



How to Be a Jewish Recovery Ally



“ An ally is any person who actively promotes and aspires to advance the culture of inclusion through intentional, positive, and conscious efforts that benefit people as a whole. ”

– Sheree Atcheson
Global Diversity,
Equity and Inclusion Leader

The Jewish community has made tremendous progress with inclusion for many marginalized groups. Now is the time to extend these efforts to those in our communities who struggle with substance use disorder and other addictions, are in recovery, or have lost loved ones.

The Talmud says “Kol Yisrael Aravim Zeh Bazeh: All Israel is Responsible for One Another.” Let’s put an end to individuals and families grappling with addiction in shame, silence, and isolation. We can start by becoming Recovery Allies.

Learn

1. Challenge your beliefs about substance use disorder that may include thinking Jews are not as vulnerable to addiction, or that it’s a choice, moral failing, or weakness, instead of a treatable disease.
2. Become educated about the science of addiction, stigma, recovery, and resources from reputable sources such as [SAMSHA](#), [NIDA](#) as well as [JAANetwork.org](#).
3. Learn the appropriate language and terms that won’t perpetuate stigma and shame. Guidance can be found from [Words Matter](#) and [Addictionary](#).
4. Sign up for a naloxone (overdose reversal drug) training and learn more about [harm reduction](#) strategies and resources.
5. Attend Jewish recovery events to learn how Jewish text, ritual, prayer, and culture can help us better understand addiction and support recovery.
6. If you don’t know or understand something, ask someone who does.



Listen

1. Attend some recovery meetings — [general](#) and [Jewish-focused](#) — to hear stories of people with lived experience.
2. Make time to listen with an open mind and heart, suspending judgment and the desire to “fix.”
3. Don’t assume you know what a person or family needs; ask them what they need from you.



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Show up

1. Offer to go with them to recovery meetings as an expression of support.
2. Know that [relapse](#) can be a common part of the recovery process. Be there for them when they are ready to continue their recovery journey.
3. Support their passions and hobbies and look for new interests and activities you can do together.
4. Be available to accompany them to a place or situation that may make them anxious about their recovery; or help them leave a place or situation that may be a trigger or put their recovery at risk.
5. Be sensitive to those in recovery during social events and secular and Jewish holiday celebrations. If you're hosting, make sure to have non-alcohol choices readily available.
6. Be aware of specific dates, locations, or holidays that may be difficult for them.
7. Offer specific and practical help to families who are coping with active addiction of a loved one or have someone in treatment.



Speak Up

1. Share your knowledge. Educate others about addiction and recovery.
2. Work to make sure your community leaders, clergy, and professionals are knowledgeable about addiction and recovery.
3. Advocate for increasing the number of 12-Step or other recovery-oriented meetings in Jewish spaces and support those that are already established.
4. Encourage and support programs that address substance use disorder or other mental or emotional challenges at your synagogue or Jewish organizations you support.



Visit the JAAN website

JAAN's website has a wealth of information including

- [Jewish resources](#)
- [General resources](#)
- [Recommended reading](#)
- [Blog posts](#)
- Listings of [JAAN events](#) and [other events](#)
- and more.

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