

Behavioral Health

Toolkit for Primary Care Providers



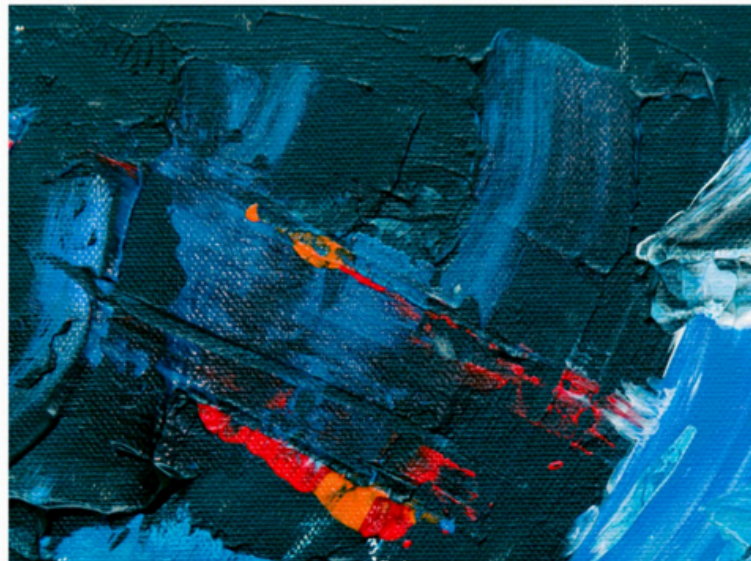
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Introduction

The contents presented in this toolkit reflect the guidelines established by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The tools and resources made available support and provide guidance to behavioral health care team members in navigating the topic of depression remission in a Community Health Center setting.

[**SAMHSA's Quality Measures for Behavioral Health Clinics \(February 2024\)**](#)



Quality Measures for Behavioral Health Clinics

Technical Specifications and Resource Manual

February 2024

Key Aspects of Remission

SAMHSA's Key Aspects of Depression Remission

Depression Remission refers to a significant reduction or absence of depressive symptoms for a period of time. It signifies that an individual with depression has improved to the point where they are either asymptomatic or have minimal symptoms. This is often considered the primary goal of depression treatment: a return to normal daily functioning.

Key Aspects Include:

- Definition
- Duration
- Symptom Severity
- Functional Improvement
- Distinction from Recovery
- Importance of Achieving Recovery

Factors Impacting Remission:

- Treatment Type
- Early Intervention
- Treatment Adherence
- Individual Factors

SAMHSA's National Guidelines for Behavioral Health Coordinated System of Criss Care - 2025



Key Aspects of Remission

SAMHSA Definition for Depression

SAMHSA defines depression as a serious mental illness characterized by persistent feelings of sadness, loss of interest in activities, and other symptoms that interfere with daily life.

SAMHSA Definition of Depression

Other Resources - Depression:

[Depression Treatment: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

[National Institute of Mental Health: Depression](#)

[Mayo Clinic: Depression \(Major Depressive Disorder\)](#)

[Mental Health America \(MHA\) - Depression](#)

[American Academy of Family Physicians - Management of Major Depression Guidelines from the VA/DoD](#) - Practice Guidelines

[Anxiety and Depression Association of America \(ADAA\) - Clinical Practice Review for Major Depression Disorder](#)

[NICE - Depression in Adults: Treatment and Management](#)

SAMHSA Definition for Remission

Remission in depression, as defined by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, as achieving a symptom-free state and returning to normal functioning.

Specifically, SAMHSA uses the definition of full remission in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5), which states that the absence of significant symptoms characterizes complete remission for at least two months.

[Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders \(DSM-5-TR\)](#)

Other Resources - Remission:

[National Institute - Remission in Major Depression - Geriatric Primary Care Population](#)

Key Aspects of Remission

Duration

One of SAMHSA's depression remission quality measures is the duration of the remission or the timeframe. Remission is assessed at six months and twelve months.

SAMHSA's BHC Clarifications to Guidance About Quality Measures & Reporting

Clinic-Collected Required Measures: Screening for Depression & Follow-up Plan - Depression Remission at Six Months (Slide Deck - November 2023)

Quality ID #370 (NQF 0710): Depression Remission at Twelve Months

Quality ID #411 (NQF 0711): Depression Remission at Six Months

Other Resources - Duration Measurement:

Children's Depression Inventory (CDI 2) - second edition

Beck Depression Inventory (BDI)

Kutcher Adolescent Depression Scale (KADS)

Hamilton Depression Rating Scale (HAM-D)

Symptom Severity

The tools that SAMHSA utilizes to assess for depression and monitor treatment response are the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9) and the PHQ-9M (Modified for Teens). A score below a certain threshold, such as a PHQ-9 score less than 5, may indicate remission.

Patient Health Questionnaire-9

Patient Health Questionnaire-9 Modified for Teens

Other Measurement Considerations:

- Clinical Judgement
- Multiple Assessment Approach
- Screening and Monitoring

Key Aspects of Remission

Other Resources - Severity:

[**NCQA Depression Remission or Response for Adolescents and Adults**](#)

[**Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale \(C-SSRS\)**](#)

[**Addiction Severity Index \(ASI\): Using the ASI Assessment**](#)

Functional Improvement

Apart from symptom reduction, remission can also include a return to normal daily functioning and the ability to cope with stress.

