupid things that Mess up Recovery, pp. 67-77)

Bertha Bear Trap



Spiritual Sally



Do It My Way Jeff



20 Weekly Alcoholics Anonymous Meeting at the Fellowship Centre

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) is one of the most recognized support groups for individuals struggling with alcohol addiction. Founded in 1935 by Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob Smith, AA has grown into a global movement, with millions of members participating in meetings across the world. The organization is based on a simple yet profound philosophy: that individuals can recover from alcoholism through mutual support and shared experiences.

The inception of AA is rooted in the personal struggles of its founders. Bill Wilson, a stockbroker, found himself battling alcoholism and sought help from fellow alcoholic Dr. Bob Smith. Their initial meetings laid the groundwork for a fellowship that would focus on the importance of sharing personal stories and listening to one another in a nonjudgmental environment. Since its formation, AA has developed a comprehensive program that emphasizes spiritual growth, accountability, and community support.

At the heart of AA's program are the Twelve Steps, which serve as a guide for individuals seeking recovery. These steps encourage members to acknowledge their addiction, seek help from a Higher Power, and make amends for past wrongdoings. The Twelve Traditions of AA further emphasize the importance of unity, anonymity, and service within the fellowship, ensuring that the focus remains on recovery rather than individual members.

The AA program also highlights the importance of sponsorship. Newcomers are encouraged to connect with experienced members (sponsors) who can provide guidance and support throughout the recovery journey. This relationship fosters accountability and strengthens the sense of community, which is vital for long-term sobriety.

Research on Effectiveness

Numerous studies have evaluated the effectiveness of Alcoholics Anonymous in promoting recovery. Research indicates that participation in AA can lead to significant improvements in abstinence rates compared to those who do not engage in mutual support groups. A meta-analysis published in the journal *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research* found that individuals who attended AA meetings regularly had better outcomes regarding sobriety and overall well-being. Moreover, AA's emphasis on spirituality and community connection has been shown to positively affect mental health. A study in *Substance Use & Misuse* highlighted that the social support provided by AA can reduce feelings of isolation and enhance resilience against relapse.

Weekly AA Meetings at the Fellowship Centre

For those looking to embark on or continue their recovery journey, the Fellowship Centre offers 20 weekly AA meetings. These meetings provide a supportive environment where individuals can share their experiences, challenges, and successes. Whether you are new to recovery or have been sober for years, you are welcome to join us. To find meeting times, please refer to the last page of the Recovery Compass or visit our website at fellowship-centre.org. Our community is here to support you every step of the way. Recovery is a journey best travelled together, and with the right support, a fulfilling life free from alcohol is within reach.



What Other People Think of Me Is None of My Business

One of the most liberating truths in addiction recovery is also one of the hardest to accept: *What other people think of me is none of my business*. Most of us can repeat those words long before we actually believe them. It often takes years in recovery to embrace this principle fully and even longer to practise it consistently.

During active addiction, many of us became experts at reading the room. We constantly wondered what others thought of us. “Were they judging us? Did they believe our excuses? Did they approve of us? Were they disappointed?” We learned to manage impressions, hide our struggles, seek approval, and fear rejection. Even after the substance is gone, those habits can remain deeply ingrained.

Recovery invites us into a different way of living. It teaches us that our value does not depend on someone else's opinion. While it is healthy to listen to constructive feedback and to make amends where necessary, we cannot build our self-worth on the shifting opinions of others. People's perceptions are influenced by their own experiences, fears, expectations, and biases. They may misunderstand us, underestimate us, or even overestimate us. None of that changes who we truly are.

This does not mean we stop caring about how our actions affect others. On the contrary, recovery asks us to become more accountable, more honest, and more compassionate. We strive to act with integrity because it is the right thing to do, not because we are chasing approval. There is an important difference between caring about our character and obsessing over our reputation.

Learning this distinction takes practice. Perhaps you attend a meeting and worry that you said something foolish. Maybe a family member seems distant, and your mind immediately assumes they are angry with you. Perhaps a co-worker offers brief criticism, and you begin questioning your entire worth. Recovery encourages us to pause before believing these stories. We can ask ourselves, *Am I responding to facts, or am I reacting to assumptions?*

As confidence grows, we discover a quiet freedom. We no longer need everyone to understand our journey. Some people may never trust us again. Others may continue to define us by our past. Still others may admire our progress. None of these opinions should determine how we see ourselves. Our responsibility is to continue living honestly, making wise choices, and allowing our actions to speak for themselves.

