

Recovering from Addiction with the H.O.P.E. Technique

Objective

To maintain your momentum in addiction recovery by learning the H.O.P.E. model.

You Should Know

You wouldn't be completing this worksheet if at least a little part of you didn't believe things could get better. Without hope, it's hard to get through the inevitable setbacks and failures. Without hope, it's hard to create a vision of the future and set goals for yourself that will result in less stress and more satisfaction.

H.O.P.E. stands for **H**ealing, **O**penness, **P**atience, and **E**xpectations.

Healing

Do we ever truly heal 100 percent, like how a scrape or cut eventually heals over and there's no scar whatsoever? Probably not. There will always be the experience of the wound. But we can work toward healing from life's difficulties with a mindful attitude and self-compassion.

People in recovery from addiction have frequently suffered terribly in their lives: childhood traumas such as abuse, neglect, bullying, losses, divorce, living with a mentally ill family member, or living with an active addict. With good therapy and a lot of support, your adult self can understand and accept those wounds. You can learn to say, "That happened to me. It wasn't my fault. I have skills now for taking care of myself and moving on."

Trauma experts talk about how our wounds are stored in our body and mind and can affect us for the rest of our lives if they are not dealt with. You deserve to heal. You deserve to take the time to make a new relationship with your past. This doesn't necessarily mean forgiving those who have wounded you; this means *forgiving yourself* in the present, acknowledging that you've done the best you can, and moving toward a new, more fulfilling future.

Openness

Most of us, when we're wounded or hurting, want to protect ourselves from further harm. That makes sense. So how do we ever experience anything new if we stay in our bubble? It takes a leap of faith to try something new or break an old habit. Yes, there is a risk, but what things in life that are good and wonderful don't involve some kind of risk? With an open mind, an open heart, and an open spirit, you can add riches to your life that you might never have dreamed of—a sense of safety, strength, control, happiness, respect, love, and connection. Those are yours for the asking.

Patience

“What do you mean, mine for the asking?” you might wonder. “I’ve been wanting good stuff in my life for as long as I can remember!” That’s where patience comes in handy. It can’t be said enough: Change can be hard. Change can be slow. Seeing the fruits of your efforts, especially if you’re someone who craves instant gratification, can take time.

Be patient with that urgency. Listen to it and acknowledge it—don’t push it away, because it can add positive, driving energy to your journey. Use your mindfulness skills to watch all of your thoughts come and go, and invest every day in your recovery activities so that you can set the stage for getting what you want.

Expectations

Here’s another dilemma. You might ask: “What if I work on healing, acknowledge my wounds with compassion, practice patience with the nature of change, and my life is still stressful and unmanageable sometimes?”

Welcome to reality. That statement isn’t meant to be cynical or punitive. It’s just true. We don’t always get our way. Most things in life are out of our control. It can be frustrating, but it can also be freeing to realize that we can dream and plan and set goals and have the process be rewarding, without necessarily having all of our expectations fulfilled.

So even if you work hard and do all the right things, you might not achieve the “perfect” life. Shoot for good enough. Shoot for OK for today. Shoot for being grateful in the moment for what you do have. H.O.P.E. is a process. Embrace it as best you can.

What to Do

What does the H.O.P.E. approach mean to you? How can you use its concepts to move forward in your recovery? Use the lines below to answer the following questions.

What are your hopes?

Examples:

- *"I hope I can maintain my focus on myself and not back down from setting limits with others."*
- *"I hope I will find a great job in an area I'm passionate about."*
- *"I hope I can regain my parents' (spouse's/partner's/children's/friends') trust if I continue to work hard."*

Healing

What wounds are you carrying from your past that need to be healed?

What people could help you in your healing process?

What activities or recovery strategies could help you in your healing process?

Are you willing to experience some emotional discomfort without picking up drugs or alcohol?
Why or why not?

Openness

Do think of yourself as a closed or open person, or somewhere in between? Explain.

Do you remember a time when you felt open to change and new experiences? Describe.

Who or what inspires you to remain open, maybe even to feel vulnerable, in the interest of leaving your comfort zone?

What are you willing to do in the next week to practice being more open to new people, places, and things?

Patience

How would you rate your ability to be patient? _____
(1 = no ability, 5 = moderate ability, 10 = excellent ability)

Do you remember a time when you were forced to be patient, waiting for something good? Describe.

What would you be willing to wait for now, and what could you say to yourself to learn more patience?

Expectations

What are your expectations of yourself in regards to your recovery right now?

What are your expectations of others in regards to your recovery? Be specific.

How do you manage having unmet expectations (being disappointed)?

How would you like to manage having unmet expectations?
