

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF REFUGE RECOVERY

1. The group's health and well-being is of utmost importance. Personal recovery depends on connection with a healthy, safe, confidential and stable community.
2. Each group's core intention is to welcome and support those who are seeking recovery.
3. Groups are to be peer-led. For our groups to be healthy and successful, there must be a rotating leadership and democratic decision-making process. Group leaders do not act in the capacity of recognized Buddhist teachers but are trusted volunteers who serve the group for a designated period of time.
4. Refuge Recovery is an abstinence-based program. Trusted volunteers are expected to maintain abstinence from all recreational drugs, alcohol and process addictions.
5. Each group operates independently, except in matters affecting other groups or Refuge Recovery as a whole. Just as individuals endeavor to live in accordance with the Eightfold Path, so should each group adhere to these Guiding Principles to maintain group integrity.
6. There are no fees for Refuge Recovery membership. Each group is responsible for its own finances, relying on the generosity of its members.
7. Ethical conduct can and should be practiced on a group level. As a group, we refrain from violence, dishonesty, sexual misconduct and intoxication.
8. Our core principles are mindfulness, compassion, forgiveness and generosity. We commit to being open and accessible to all who seek refuge.

Current list of meetings in NYC  
<http://refugerecoverynyc.org/meetings/>

## WHAT IS REFUGE?

A refuge is a safe place, a place of protection — a place that we go to in times of need, a shelter. Drugs, alcohol, food, sex, money, or relationships with people have been a refuge for many of us. Before addiction, such refuges provide temporary feelings of comfort and safety. But at some point we crossed the line into addiction. And the substances or behaviors that were once a refuge inevitably became a dark and lonely repetitive cycle of searching for comfort as we wandered through an empty life.

Active addiction is a kind of hell. It is like being a hungry ghost, wandering through life in constant craving and suffering. Traditionally, Buddhists commit to the path of awakening by taking refuge in three things:

- Awakening (Buddha),
- Truth (Dharma), and
- Community (Sangha).

Practicing these principles and developing these skills will lead to a safe place, a true and reliable refuge, a place that is free from addiction, to a full recovery.

### NEW YORK CITY SANGHA (COMMUNITY)

Open to people of all backgrounds and respectful of all recovery paths, our meetings are appropriate for anyone in, or interested in, recovery from any forms of addictive behavior.

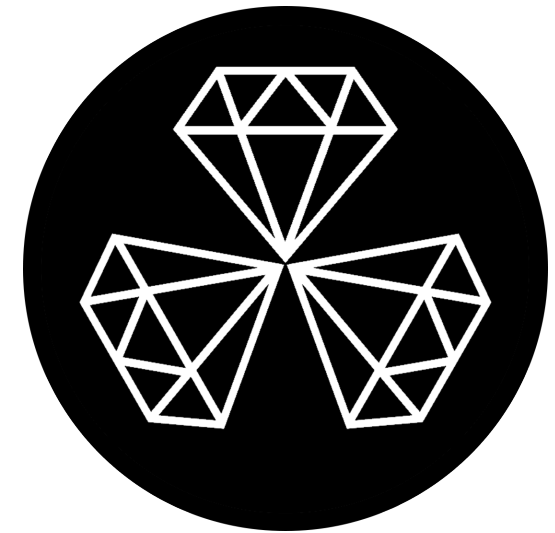
We are a self-supporting sangha committed to meeting the needs of current and new members. As we continue to grow, we are adding meetings throughout the week in multiple neighborhoods of the city.

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# REFUGE RECOVERY

A BUDDHIST PATH TO RECOVERING FROM ADDICTION

Refuge Recovery is a community of people who are using the practices of mindfulness, compassion, forgiveness, and generosity to heal the pain and suffering that addiction has caused in our lives and in the lives of our loved ones. The path of practice that we follow is called the Four Truths of Refuge Recovery.

The Four Truths of Refuge Recovery are a Buddhist-oriented path to recovery from addictions. They have proven successful with addicts who have committed to the Buddhist path of meditation, generosity, kindness, and renunciation.

