

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. For providers and caregivers: Define recovery in collaboration with youth.**

Do not assume what recovery means to youth and be alert to shifts in definitions across time and place. For example, recovery may initially include alcohol and cannabis use and later be defined as abstinence from all substances.
- 2. For providers and caregivers: Use supportive language that makes room for missteps and learning.**

Use language that motivates youth to keep moving forward with self-defined recovery and healing goals and avoid language that may lead to feelings of pressure and looming or actual failure.
- 3. For providers: Encourage youth to continually (re-)define their treatment, recovery, and healing goals and timelines.**

Focus on strengths and supporting youth in learning what it means and how to live a fulfilling, pleasurable, and “fun” life over attempts to “fix” them. Be alert to changes in goals and timelines across time and place.
- 4. For providers: Provide opportunities to practice recovery during programs.**

Help youth move toward more independent recovery and healing by first supporting them with navigating challenges and missteps.
- 5. For providers: Treatment and recovery programs should approach returns to use (e.g., while on day and weekend passes) as learning opportunities.** Prioritize policies that approach returns to use as opportunities to learn and build skills and capacity rather than as grounds for discharge. Don’t assume returns to use are indicative of “not being ready” or wanting to pursue recovery and healing.
- 6. For health systems change: Reduce barriers to treatment and recognize that repeated treatment engagements are often viewed positively by youth.** Implement measures to reduce barriers, ensuring youth have access to treatment at the moment they want it and as many times as they may need.
- 7. For health systems change: Provide quality housing and income support.** Ensure access to a continuum of safe and desirable housing and adequate income to support evolving recovery, healing, and wellness goals and timelines.
- 8. For providers: Promote caregiver involvement that fosters a balance between support and autonomy for youth.** Design programs that promote caregiver involvement while recognizing and supporting youth who prefer to pursue recovery and healing independently. Be alert to changes in youth’s needs and goals regarding caregiver involvement across time and place.
- 9. For health systems change: Provide programs for caregivers to pursue learning about youth substance use, treatment, and recovery independently.** This is particularly important when caregiver and youth needs, priorities, and desires are not aligned.
- 10. For health systems change: Create new and scale up existing caregiver support programs.** Develop comprehensive support programs characterized by flexible hours and outreach approaches to address the emotional, social, and material challenges and regular emergencies faced by caregivers.
- 11. For health systems change: Expand family liaison services and caregiver peer supports.** Increase the availability of family liaison workers and caregiver peer supports to strengthen relationships with and between youth and caregivers.