

Emotional Sobriety: The Golden Key To Addiction Recovery

by Glynis Sherwood MEd, CCC, CSAC

Do you have the emotional sobriety skills needed to sustain a healthy recovery? Read on to find out how you can make your recovery stronger.

What is Emotional Sobriety?

Emotional sobriety is a set of psychological 'self-management' skills that are vital to achieving successful recovery. It is both the 'foundation' and the long term 'task' of recovery. Emotional sobriety includes – but is not limited to - the ability to:

- be aware of and at ease with emotions
- feel calm and resilient during times of stress
- cope effectively with difficult emotions such as fear, hurt, sadness and frustration
- cultivate an optimistic outlook
- attain mood stability
- develop enduring and satisfying relationship bonds
- achieve overall balance between body, mind, spirit, relationships, etc.

What's The Difference Between Emotional Sobriety and Abstinence?

Simply put, abstinence is not recovery. It is merely the cessation of addictive behaviour - the starting point of recovery. Abstinence can last a day, a week or indefinitely. What gives abstinence staying power, and turns it into true recovery, is the development of solid emotional self-management skills.

Now That I've Stopped Addictive Behaviours, Why Don't I Have Emotional Sobriety?

People who engage in addictive behaviours are often out of touch with, and therefore at a loss about, how to care for their emotional needs. This can be due to some significant loss, neglect, abuse or trauma earlier in life. When emotions are associated with crisis or pain, people can become 'emotion-phobic', and want to escape or avoid feelings through addictive behaviour. They may turn to alcohol, drugs, food, sex or gambling to try and achieve a sense of gratification and calm. The solution becomes the problem however as legitimate psychological needs continue to go unmet, and difficulties escalate into the crisis of addiction.

Why Do I Need Emotional Sobriety?

1. First and foremost, to avoid relapse
2. To be able to recognize and 'collaborate' with your emotions as teachers and allies that are there to tell you what your needs are, whether your needs are being met, and what circumstances in your life may require change in order to meet your needs.
3. To develop the confidence, satisfaction and resilience that comes from dealing with your emotions directly and effectively, rather than self-medicating to avoid pain
4. To become the person you want to be – so your actions are congruent with your values and aspirations for your life

How Do I Develop Emotional Sobriety?

Emotional sobriety starts with understanding what full recovery means – psychological wellness paired with the end of addictive behaviours. In other words, learning to experience, accept and be guided by emotions and reframe pessimistic thinking, without self-medicating with substances or compulsive behaviours, is the foundation of recovery. The next step is to channel this understanding into the commitment necessary to achieve success. People in recovery need to identify their psychological 'learning curves' – i.e. areas of their emotional lives that require healing, development and support. This may involve resolving losses, hurts or traumas from the past. It might also mean overcoming anxiety or depression in the present. Emotional recovery is a task that is difficult to achieve in isolation. Addiction counselling can help recovering people conquer psychological obstacles and gain emotional balance, optimism and healthy coping skills.

Emotional self-management skills are crucial for recovering addicts who want to avoid relapse and achieve stability between moods, thoughts, behaviours and appetites. The good news is that with the right motivation, strategies and counselling support, pain and uncertainty can be replaced by a sense of peace and fulfillment - a powerful foundation for long term recovery.

For more help overcoming addiction and developing emotional sobriety today, visit Glynis Sherwood's website at www.RecoveryCounsellingSolutions.com

*While visiting my website, please sign up for my free report "**7 Addiction Recovery 'Red Flags' And What To Do About Them**".*

You are also invited to contact Glynis for a Free Consultation by telephone: 778-837-0616, or by email: Info@GlynisSherwood.com