The phrase, *What other people think of me is none of my business*, is not permission to become selfish or indifferent. Instead, it is an invitation to let go of the exhausting burden of trying to control what cannot be controlled. We cannot manage another person's thoughts any more than we can control the weather.

Recovery flourishes when we stop seeking validation from every passing opinion and begin grounding our identity in honesty, humility, and consistent action. The longer we stay sober, the more we discover that peace comes not from being approved by everyone, but from knowing we are living in a way that allows us to approve of ourselves.

The Power of Our Dominant Thoughts

"Our life always expresses the result of our dominant thoughts." These insightful words, attributed to the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, remind us that the quality of our lives is deeply connected to the quality of our thinking. For those in addiction recovery, this truth carries particular significance. Recovery is not simply about stopping the use of alcohol or drugs; it is about developing a new way of thinking that supports a new way of living.

Our thoughts influence our emotions, our decisions, our relationships, and ultimately our future. If our minds remain occupied by shame, fear, resentment, or hopelessness, we will naturally struggle to experience the peace and freedom that recovery offers. The painful memories of past mistakes may continue to dominate our thinking, convincing us that we are failures or that lasting change is impossible. When these thoughts become our daily companions, they shape our reality and limit our ability to grow.

This is why becoming aware of our thinking is such an important part of recovery. We cannot change thoughts that we fail to recognise. Many recovery programs encourage honest self-examination because they understand that unhealthy thinking patterns often lie beneath destructive behaviours. When we begin to notice recurring thoughts of self-condemnation, fear, or despair, we have an opportunity to challenge them rather than simply accept them as truth.



Our minds are remarkably powerful. Like magnets, they tend to draw our attention towards whatever occupies them most consistently. This does not mean that positive thinking alone will solve every problem or eliminate every struggle. Recovery requires practical action, accountability, and support. However, the thoughts we repeatedly entertain influence the choices we make. A person who continually believes, "I will never change," is less likely to persevere through difficult moments than someone who reminds themselves, "Recovery is challenging, but I can take the next right step."

Changing our dominant thoughts is not about pretending the past never happened. The past contains valuable lessons, but it should not become a prison. We acknowledge our mistakes, make amends where possible, and accept responsibility, but we do not need to relive yesterday's failures every day. Dwelling continually on guilt and regret only robs us of the opportunity to live fully in the present.

Instead, recovery invites us to fill our minds with thoughts that strengthen hope, gratitude, forgiveness, and purpose. We can choose to focus on today's opportunities rather than yesterday's disappointments. We can remind ourselves of the progress we have made, the people who support us, and the values we are striving to live by. These thoughts gradually become habits, and those habits shape our character.

Each day presents a choice. We can allow the fearful, negative, and defeated ghosts of the past to define our present, or we can deliberately cultivate thoughts that encourage healing and growth. While we cannot always control the thoughts that first enter our minds, we can choose which ones we nurture and allow to take root.

Recovery begins with one decision at a time, one healthy choice at a time, and often one hopeful thought at a time. As our dominant thoughts become healthier, our lives increasingly reflect the freedom, purpose, and peace that recovery makes possible.

Recovery Does Not Happen All at Once

“There is no such thing as all at once in recovery.” That simple statement challenges one of the most common pressures people bring into the healing process: the belief that change should happen quickly. In many areas of life, speed is rewarded. We choose a destination, buy a ticket, board a plane and arrive within hours. Recovery is different. It is not a journey powered by a machine while we sit back and wait. We are the motive force. We are, in a sense, the ticket agent, the pilot and the navigator.



A recovery program can provide a map. Counsellors, peers, sponsors, family members and treatment professionals can offer guidance, encouragement and support. Yet no one else can take every step for us. We still have to make decisions: attending an appointment, telling the truth, avoiding a trigger, asking for help, taking medication as prescribed, or beginning again after a difficult day. This is not about blame. It is about recognizing personal agency while accepting that support is essential.

The idea also warns us about unrealistic expectations. Early in recovery, a person may want to repair everything at once: stop using substances, rebuild trust, fix finances, return to work, sleep well and feel emotionally steady. When these changes do not happen immediately, discouragement can set in. Discouragement then whispers that recovery is not working, that progress is too slow, or that quitting would be easier.

Because every recovery journey is unique, comparison can be another source of discouragement. Someone else's milestones, confidence or length of sobriety do not determine the value of our progress. Different histories, health needs, responsibilities and supports create different routes. Patience means respecting the journey we actually have, rather than demanding somebody else's timetable.

