



Safe Medications And Recovery

This handout is being provided to you as a client at The Healing Place of Richmond (THP) to help you make good decisions about treatment of medical problems and your recovery, as well as to share with your healthcare provider (for example- doctor/nurse/therapist).

Individuals with alcoholism and other drug addictions are particularly sensitive to mind and mood altering drugs. Because of this sensitivity, alcoholics and other drug addicts need to be very careful about what medications they take, whether they are medications prescribed by a physician or over-the-counter medications. It is well documented that the use of certain medications (prescribed or OTC) for legitimate purpose can cause relapse. ***YOU must be responsible for your own recovery!*** Being responsible for your recovery includes explaining to your provider the risks that certain medications pose and that careful consideration and precautions must be taken if it is necessary to take certain medications.

THP recognizes that some people have health diagnosis that do require medications. If the medication is an approved medication, the Healing Place requires any Hospital or other Health Care Provider to provide 30 days of medication for any client referred to THP in order for those clients to receive services!

The philosophy of THP is to be very conservative in the use of medications based upon these well known risks. Further, alcoholics and other drug addicts are accustomed to finding "something" that they can take in order to change how they feel immediately. Part of what we teach clients at THP is how to look at alternatives to drugs or medications as a first response to any problem. Also, since THP is a community of persons in recovery, the safety of all persons must be considered. What may not be a problem for one individual may be a problem for another.

Other factors that need to be considered when deciding whether to take a medication:

- 1) Severity and intensity of the problem requiring possible treatment with medications
- 2) Duration (long term or short term)
- 3) Available alternatives

There are a number of medications considered very high risk and you are not allowed to take in the THP program. These include benzodiazepines, barbituates, sedatives, hypnotics, stimulants antihistamines (for sleep), opiates, and certain psychotropic medications.

THP is not opposed to you being prescribed medications when they are required. Since there is a risk of dying following a relapse, the benefit of using certain medications should always outweigh the harm that could result from using it. For example, we do not support clients taking medications for sleep, as the sedating property they cause has led to relapse for people in recovery. If you have questions about whether you can take certain medications please ask a peer mentor for guidance.

Suggestions Regarding Medications in Recovery

The following suggestions can be helpful to people in recovery when medications are required, whether for a short term or long term need.

- 1) Treat any use of a controlled drug, or over the counter medication that are mood altering as a potential for a relapse.
- 2) Locate a single primary care physician to provide for most or all of your health care needs. Notify this person that you are in recovery, and that great care should be used before prescribing medications. Do the same for all health care providers, including dentists. Consider having your primary care physician prescribe all of your medications, even those recommended by another physician.
- 3) Realize that many providers (doctor/nurse/therapist) may be unaware or under aware of the risks that certain medications pose for a person in recovery. It is well documented that the use of certain medications (prescribed and OTC) for legitimate purposes can cause relapse. ***YOU must be responsible for your own recovery!!***
- 4) Ask questions of knowledgeable individuals if you are unsure about the risk of a given medication.
- 5) Discuss with your sponsor and support network if you must take a medication that may cause relapse.
- 6) Chronic pain problems can often be addressed with non-steroidal and other non-addicting medications. Many treatments other than drugs can prevent pain from becoming suffering. Since it is the suffering experience we want to avoid, many recovery related activities could be of benefit. Also consider biofeedback, acupuncture, neuromuscular massage, chiropractic, and relaxation/stress reducing training.
- 7) If others in your living environment are using medications that may cause relapse, consider asking them to keep them out of sight. Have family members discard unused medications. Do not stockpile or save medications "just in case" you need them later.
- 8) Read the NA pamphlet "In Times of Illness" and the AA pamphlet "The AA Member-Medications and other drugs".

MEDICATIONS THAT ARE NOT ALLOWED WHILE IN THE RECOVERY PROGRAM AT THP

Updated 9/12/17

- Benzodiazepines-All
- Barbiturates -All
- Stimulants- To include but not limited to, Amphetamines, Methylphenidate, Modafinil, Pemoline, Weight Loss medications that are stimulant based.
- Antihistamines- When used to induce sleep (diphenhydramine, doxylamine etc.)
- Opiates- All opioid medications (Ultram, Tramadol, Oxycontin, Fentanyl etc.)
- All Medications used to induce sleep- (non-benzodiazepine sleep medications, tricyclic antidepressants (Amitriptyline, Imipramine, Anafranil, etc.) Trazadone, OTC sleep aids, herbal or pharmaceutical.
- Antipsychotic Medications: All (no matter the reason prescribed) Haldol, Seroquel, Risperdal, Thorazine, Prolixin, Mobic, Trilafon, Abilify, Clozapine, etc.
- Muscle relaxants; including GABAPENTIN

Healthcare providers:

This list will change as new medications are released or existing ones become misused. Please Call (804) 248-3004 Ron Schneider, RN If you have questions.