

LEVELS OF RECOVERY

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The Women for Sobriety New Life Program is designed especially for women who are addicted to, or who abuse, alcohol or other substances. The program is a guided journey from self-defeating, negative behavior and attitudes to feelings of confidence, power, and self-worth. By practicing the program's Thirteen Statements of Acceptance, women form a secure base of happiness and well-being that withstands the stress and problems of everyday living. This process can be described in six stages or levels of growth and change.

Workbooks, booklets, CDs, and DVDs are available for instructing individuals and self-help groups in the statements and levels. Materials are provided for forming support groups in, or independent from, treatment facilities. A monthly newsletter is published and available electronically. There is a complete set of CDs and DVDs on the Levels of Recovery, as well as a spiral-bound booklet that goes into detail on the Level format.

LEVEL 1: Statement #1, "I have a life-threatening problem that once had me."

We accept our addiction with the knowledge that we have a physical disorder and that abstinence from alcohol (or other addictive substance) is necessary. We recognize that alcohol has damaged our bodies and minds, and special care and time are required for recovery.

Examples of booklets that help during this stage: "The Woman Who Drinks Too Much," "So You Want To Quit?" (also a CD), "The Disease of Alcoholism," "Body, Mind, & Alcohol," "The Beginner's Booklet," "One Woman's Recovery" (3 Volumes by Irene Quait-Boehk), "Tools for Recovery" (series), "The First Year," and "For Women Alcoholics: 3 Essays." Also important during this Level is the "Beginner's Special" package and the "Reflections for Growth" booklets. Group members give needed support and the feeling of not being alone with our problems.

LEVEL 2: Statement #2, “Negative thoughts destroy only myself.”

Statement #4, “Problems bother me only to the degree I permit.”

Statement #9, “The past is gone forever.”

We are now ready to examine our attitudes and approach to life and its dilemmas. This is a time to write down in detail our concepts, experiences, difficulties, and feelings. We may believe that we are well aware of our thinking and attitudes, but only after we have written them with total honesty do we know what they really are – not what we thought them to be. Most women are surprised by this revelation. At this stage, we must also recognize the distorted, negative, and self-destructive patterns we have developed and resolve to change.

This level is difficult and takes some time. Also, during a later period of stress, we may need to return to these exercises (or review any level). This is not a matter of failure, but an opportunity to grow and change again in times of crisis.

Workbooks available for these exercises: “The New Life Diary,” “Considerations” (subject records), “Self-Analyzers,” “Anger: the Workbook,” “Coping with Stress,” and “New You Program” (for overeaters). Booklets available: “Anger & Women,” “Depression,” “Fear & Worry,” “Loneliness,” and “The Nature of Guilt.” CDs for this Level: “Handling Anger,” and “Breaking Dependencies/Anger & Women.” A physical exercise routine should now be established and a method of relaxation and meditation. Regarding relaxation and exercise, these are available: “New Life, New Body,” (booklet) and a CD “A Guided Healing Meditation.” Group members add support and positive reinforcements; however, these are NOT problem-solving groups.

LEVEL 3: Statement #5, “I am what I think.”

Statement #12, “I am a competent woman, and I have much to give life.”

We are now ready to exchange our irrational, negative attitudes for realistic, positive thoughts about ourselves and our lives. We realize that our thoughts are responsible for our feelings and not the events, people, or situations themselves. This level can be a happy time of growth and change. One unpleasant incident need not ruin an entire day; a mishap can be ‘unfortunate’ and not ‘awful’; a mistake, “a learning experience,” not “a wretched blunder.” We can make our environment pleasant, uncluttered, and attractive and know that we alone create the world around us.

Booklets on these subjects may aid our understanding: “The Nature of Guilt,” “Fear & Worry,” “Loneliness,” “Self-Imaging,” “Anger & Women,” “Goal-Setting,” and “Depression.” One-hour CDs are also available.

LEVEL 4: Statement #3, “Happiness is a habit I am developing.”

Statement #6, “Life can be ordinary or it can be great.”

Statement #11, “Enthusiasm is my daily exercise.”

We now become aware that we do not need to wait for or to seek enthusiasm and happiness – all we need do is reach out and grasp them. We can accept a happy and enthusiastic outlook on life or we can choose a gloomy, pessimistic, and cynical approach – it is up to us. This level leads us to the next stage; much of the joy in life depends on sharing with others – happiness and enthusiasm are reinforced by those to whom we are close.

Available for this Level is a CD, “Happiness & Sobriety,” and a booklet, “Reaching for the Sky.”

LEVEL 5: Statement #7, “Love can change the course of my world.”

Statement #10, “All love given returns.”

This level can be difficult for many women. Our culture has taught us to be over-dependent on others – by attaching our self-esteem to our relationships and to approval from others. Our value as a person often depends on our relationship with others and not on our own intrinsic worth. On the other hand, we fear and dread rejection and hurt. Now is the time to take risks – be open about our feelings – be vulnerable – balance giving and receiving. Mature loving relationships can bring us the greatest happiness of all. And their success depends primarily on how we feel about ourselves.

Workbooks: “Relationships,” “Self-Esteem,” and “Communicating.” Booklets: “A Woman’s Guide to Surviving Divorce & Maintaining Sobriety,” and “Problems of Gender.” CDs: “Relationships,” and “Breaking Dependencies.”

LEVEL 6: Statement #8, “The fundamental object of life is emotional and spiritual growth.”

Statement #13, “I am responsible for myself and for my actions.”

As we gain knowledge and understanding of ourselves, our connection to others, and our place in the world, we find a spiritual home that is both unique and personal to us. We nurture our spiritual growth and reach out to encourage self-responsibility and self-worth, not just for ourselves, but also for others.

Suggested booklets for this level: “A Plan for Life: Relapse Prevention,” and “Tools for Recovery” series. Also available to aid in emotional and spiritual growth: CD “A Guided Healing Meditation.”

As a woman grows in strength and understanding in this program, the need and desire to cope with life’s problems with alcohol or drugs are removed. Her destructive behavior and emotions are replaced with self-acceptance and confidence. She is no longer just a woman with an addiction problem; she is liberated and at peace with herself and her world. Thousands of women have found this ‘new life’ through the WFS Program.