

Blog #8: What Gives us Hope as Young People in Recovery

By Joely Feder

Here is the eighth installment of the blog. To protect the confidentiality of participants, names and some personal information have been altered.

Hope Means Moving Forward

Hope is essential to recovery. So many of us who have struggled with addiction have felt the crushing weight of being hopeless. Many of us felt we had no direction, like our lives would be miserable forever, or that things would always remain how they were.

To have hope is to believe that things will get better; that we will not struggle forever. In recovery, hope shows up in a motivation to keep going, even when hard things come up.

After hearing so much about the journeys of other young people in recovery, the last question I posed to each of my peers was, “What gives you hope in your recovery?”

Read on to hear about what gives other young people in recovery hope on their journeys.

What Gives Us Hope?

BK shared that over her recovery journey, her self-love has grown immensely. As someone who lost a parent, a cousin, and a friend to overdose, she shared that being alive is what gives her hope every day to continue pushing on in recovery. She reflected that, to her, being alive is a privilege that she is grateful to have. Because she is alive, she can cultivate her growth in recovery.

For ZL, this growth is something that gives him hope, too. He said, “the genuine happy moments [he’s] had so far in [his] journey” inspire him to keep going.

Other peers shared that hearing people’s recovery stories gives them hope. WJ said, “the fact that people are decades sober” keeps him going. Similarly, MD, Miranda, and LA shared that hearing other people’s recovery stories inspired them.

SP said, “What gives me hope is that, like, it wasn’t too late. It wasn’t too late for me and it felt like it was for a long time...But it wasn’t too late. It wasn’t too late to salvage a life worth living.”

Many peers shared this sentiment; it wasn’t too late for them. In fact, many told me that the future gave them hope. UI said, “Like every year [of my recovery] has been totally, completely different... Everything in my life has shifted so much over the last few

years...” and that the curiosity of what may come keeps their hope alive as they continue in recovery.

Similarly, BA said that in her recovery, “these crazy beautiful things [have] happened,” and that they “drive [her] hope that it can be better” because she has “actually seen it get better” in real time.

Growing Every Day

Everyone I interviewed shared the sentiment that having hope has been essential to their recovery journey so far. In fact, many agreed that this sense of hope would help them continue in their lives.

To have hope is to defy everyone, every system, or everything that ever told you things would never change. As I’ve said before, just being in recovery as a young person is representation itself because it shows other young people that someone like them can pursue recovery.

Having hope, too, redefines certain stereotypes or wide held beliefs of people who have substance use disorders. When we have hope, we allow ourselves to change in the way we want to. Hope keeps us going and motivates us for what is to come.

After conducting these interviews, my peers have shown me that many of these things to come are amazing and beautiful. I thank each of them for giving me hope in my own journey.