

8 TIPS

FOR  
PEOPLE IN  
RECOVERY

This holiday weekend!

OREGON *Recovery* NETWORK

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## 1. CHECK IN WITH YOURSELF BEFORE YOU COMMIT TO PLANS

Check in with yourself and ask some important questions. Where am I at in my recovery? Am I able to attend an event where alcohol is served and not be triggered to partake? Do I have a backup plan such as a peer mentor, supportive friend, or sponsor I can call if I am triggered?

Be honest with yourself and know what your limits are and stick with them. If you don't feel that your recovery is safe if you attend the event, then make other plans.

## 2. PREPARE FOR TRIGGERS

Your brain learns to associate all sorts of things such as sights, smells, sounds, certain places and people with your alcohol use.

These act as triggers, prompting you to anticipate the reward and begin craving it whenever these reminders reappear.

Think about what these triggers are for you and how these triggers make you feel. Just being aware that they will bring up urges will help you to tackle them in the moment.

### 3. ESTABLISH A RECOVERY MINDSET

Before you embark on your Memorial Weekend activities make sure your recovery toolbox is full.

Connect with a peer mentor or your sponsor, go to support meetings, exercise, meditate, or spend time with friends and family.

Get yourself in the right frame of mind, one in which you see your recovery as adding to your happiness rather than being a hindrance to it.

## 4. BE PREPARED FOR QUESTIONS

If you are going to attend an event with alcohol don't go unprepared. It's inevitable that someone will offer you a drink or ask why you're not drinking.

Have some simple and effective one-liners ready like "No thanks, I don't drink", or "I really appreciate the offer, but I'm not drinking", or "Sure, I'd love a soda".

If you get the dreaded "why?" an easy out is simply "I don't drink", or "I'm driving", you don't owe anyone an explanation.

## 5. DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT THIS YEAR

Try doing something new this year, going to the same BBQ you went to in the past when you were still using isn't a good idea.

Ask your friends in recovery what they are doing or host your own recovery event. Recovery centers and support groups often have sober events for people in recovery.

## 6. FIND A SUBSTITUTE

Make mocktails, so you don't feel like you're missing out! There are so many fun drinks you can make without alcohol.

If you feel better having something in hand to constantly sip on bring a cooler of your own non-alcoholic beverages like bubbly water and soda. Don't rely on the host to have these available for you.

## 7. HAVE AN EXIT PLAN & DRIVE YOURSELF

Drive yourself so when you're ready to leave you can just leave.

Wherever you end up, have a way to remove yourself if necessary.

You may arrive at an event confident that you can handle any potential triggers only to find yourself increasingly anxious. Thank the host and then just leave there is no need for a big explanation.



## 8. SKIP IT ALTOGETHER AND SERVE YOUR COMMUNITY INSTEAD

Your recovery comes first. If you feel that going to an event where alcohol is present will trigger you then just don't go.

Holidays come and go, there's no reason you can't sit this one out.

Consider getting back to the meaning of the holiday, honoring those who have died while serving in our country's armed forces. Volunteer at a veteran's center or decorate a veteran's grave. Or just stay at home with a good movie or a book and observe how nothing is different afterward.

CONNECT WITH A PEER TODAY

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