

# Your journey into recovery



## This brochure is intended for people who have opioid dependence.

The information in this brochure is not medical advice. Always consult a healthcare professional to discuss appropriate treatment options and support based on your circumstances.

## What is opioid dependence?

If you have an opioid dependence, you are not alone. There are around 1.3 million high-risk opioid users in the EU and UK, of which only around half are in treatment.<sup>1-4</sup>



**Opioids include** heroin, opium, nitazenes, and prescription medications such as buprenorphine, codeine, fentanyl, methadone, morphine, oxycodone, pethidine, and tramadol.

## Opioids are highly addictive



**Opioid dependence** is a chronic, relapsing brain disease that involves both a physical and a psychological need for opioids.<sup>5-9</sup>



**Opioids alter** how the brain works, hijacking the motivation and rewards processes – this increases the risk of dependence and makes it very hard to quit.<sup>10</sup>



**Even as you've embarked** on your journey towards recovery, navigating life with opioid dependence can present challenges. You may encounter temptations and triggers at various points throughout your day.<sup>5,11</sup>



**While medications** aim to help you cope with the physical aspects of opioid dependence (cravings and withdrawal symptoms), counselling and psychosocial support services can help you deal with underlying issues that have the potential to cause a relapse and a return to illicit opioid use.<sup>12-14</sup>