But slow progress is still progress. At the beginning, we do not yet have every skill the journey will require. We learn as we go, often one skill at a time and one day at a time. We practise recognizing cravings, managing strong emotions, setting boundaries, tolerating discomfort and building healthy routines. These abilities grow through repetition, not instant transformation.

A useful way to apply this message is to measure recovery by direction rather than speed. Movement onward may look small from the outside: making a phone call before using, eating a proper meal, showing up for a meeting, apologizing sincerely, or getting through one evening without returning to an old behaviour. Each of these actions is evidence that new pathways are being built.

Setbacks do not have to become destinations. They can reveal where more support, planning or skill development is needed. What matters is returning to the map and taking the next responsible step.

The reflection reminds us that even the Santa Maria was slow, and it still arrived. Recovery does not demand perfection or dramatic change overnight. It asks for patience, honesty and continued movement. When we accept our own rate of progress, every step forward becomes a major success—and every day becomes another opportunity to continue the journey.



Choosing Real Happiness in Recovery

“I accept responsibility for my own happiness, for the obstacles I put in my own way, and for the happiness substitutes that I used to distract and numb myself.”

This statement captures a difficult but liberating truth about addiction recovery. It asks us to examine not only what happened to us, but also how we responded—and how we want to live now. Accepting responsibility does not mean blaming ourselves for having an addiction. Addiction is complex, shaped by biology, trauma, relationships, social conditions and mental health. Responsibility means recognizing that, whatever contributed to our past, we have a meaningful role in shaping our future.

During active addiction, happiness can become confused with relief. Alcohol, drugs, gambling, compulsive eating or other behaviours may briefly quiet fear, loneliness, shame or emotional pain. These “happiness substitutes” offer distraction and numbness, but not lasting well-being. Their comfort is temporary, and the cost often grows: damaged health, strained relationships, financial hardship, secrecy and a diminished sense of self.

Recovery invites us to distinguish pleasure, escape and genuine happiness. Genuine happiness is not constant excitement or the absence of difficulty. It may appear as peace after an honest conversation, pride in keeping a commitment, laughter with a trusted friend or gratitude for an ordinary morning. It develops through connection, purpose, self-respect and the ability to remain present—even when the present is uncomfortable.

The obstacles we place in our own way can be subtle. We may isolate ourselves, refuse help, hold onto resentment or expect perfection. We may tell ourselves that change is impossible, that one mistake erases all our progress or that we are unworthy of a better life. These patterns once may have helped us survive, but in recovery they can prevent us from growing. Identifying them is not an occasion for shame; it is an opportunity to choose differently.

Applying this statement begins with honest self-observation. When we feel the urge to escape, we can pause and ask: What am I feeling? What do I need? Am I seeking happiness, or simply immediate relief? The answer might point us toward a meeting, a counsellor, a supportive friend, physical movement, rest, creative expression or a quiet moment of reflection. These choices may not provide instant comfort, but they strengthen our capacity to live without numbing ourselves.

Taking responsibility also includes creating conditions in which happiness can grow. We can establish healthy routines, repair relationships where appropriate, set boundaries and practise asking for help. We can notice small successes instead of waiting for life to become perfect. When setbacks occur, responsibility means learning from them and reconnecting with support—not condemning ourselves.

Recovery does not promise uninterrupted happiness. It offers something more dependable: the freedom to meet life honestly and participate in our own well-being. Each time we remove an obstacle, reject a substitute or choose a life-giving response, we reclaim part of ourselves. Happiness then becomes less like something we chase and more like something we patiently build.



Friendly Fire: Ending the Battle Within

“Friendly fire” is a military term for an attack that mistakenly strikes one’s own side. At a recovery meeting, a man used the expression to describe what was happening in his life. He realized that he was both the sniper and the target. Armed with self-pity and resentment, he carried his emotional weapons everywhere, ready to use them whenever life seemed unfair.

He never had difficulty finding targets. Most of us can find countless reasons to feel cheated, ignored, disappointed or sorry for ourselves. When we repeatedly revisit these injuries, however, the damage is not directed only at the people or circumstances we blame. Each burst of anger, each rehearsed grievance and each bitter comparison sends another volley into our own position.

This kind of friendly fire can be especially dangerous in addiction recovery. Resentment isolates us, while self-pity persuades us that our situation is uniquely hopeless. Together, they can weaken gratitude, distort our judgement and make old coping behaviours seem attractive. A person may begin thinking, “After everything I have endured, I deserve some relief,” or, “Nobody understands, so what is the point?” Such thoughts can quietly prepare the ground for relapse.

