



WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT

SMART Recovery Groups

SMART Recovery (Self-Management and Recovery Training) is a free, secular mutual aid program for changing any addictive behavior, including alcohol, drugs, gambling, and behavioral addictions. It's the most widely available evidence-informed alternative to 12-Step programs, grounded in CBT, motivational interviewing, and REBT rather than spiritual principles. Its four-point program covers building motivation, coping with urges, managing thoughts and behaviors, and building a balanced life. It uses no "addict" or "alcoholic" labels, asks for no higher power, and encourages members to graduate when ready.

WHO IT'S FOR, AND WHO IT'S NOT

- A strong fit if you want a secular, analytical, skills-based alternative to 12-Step.
- It works alongside clinical and medication-assisted treatment.
- Not a sole response to severe or medically complex addiction. In crisis? Call or text 988.

What it's for

Anyone wanting to change a problematic behavior: alcohol, drugs, gambling, and more.

Welcomes any stage, including harm reduction, not just full abstinence.

A Family & Friends program supports loved ones too.

WHAT TO EXPECT

1 Meetings run 60 to 90 minutes: purpose statement, check-in, tool work, check-out.

2 Tools include DEADS for urges, Cost-Benefit Analysis, and the ABC framework.

3 Cross-talk is encouraged, and online meetings run 24/7.

SMART Recovery's evidence base is smaller but growing and encouraging.

- A systematic review linked attendance to **reduced substance use, higher self-efficacy, and less depression**.¹
- A 2023 pilot integrating SMART into outpatient care found **94% reported benefits**, with high feasibility.²

MAKING THE MOST OF IT

Bring a real situation. The tools work best on something current.

Use cross-talk. Feedback from the group deepens the work.

Stay as long as it helps. Graduating when ready is the design.

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU JOIN

- 1 Is it in person or one of the 24/7 online meetings?
- 2 Is it general, or focused on a substance or behavior?
- 3 Is there a Family & Friends meeting for my loved ones?

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If you're in crisis, call or text 988.

The Group Guide is a directory, not a clinic. This handout is general education, not medical or mental health advice. Listings are written by group leaders and are not endorsements. Confirm details, cost, and fit with any group you contact. Sources on page 2.



Sources

SMART Recovery Groups · references keyed to the numbers on page 1.

- 1 Beck, A. K., Forbes, E., Baker, A. L., et al. Systematic review of SMART Recovery: outcomes, process variables, and implications for research. *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors* (2017), 31(1), 1–20.
- 2 Manning, V., Roxburgh, A. D., & Savic, M. Piloting the integration of SMART Recovery into outpatient alcohol and other drug treatment programs. *Addiction Science and Clinical Practice* (2023), 18(1), Article 52.

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