



Americans Believe in Prevention and Recovery from Addictions

Highlights

- Half of all adults 18+ know someone in recovery from addiction to alcohol, illicit drugs, or prescription drugs.
- Fewer than one-fifth of Americans would think less of a friend or relative who is in recovery from addiction.
- Nearly two-thirds of Americans believe that addiction to marijuana and other illicit drugs, prescription drugs, and alcohol can be prevented.
- The majority of Americans believe that treatment programs can help people with substance addictions and that people can recover and live productive lives.
- Young adults age 25-34 are the most positive about prevention and recovery from addiction.

A majority of Americans (80%) have positive feelings about prevention and recovery from substance addictions, according to a study released by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

A new SAMHSA report, *Summary Report: Caravan® Survey for SAMHSA on Addictions and Recovery*, provides data on public perceptions about prevention, recovery, and stigma related to substance addictions. The findings presented in this short report are extracted from the larger *Summary Report*, which is based on replies to a nationally representative Caravan® telephone survey conducted from August 29 to September 1, 2008. The target audience was a national probability sample of 1,010 adults, 18 years of age and older living in private households in the continental United States.

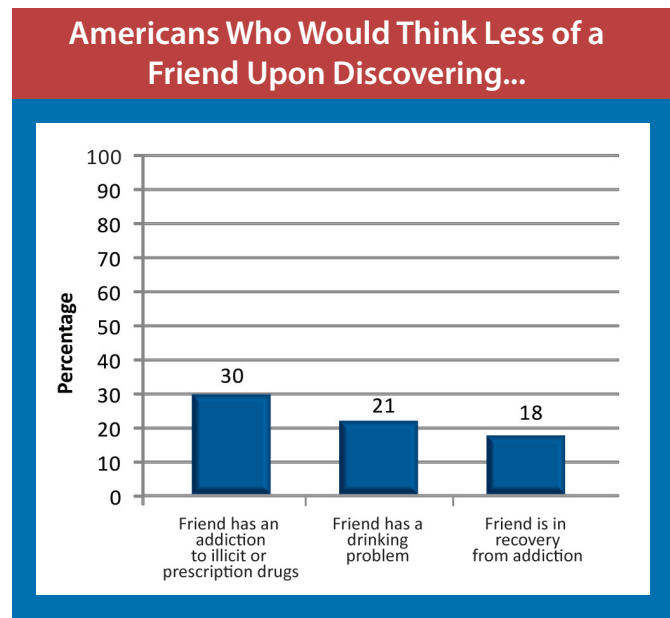
SAMHSA is an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that supports programs to improve the lives of people with or at risk for mental illness and substance use disorders, including the promotion of society's acceptance of persons in recovery.

Key Findings about Prevention and Recovery from Substance Addictions

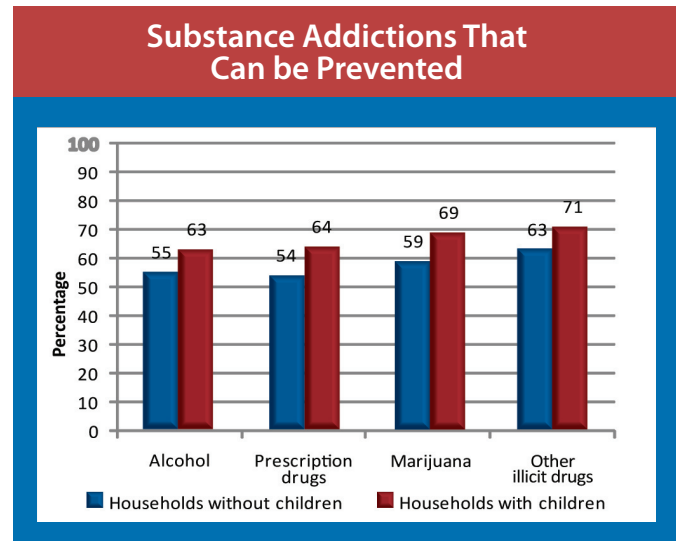
One out of two people knows someone who is in recovery from addiction to alcohol, prescription drugs, or illicit drugs, including marijuana, cocaine, heroin, or methamphetamines.¹ Of these, many more people know someone in recovery from alcohol addiction. Younger adults, age 18-34, were more likely than older adults to know someone in recovery from marijuana addiction.

Stigma

Fewer than 20 percent of Americans say they would think less of a friend or relative if they discovered that person is in recovery from addiction to drugs or alcohol. Considerably more, 30 percent, said they would think less of a person with a current addiction.



¹ For some questions, marijuana was polled and reported separately from the other illicit drugs.



Prevention

Younger adults age 25-34 are the most positive that substance addictions can be prevented. Americans in households with children are more likely than those in households without children to believe that all substance addictions can be prevented.

Recovery

Approximately three-quarters of the population believe that recovery is possible from addiction to alcohol, prescription drugs, and marijuana. However, only 58 percent believe that a person can fully recover from addiction to other illicit drugs such as cocaine, heroin, or methamphetamines.

Women (62%) are more likely than men (54%) to believe a person can fully recover from addiction to illicit drugs such as cocaine, heroin, or methamphetamines.

AMERICANS BELIEVE IN PREVENTION AND RECOVERY FROM ADDICTIONS

More than 75 percent of Americans feel more positive about people in recovery from addictions to alcohol, prescription drugs, and marijuana, than those in recovery from addiction to other illicit drugs such as cocaine, heroin, or methamphetamines.

