

Foundations of Substance Use and Health-Promoting Choices

Healthy Change Comes From Replacement, Not Removal

Substances like alcohol, nicotine, cannabis, or recreational drugs often fill a role in someone's routine. Healthy change comes from building routines that meet that same need in a more supportive way. You do not break a pattern by force. You shift the environment and the routine around it.

Understanding the Role a Substance Plays

Substances often serve functions such as:

- Stress relief
- Social connection
- Comfort
- Structure in the day
- Transition between activities
- Reward after work or effort

Identifying the role helps you understand what actually needs support.

What Healthy Emotional Well-Being Looks Like: These routines help people meet their internal needs without relying solely on substances.

1

Replacement Habits: Heading to the gym after work instead of using that time for smoking. Taking a walk during a stressful moment instead of reaching for alcohol. Creating a calming nightly routine to replace evening cannabis use.

2

Supportive Structure: Regular meals, hydration, sleep, and movement reduce cravings and improve emotional regulation.



3

Environmental Shifts: Changing where you spend time, how you transition through your day, and who you interact with can change the cues linked to substance use.

4

Understanding Triggers: Fatigue, stress, loneliness, boredom, and routine loops often drive use. Awareness creates space for new choices.

Some routines/habits that serve as tools for success with substance use and health-promoting choices:

- . Setting limits on how much I drink
- . Planning alcohol-free or substance-free days
- . Choosing non-alcoholic options in social settings
- . Avoiding situations that lead to overuse
- . Using coping strategies instead of substances
- . Talking with a professional when needed



What This Means for You

People don't change by just removing something. They change by replacing it with routines that serve them better. As your environment and habits shift, the pull of old patterns begins to fade.