[**SAMHSA's Evidence-Based Practices Resources Center**](#)

[**SAMHSA's Strategic Plan 2023-2026**](#)

Residual Symptoms Considerations:

- Tapering Antidepressants
- Personalized Approach
- Relapse Risk

Other Resources - Functional Improvement:

[**NIH National Library of Medicine - Managing Depression in Primary Care: Achieving Remission**](#)

Distinction from Recovery

SAMHSA considers remission to be the absence of symptoms, whereas its definition of recovery encompasses a broader concept, including positive change and overall well-being. Recovery also includes SAMHSA's four dimensions of supporting recovery: Health, Home, Purpose & Community

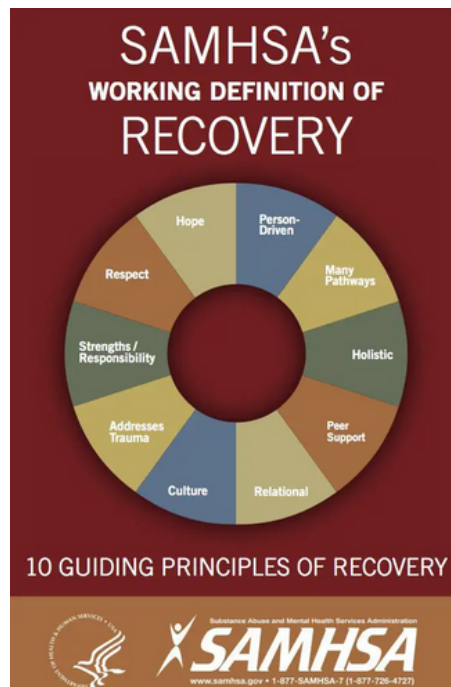
Remission Includes:

- Cessation of meeting diagnostic criteria
- Absence of symptoms
- Can be a temporary or sustained state of not meeting the diagnostic criteria

Key Aspects of Remission

Recovery Includes:

- Considered a process of change
- Holistic and includes the individual's overall well-being
- An active process focused on positive changes and maintaining a lifestyle of sustaining well-being



[SAMHSA's Working Definition of Recovery](#)

Types of Treatments:

- Psychotherapy
- Medication
- Brain Stimulation Therapies
- Self-Care (Exercise, Healthy Eating, Stress Management, Sufficient Sleep)
- Alternative Treatments (Acupuncture, Yoga, Herbal Remedies)
- Support Systems (Groups, Family Therapy)

Other Resources - Recovery:

[AIMS Collaborative Care Model](#)

[SAMHSA's Recovery Innovation Challenge](#)

[SAMHSA's National Recovery Month Toolkit](#)

Key Aspects of Remission

Other Resources - Recovery:

[SAMHSA's Gallery of Hope](#)

[SAMHSA's Digital Toolkits Library](#)



Signs and Symptoms

Depression symptoms vary from person to person, and anyone who has questions about symptoms and signs should consult a doctor:

- Continued feelings of sadness, hopelessness, pessimism, emptiness
- Fatigue, lack of energy
- Insomnia or other sleep issues, such as waking up very early or sleeping too much
- Anxiety, irritability, restlessness
- Feeling worthless or guilty
- Lack of interest or joy in hobbies and activities
- Changes in appetite, leading to weight loss or weight gain
- Moving, talking, or thinking more slowly or feeling extra fidgety
- Forgetfulness
- Trouble concentrating, thinking clearly, or making decisions
- Thoughts of not wanting to live, death or suicide, suicide attempts, or self-harm behaviors

Treatment and Help

In addition to clinical treatments, if you are one of the millions of people living with depression, there are also healthy lifestyle habits that can help you feel better:

- Focus on self-care.
- Set small, achievable goals.
- Know the warning signs.
- Educate family and friends about major depression.
- Seek support.
- Stick to your treatment plan.

samhsa.gov/mental-health/depression

If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available. Call or text 988 or chat 988lifeline.org. To learn how to get support for mental health, drug, and alcohol issues, visit FindSupport.gov. **SAMHSA**

Importance of Achieving Recovery

According to SAMHSA, achieving remission is a crucial step in the treatment of depression because it is associated with lower rates of relapse and improved long-term outcomes.

Elements of Recovery Importance:

- Individualized Care
- Empowerment
- Hope and Resilience
- Community and Connection

[SAMHSA's Grants for Recovery and Recovery Support](#)

Additional Resources

Additional Resources - General:

[Center of Excellence for Integrated Health Solutions](#)

[Provider Clinical Support System \(PCSS\)](#)

[SAMHSA's Gains Center](#)

[SAMHSA's Disaster Technical Assistance Center \(DTAC\)](#)

[SAMHSA's Technical Assistance & Training Directory](#)

[FindTreatment.gov](#)

[FindSupport.gov](#)

[SAMHSA's Harm Reduction](#)

Additional Resources - Providers & Care Team Members:

[SAMHSA's Provider Resources](#)

[National Network of Depression Clinics](#)

[American Association of Nurse Practitioners](#)

[Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality \(AHRQ\)](#)

[myCME](#)

[Agency for Care Effectiveness \(ACE\)](#)



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