**This brochure** is designed to help you along your personal journey into recovery.

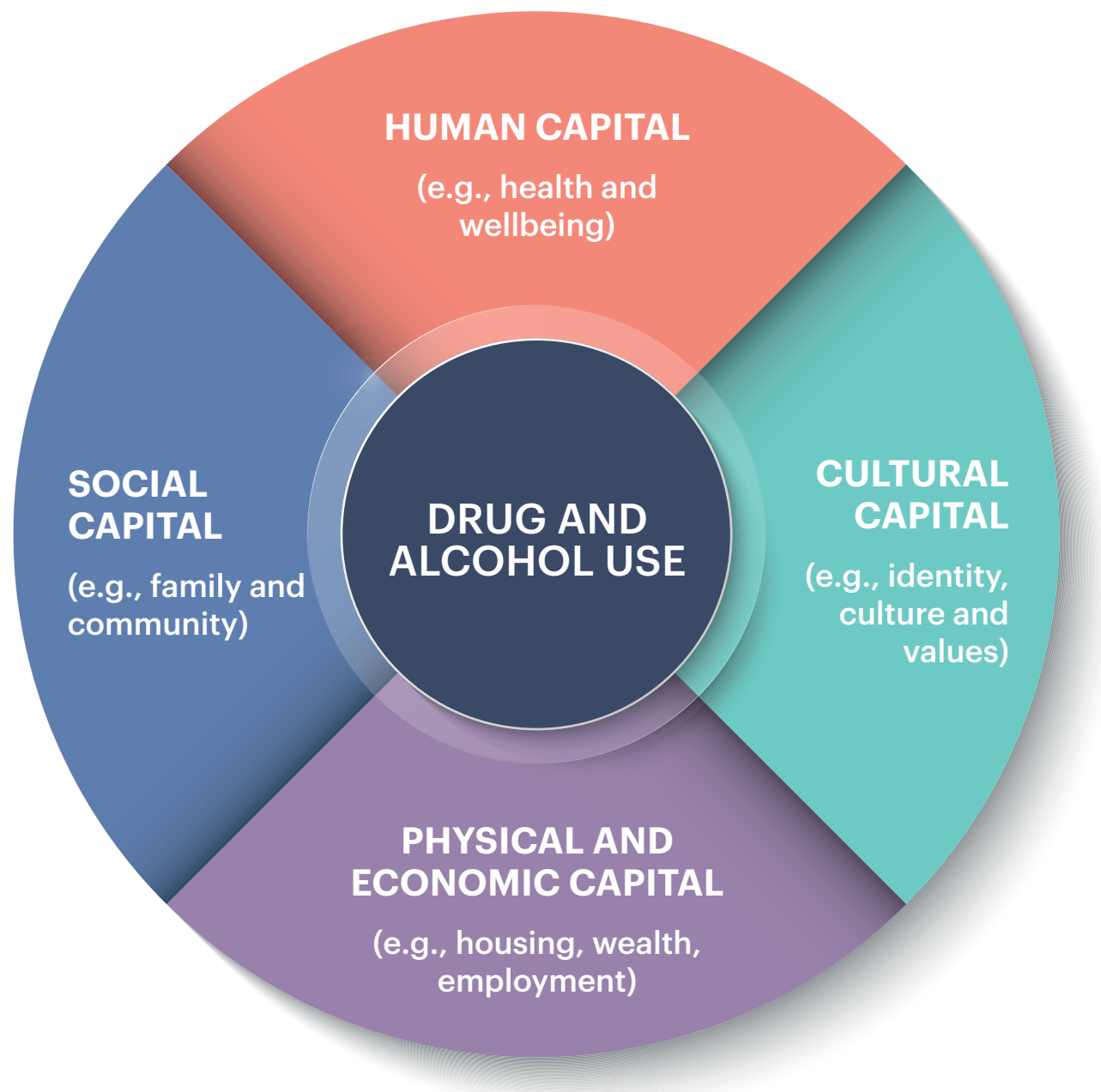


# Your journey into recovery

The term 'recovery' has many and diverse meanings, but all involve improvements in quality of life.

Recovery can be viewed as a process of controlling substance use and working towards positive outcomes in other domains of recovery capital shown below.<sup>15</sup>

## Domains of recovery capital<sup>15</sup>



Recovering from opioid dependence is a journey. Whether you're just initiating your opioid dependence treatment journey (either after a relapse or for the first time) or you've been on the path to recovery for a while, breaking it down into a series of manageable steps could help visualise the road ahead.

1

## Set an achievable treatment goal

- Such as decreasing illicit opioid use or controlling and managing your craving and withdrawal symptoms.

Getting the right medication and the right dose for you to treat opioid dependence is important in order to control withdrawal and cravings. Discuss with your doctor or nurse which medication would best meet your treatment needs and goals.

2

## Have an action plan

- Identify your high-risk situations, triggers or life stressors.
- Develop a plan, perhaps together with your counsellor, to see what you can do to prevent relapse.

\*Availability of medical treatment options may vary between countries

3

## Find new ways to occupy yourself

- Regardless of whether you will be receiving your medical treatment daily, weekly, monthly or every 6 months\*, you'll need to find new routines to fill your day and mind. Consider:
  - Taking up healthy habits
  - Leaning into a supportive network.

4

## Stay on the path

- Enjoy your recovery and take advantage of new opportunities presented by your network, job, education and community.

**On the following pages** you'll be introduced to the 'wheel of life' tool – this can help you discover and understand your situation today, as well as where you want to go in your recovery.

# Create your wheel of life

To the right is a table showing eleven different areas of life. Think about these statements in relation to your life and give each of them a rating between one (worst) and ten (best) based on how well they apply to you. Circle that number on the line below each statement.

