

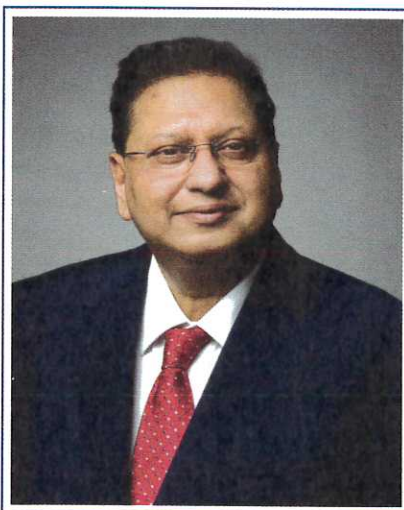


Recovery Doesn't Stop After Treatment Ends, Continuing Care is Key

A paradigm shift needs to occur in the way that we view and treat behavioral health conditions so that we can improve clinical outcomes and recovery of patients seeking mental health or addiction treatment. Instead of treating addiction and mental illness with episodic care, as if they are acute conditions, we should be treating these illnesses in the same way that we treat asthma, diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and other chronic conditions—with a continuum of care.

As with a patient who has diabetes requires long-term follow-up, monitoring and support, the recovery process for patients with mental illness or addiction shouldn't stop after they complete a treatment program. Like the medical treatment that is provided to patients who have other chronic and pervasive diseases, behavioral health treatment should also focus on the management and long-term monitoring of mental and substance use disorders, not solely on their stabilization.

Similarly, just as patients who have diabetes can have symptoms of their disease recur after a period of improvement, a person with an addiction or mental health condition shouldn't be viewed any differently for having a relapse. Patients who are treated for any chronic illness are vulnerable to relapse, and recurrence is very much a part of the disease. It is the responsibility of treatment providers to teach patients how to manage their symptoms and make healthy choices that support their overall health and wellbeing.



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In behavioral health, recovery management is provided to patients after they complete formal treatment; it may consist of education, motivational interviewing and cognitive behavior strategies that aim to help patients make progress toward their goals in recovery (McKay, 2009). Within a recovery management framework, professionals must help patients learn how to manage and take responsibility for their condition (Kushner, Dennis, & McKay, 2013).

Recovery management is an important component of the treatment and recovery processes because it empowers patients to understand their condition, and teaches them how to cope with triggers and stress and manage their symptoms in

times of crisis and distress. In addition to these benefits, continuing care services, also referred to as aftercare, can be provided to patients to reduce their risk of relapse and rehospitalization after they receive treatment (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014).

Sovereign Health, a leading national behavioral health treatment provider, offers recovery management services to patients for extended period through our comprehensive Continuing Care Program. The Continuing Care Program includes ongoing monitoring, process groups, community activities and continuing education to teach patients' important life skills to help patients continue to make progress in their recovery after their treatment. Continuing care services provide follow-up, support and monitoring to patients long after their treatment has been completed to help them manage their recovery from mental and substance use disorders, so they can go on to live happy and healthy lives.

References

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