



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF FIRE FIGHTERS



ADVANCED RECOVERY
SYSTEMS
an advanced approach to patient care

Gratitude and Recovery

Being grateful is **shown to be helpful** for people with behavioral health issues, from physical health benefits to enhanced sleep and strengthened relationships. Gratitude encompasses many things, but it's rooted in an appreciation for what you have. It's also an appreciation for the things you no longer struggle with, such as the fear and anger that may stem from an addiction or substance use disorder. As a part of maintaining recovery, gratitude can help an individual focus on the life they lead now instead of mistakes made in the midst of past behavioral health struggles.

These are a few concepts for practicing gratitude:

- 1. Journal:** write down a few things (3-5) you are grateful for each day or throughout the week. You can reflect on the past day, few days, or even longer. This practice can increase your quality of sleep, decrease negative physical health symptoms, and increase overall joy and happiness. Identifying what you are grateful for becomes easier over time, so stick with it if journaling feels uncomfortable at first!
- 2. Gratitude prompts:** prompts are an easy way to get in the habit of acknowledging what you're grateful for. There are several different prompts you could implement into your practice, but in general, these prompts should cover multiple senses, colors, people, and things. The goal is to identify at least three things in each category you are thankful for. Some examples of prompts include:
 - I'm grateful for 3 things I hear/see/smell/touch/taste
 - I'm grateful for these 3 yellow things
 - I'm grateful for these 3 animals
 - I'm grateful for these 3 people
 - I'm grateful for these 3 things in my home



- 3. Gratitude walk:** walking is a great way to cleanse your mind and gratitude can easily be incorporated in a walk to make the activity meditative and grounding. Walking and focusing on gratitude has major health benefits like, increased endorphins, decreased stress, better heart health, decreased lethargy, and decreased blood pressure. The goal of a gratitude walk is to focus on the things you see during your walk. Be mindful of nature, colors you see, sounds you hear, and the smells of nature. It may also help to take more notice of your feet when you step. This is also an activity that could easily involve a loved one or child.

- 4. Gratitude meditation:** <https://bit.ly/gratitudemeditationvideo>

Source:

- <https://positivepsychology.com/gratitude-exercises/>
- https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_gratitude_changes_you_and_your_brain

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