

How to Take Hold of Serenity

MCC Medical Patient Education Module

Finding Peace in Addiction Recovery

Most people will experience life as being full of ups and downs. They may have periods where things are going good, but this will tend to be followed by harder times. Even during the best of days the average person will still have fears that niggle at them. They never quite manage to experience complete peace. There are other people who have managed to reach an emotional state known as serenity. Such individuals feel at peace most of the time. Life may continue to be full of ups and downs, but they no longer feel the bumps quite so hard. It is a highly desirable goal for people recovering from addiction to reach this state of equanimity. This is the state they once dreamed of achieving when they first turned to substance abuse.

Serenity Defined

Serenity can be defined as a feeling of being calm and tranquil. When people feel serene they are untroubled by the normal daily niggles that make life uncomfortable. They feel free of worry and are confident in their ability to face any challenges that will come their way. To be serene does not mean that the individual will be bursting with joy; it just means that they are at peace with themselves. This is a desirable mental state to experience. It is the goal of most humans to achieve such inner peace. Some people will experience episodic period of serenity, but there are other individuals who manage to feel this way most of the time.

The Difference between Serenity and Sobriety

The words serenity and sobriety are often used interchangeably, but there is a difference between the two. It can be helpful to think of sobriety as the path and serenity as the final goal. It is not possible for people in recovery to achieve serenity without sobriety. This is also more to it than just being sober. Sobriety means that the individual is doing all the right things to achieve good mental health. In most instances the individual will need to put plenty of time and effort into their sobriety before they achieve serenity – it can take decades. They will likely get glimpses of the final goal long before they arrive.

Serenity and Equanimity

Serenity always involves a high degree of equanimity. This is an emotional state where the individual is fully accepting of what is going on at that moment. When people experience equanimity they are able to keep their composure no matter what is happening externally. If life does become rough they are able to manage things calmly and without experiencing a too much suffering. This does not mean that the individual no longer feels anything; it just means that the individual is no longer a slave to their emotions.