This does not mean that every hurt is imaginary or that people in recovery should tolerate mistreatment. Many grievances are legitimate, and healthy recovery includes setting boundaries, seeking justice and acknowledging pain. The problem begins when we keep a grievance loaded long after it has stopped protecting us. Resentment then becomes less like armour and more like a weapon turned inward.

The encouraging truth is that friendly fire can stop. The man at the meeting changed direction when he recognized what he was doing. Awareness gave him a choice. He could continue pulling the trigger, or he could put down the weapon.



We can make the same choice by pausing when resentment appears and asking, “What is this thought doing to me?” We can speak honestly with a sponsor, counsellor or trusted member of our recovery community. Writing an inventory can help us separate facts from assumptions and identify our own part without taking responsibility for another person’s behaviour. Prayer, meditation, service and gratitude can also redirect attention from what life owes us toward what recovery is giving us.

Forgiveness may be part of this process, but it cannot always be rushed. Sometimes the first step is simply becoming willing to stop feeding the injury. We do not have to approve of what happened, forget it or restore an unsafe relationship. We only need to stop repeatedly wounding ourselves with it.

Recovery asks us to lay down weapons that once felt necessary. When we refuse to fire another round of self-pity or resentment, we create room for honesty, responsibility and peace. We may discover that much of our war with life has been sustained from within—and that we possess the power to call a ceasefire.

Exercise Your Recovery Mind

Unscramble the 15 recovery words, then check the solution key at the bottom.

RECOVERY WORD SCRAMBLE

Unscramble the recovery-related words below:

- | | | | |
|-----|--------------|---|-------|
| 1. | YTOAD | → | _____ |
| 2. | ROSOPNS | → | _____ |
| 3. | RYVCORE | → | _____ |
| 4. | EIVCRES | → | _____ |
| 5. | YSOTNEH | → | _____ |
| 6. | DRTUGAITE | → | _____ |
| 7. | EINTMEGS | → | _____ |
| 8. | LLOWSHIEFEP | → | _____ |
| 9. | ACPEETCCAN | → | _____ |
| 10. | TNMEIMTOCMC | → | _____ |
| 11. | ITYENERS | → | _____ |
| 12. | RHEIGH OWERP | → | _____ |
| 13. | BYROITES | → | _____ |
| 14. | EOMFRED | → | _____ |
| 15. | ITNAEPNCE | → | _____ |

SOLUTION

1. TODAY
2. SPONSOR
3. RECOVERY
4. MEGHEITMENT
5. PATIENCE
6. FREEDOM
7. HIGHER POWER
8. SOBRIETY
9. COMMITMENT
10. ACCEPTANCE
11. PATIENCE
12. FREEDOM
13. HIGHER POWER
14. SOBRIETY
15. COMMITMENT



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SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	7:00 AM Alcoholics Anonymous HYBRID	7:00 AM Alcoholics Anonymous HYBRID	7:00 AM Alcoholics Anonymous HYBRID	7:00 AM Alcoholics Anonymous HYBRID	7:00 AM Alcoholics Anonymous HYBRID	
10:30 AM Alcoholics Anonymous (Women Only)		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 HYBRID SMART Recovery						2:00 PM Gamblers Anonymous
3:00 PM HYBRID Twelve Steps for Trauma Recovery				2:30 PM Overeaters Anonymous		
4:30 PM Alcoholics Anonymous (Meditation)						
6:00 PM Cocaine Anonymous		6:30 PM Alcoholics Anonymous (Book Study)	7:00 PM Cocaine Anonymous	6:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous (Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu)	7:00 PM SMART Recovery	7:00 PM Sex Addicts Anonymous
	7:30 PM Alcoholics Anonymous (Men Only)			8:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous (Men Only)		

WEEKLY ONLINE MEETINGS

SUNDAY 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 Twelve-Step addiction recovery. All are welcome. ZOOM MEETING ID 815 5962 9907 PASSCODE 357546
SUNDAY 3:00 PM	Twelve Step for Trauma Recovery is a 60-minute meeting focused on working the Twelve Steps to recover from past trauma. All are welcome. ZOOM MEETING ID 821 9943 2979 PASSCODE 936178
WEEKDAYS 7:00 AM	Sunrise Weekdays are 60-minute Alcoholics Anonymous meetings held Monday through Friday. Start your workday with the program. ZOOM MEETING ID 899 6946 5894 PASSCODE 912107

Power

Remov

Power