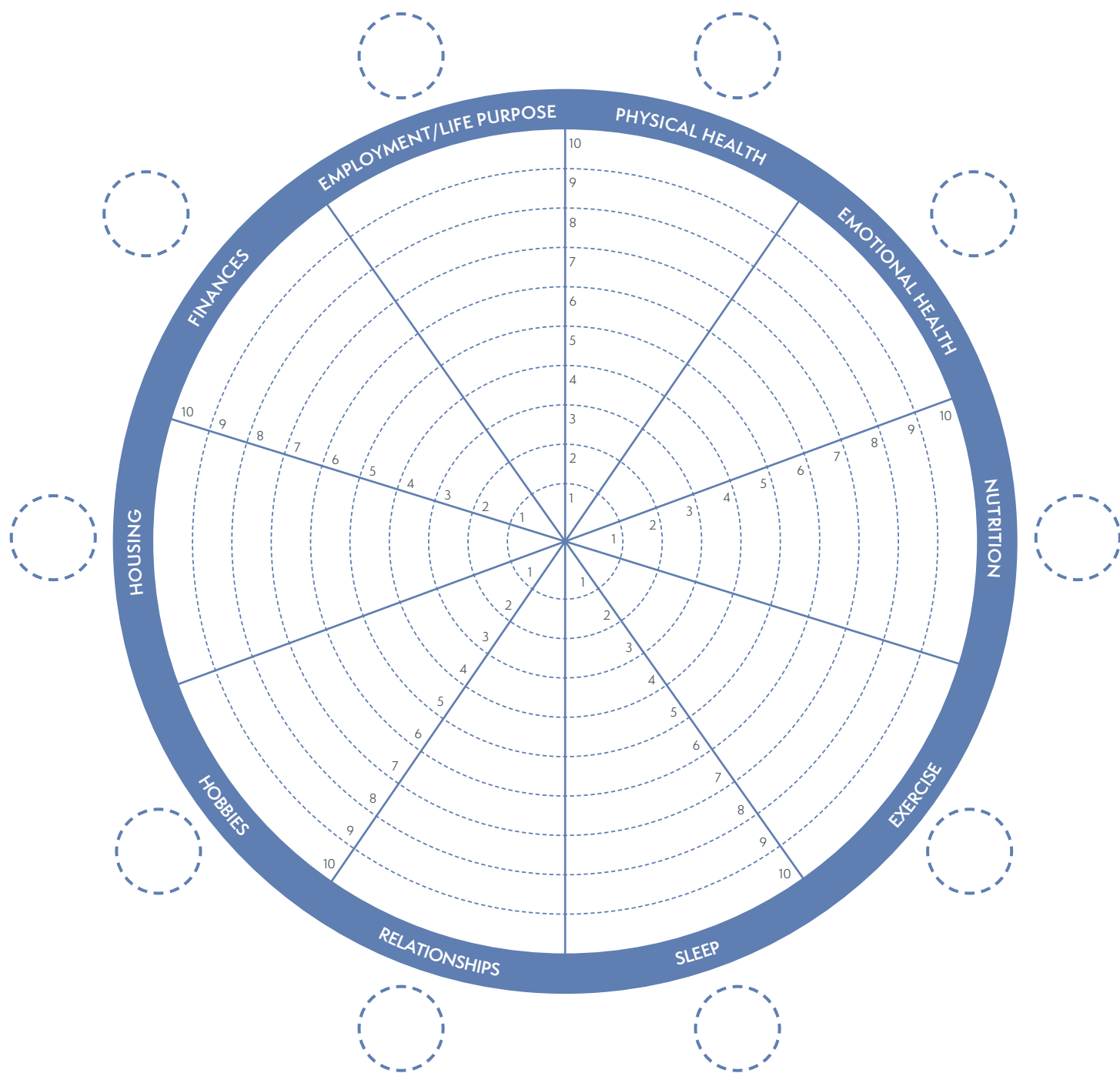
AREA OF LIFE	STATEMENT
Physical health	I feel well in my body and can move freely
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Emotional health	I am happy with my own thoughts and feelings, and I am able to cope with life events
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Nutrition	I eat a well-balanced diet with plenty of fruit and vegetables
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Exercise	I am active for 30 minutes per day or more
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Sleep	I achieve at least six hours of sleep per night and feel well rested in the morning
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Relationships	I have a good network of friends and/or family who I can rely on and talk to about my concerns
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Hobbies	I fill my time by doing things I am passionate about
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Housing	I have a safe and comfortable place to live
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Finances	I have no money concerns
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Employment	I am satisfied with my employment
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Life purpose/spirituality	I have a sense of meaning and purpose in my life
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	