The percentage of Americans who believe that treatment programs can help people with substance addictions is slightly higher than the percentage who believe that people in recovery can live a productive life. Programs to help people with addictions to alcohol, marijuana, and prescription drugs are looked on more favorably than treatment programs designed to help people with addictions to other illicit drugs such as cocaine, heroin, or methamphetamines. In general, Americans age 65 and older are least likely to feel that recovery from substance addiction is possible.

Age

Americans age 65 and older are less likely to state they know someone in recovery from addiction. This group also states that they feel least comfortable being friends with, working with, and living next door to someone in recovery from alcohol addiction.

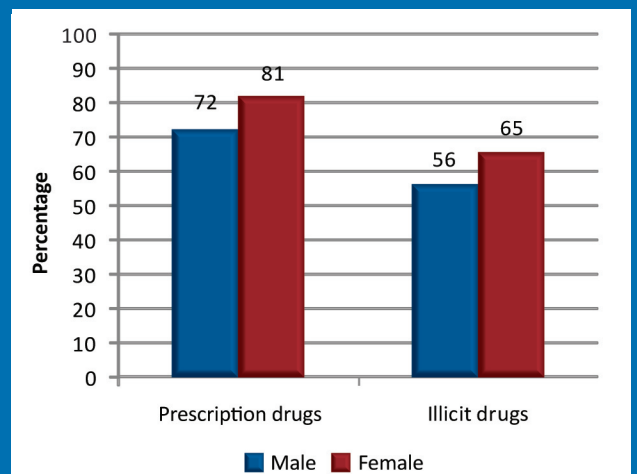
In general, the older a person is, the more likely he or she is to think less of someone who is in recovery from addiction to alcohol or drugs, and the less likely he or

she is to feel comfortable with someone in recovery from addiction to alcohol or drugs.

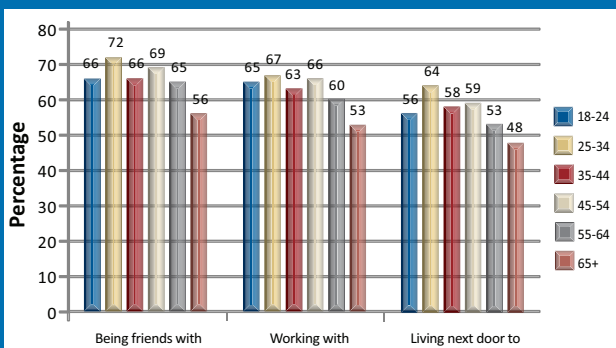
People age 65 and older are less likely than younger Americans to believe that substance addictions can be prevented. However, more than half of Americans age 65 and older do believe addictions can be prevented.

Younger Americans age 25-34 are the most positive that a person in recovery from addiction could go on to live a productive life. Those age 65 and above are the least so.

A Person in Recovery From Addiction Can Live a Productive Life



Americans Who Would Feel Comfortable With Someone in Recovery From Alcohol Addiction



Gender

Females feel more strongly than males that individuals who are addicted to any of the substances mentioned in the survey are dangers to society. This is particularly true in relation to alcohol addiction.

Women feel more positive than men that a person in recovery from an addiction to illicit or prescription drugs can live a productive life.

What recovery from addiction means to the American public...

"Capable of living a normal life"

"Freedom from addiction"

"Complete deliverance"

"Trying to turn life around"

"Getting help and not doing it anymore"

"Returning to a normal lifestyle"

"You're getting better"

"To get back into life"

Verbatim comments taken from the Caravan® telephone survey conducted from August 29 to September 1, 2008.

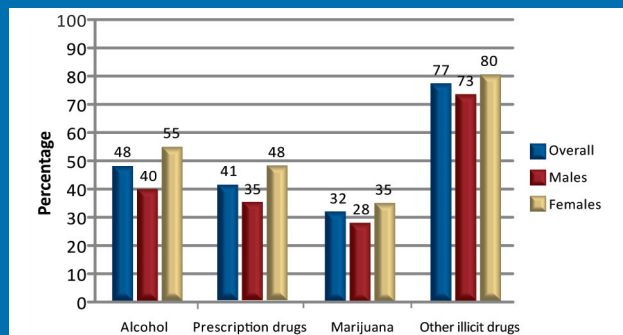
Marijuana

Fewer than one-fifth of Americans say they know anyone in recovery from addiction to marijuana, compared to twice that for addiction to alcohol. In the list of substances that pose a danger to society, marijuana ranked last among all demographic groups (age, race, gender, ethnicity, and income).

Drugs vs. Alcohol

People tend to view addiction to drugs differently than addiction to alcohol. In general, respondents are more comfortable with someone in recovery from addiction to alcohol than addiction to drugs.

Substance Addictions That Are a Danger to Society



Overall, Americans feel that persons who are addicted to certain illicit drugs—cocaine and heroin—are much more of a danger to society than those addicted to marijuana, alcohol, or prescription drugs.

Summary Report: Caravan® Survey for SAMHSA on Addictions and Recovery is based on 11 global questions about prevention, recovery, and stigma related to substance addictions. The questions were part of a nationally representative 2008 Caravan® Survey conducted by Opinion Research Corporation and Macro International Inc. All results are weighted by four variables (age, sex, geographic region, and race) to ensure reliable and accurate representation of the total population, 18 years of age and older. The margin of error for this data is +/- 3%.

The full *Summary Report* is available online at www.samhsa.gov/attitudes

For information on prevention and recovery from addiction, contact the SAMHSA Health Information Network (SHIN)

<http://www.samhsa.gov/shin>

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