

9 party survival tips – when you (or guests) are in recovery



The compassionate party host recognizes that some family members and friends may be in recovery. With an estimated 22 million Americans in recovery from addiction, chances are one or more of your guests may be in recovery from behavioral health issues.

Jaime Vinck, Group CEO of the Sierra Tucson Group, offers these guidelines for planning a recovery-friendly party:

- **Adopt new traditions:** Did your past parties revolve around the vodka-infused punch bowl or a drinking game? Consider replacing those alcohol-focused traditions with new ones — from board games to improvised singing.
- **Offer an alternative to wine or champagne:** There's never been more choices of sparkling waters, exotic juices, teas and other non-alcoholic beverages to delight your guests. Be sure to clearly label those beverages that do contain alcohol. Time for a toast? Be a role model and toast with sparkling water.
- **Know the foods that have hidden alcohol:** Even a trace of alcohol can trigger cravings. If your guests promise to bring over a specialty that traditionally includes liquor, encourage them to substitute other ingredients so everyone can enjoy their treats.
- **Facing realities with friends and family:** No one wants to face something unpleasant; but it's better to let your loved one know how much you care if they're struggling with sobriety. Be open to discussing the realities of life: joy, as well as depression, anxiety, stress, loss or addiction. And be prepared to talk about treatment and recovery if your friend or loved one wishes to. Your support during this time can make a huge difference.
- **Welcome a furry friend:** Let your cat or dog enjoy the party. A few minutes of pet-friendly playtime with an animal companion can keep an anxious guest in the moment and, without alcohol, ease their stress.
- **Arriving early, leaving early:** If you know that someone coming to your party is struggling with recovery from alcohol or other drugs, encourage them to arrive early — so, if they need to, they can leave early, before any late-night imbibing.
- **Offer an escape plan:** Encourage everyone to come to your party in their own vehicle. That way, no one feels trapped and anyone can leave immediately if they feel uncomfortable. Then, don't make a big deal out of their slipping out of the party.
- **Take a break from social media:** Encourage your family and friends to take a hiatus from social media. When on Facebook, Twitter, etc., we tend to compare our lives to the appearance of others — an illusion that can feed depression and encourage party-goers to slip into old coping mechanisms, such as drinking or abusing drugs.
- **Helping others lifts your spirits:** Serving others is a beautiful way to alleviate seasonal depression and focus your and your guests' minds on gratitude. Explore ways to join family and friends in volunteering to feed those in need or assist at a domestic violence shelter.

To download 70 free articles about dealing with anxiety, stress, depression, addiction and more, visit Sierra Tucson's Resources Page: <https://www.sierratucson.com/about/news-media/>.

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www.sierratucson.com.