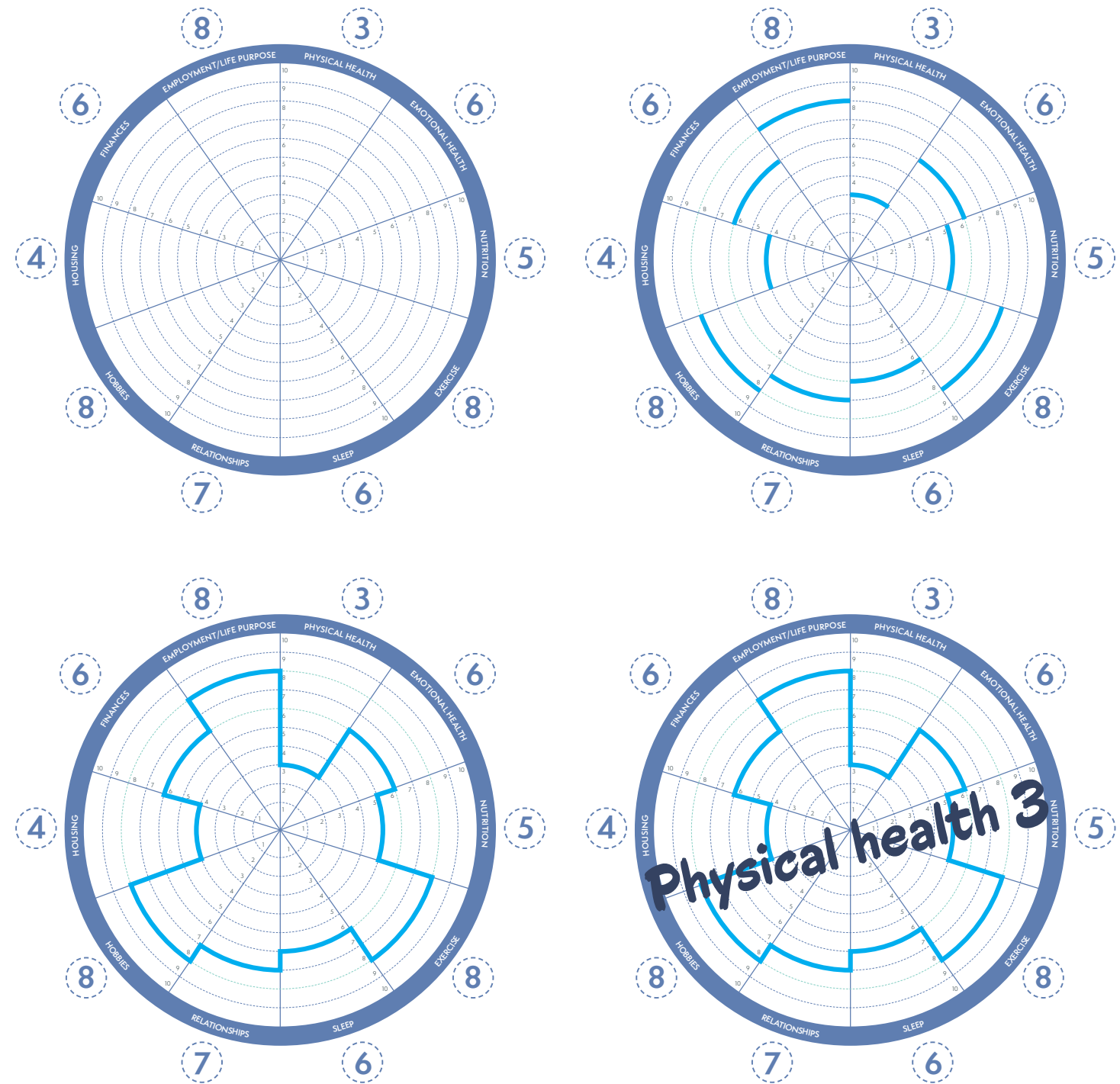
When you have rated each statement, you can create a visual representation of your current 'wheel of life' together with your counsellor. Below is a wheel split into ten segments. Each segment represents an area of life you have just rated.

Use a pen to draw an arc in each segment that corresponds to the number you've given to that area.

Next, connect those arcs along the straight lines. Please see the example on the next page.



## Wheel of life example



# Working with the wheel of life

Now you have established the aspects of your life where you feel less positive.

Together with your counsellor, you can work on those areas and identify the support you need to get your life back on track.

Choose which area you would like to focus on – the area where making a change would bring you the greatest amount of fulfilment.

Once you’ve chosen the area you want to focus on, take some time to think about what it’s like right now, and how you would like it to change. Choose an action to commit to that will bring you more fulfilment in this area.

AREA OF LIFE

RATING TODAY

What is important to you?

What could you do to improve this area?

What small step are you going to take to make this happen?

# Staying in recovery

**Maintaining your recovery entails creating a supportive community and choosing to prioritise your health and wellbeing.**

Acknowledging that you're not alone in your journey is a pivotal aspect of recovery. Yet, many fail to realise the extent of support available from those around them.

Building relationships can help you create a strong and diverse support system. Begin by considering the individuals already present in your life who can help you, and expand from there.



## **Recognise the positive, supportive individuals in your life**

A robust support network can assist in maintaining your focus on the journey to recovery.



## **Connect with peers (virtually or in person)**

Reach out to your local patient support groups.



## **Use available tools and resources**

[Opioiddependenceandme.com](https://opioiddependenceandme.com)



## **Talk to your doctor**

Consult with your doctor or nurse about treatment options individualised to your needs, and how these can aid you in your journey towards recovery.



## Notes

[illegible]

## References

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