This is an approach to recovery that understands that "All beings have the power and potential to free themselves from suffering." We feel confident in the power of the Buddha's teachings, if applied, to relieve suffering of all kinds, including the suffering of addiction.

## WHAT IS BUDDHISM?

Buddhism is a practical and applicable humanist psychology that teaches us that we all have the power to relieve suffering through our own efforts. The core teachings of Buddhism are the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path, in which the practices of mindfulness and compassion play key roles.

## WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

Mindfulness is defined as present-time, nonjudgmental, investigative, kind and responsive awareness. To be mindful of the present-time experience of our thoughts, intentions, and actions, we must continually train and redirect our attention to the here and now. Mindfulness teaches us to see clearly and respond wisely.

The Four Foundations of Mindfulness

1. Mindfulness of body/breath
2. Mindfulness of feeling tone
3. Mindfulness of mind states
4. Mindfulness of mind objects/truth

## WHAT IS COMPASSION?

Compassion is a quality of the heart that enables us to care about pain and suffering. As we train in compassion practices, we gain the ability to choose how we respond to pain. We aspire to meet all experience with a kind and friendly attitude.

We learn to meet our pain and suffering with compassion and forgiveness.

We begin to meet happiness and pleasure with non-attached appreciation. We come to hold all our experiences with equanimity, acknowledging that our happiness and freedom is dependent on our actions, not on our wishes.

## FOUR HEART PRACTICES

1. Kindness
2. Compassion/Forgiveness
3. Appreciation
4. Equanimity

# PROCESS: THE FOUR TRUTHS OF REFUGE RECOVERY

## 1. ADDICTION CREATES SUFFERING

“We take stock of all the suffering we have experienced and caused as addicts”

## 2. THE CAUSE OF ADDICTION IS REPETITIVE CRAVING

“We investigate the causes and conditions that lead to addiction and begin the process of letting go”

## 3. RECOVERY IS POSSIBLE

“We come to understand that recovery is possible and take refuge in the path that leads to the end of addiction”

## 4. THE PATH TO RECOVERY IS AVAILABLE

“We engage in the process of the Eightfold Path that leads to recovery”

# THE EIGHT-FOLD PATH TO RECOVERY

This is an abstinence based path and philosophy. We believe that the recovery process begins when abstinence begins. The Eight factors of the path are to be developed, experienced and sustained. This is not a linear path, it does not have to be taken in order, rather all of the factors will need to be developed and applied simultaneously. This is a guide to having a life that is free from addiction. The eight-fold path of recovery will have to be maintained throughout ones lifetime.

**1. Understanding:** We understand that recovery begins when we renounce and abstain from all substances or addictive behaviors regardless of specific substances we have become addicted to.

**2. Intention:** We begin to move towards a lifestyle that is rooted in non-harming by establishing clear intentions and work to change our relationship towards the minds unwholesome tendencies and habits.

**3. Communication/Community:** We take refuge in the community as a place to practice wise and skillful communication and to support others on their path.

**4. Action:** We abstain from all substances and behaviors that could lead to suffering.

**5. Livelihood/Service:** We begin to look at our relationship to money. We try to be of service to others whenever possible, being generous with our time, energy, attention and resources to help create positive change.

**6. Effort:** We commit to the daily disciplined practices of meditation, yoga, exercise, wise actions, kindness, forgiveness, generosity, compassion, appreciation and moment-to-moment mindfulness of feelings, emotions, thoughts and sensations.

**7. Mindfulness/Meditations:** We develop wisdom and understanding through practicing formal mindfulness meditation.

**8. Concentration/Meditations:** We develop the capacity to focus the mind on a single object, such as the breath or a phrase, training the mind through the practices of loving-kindness, compassion and forgiveness to focus on the positive qualities we seek to uncover and we utilize concentration at times of temptation or craving in order to abstain from acting unwisely.

Extracted from the Refuge Recovery book written by Noah Levine. Check out [RefugeRecovery.org](http://RefugeRecovery.org) for more info.

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