The Addiction Policy Forum Patient Journey Map represents a common set of moments that individuals in treatment and recovery from a substance use disorder experience. This map does not represent what happens to every individual, but rather highlights key points in an individual’s journey toward recovery. Questions from patients are evaluated to illustrate the salience of the events. Common threads and insights are also provided, which guide practical steps and tasks to lead to the improvement of care and patient experience.

### Onset & Progression

#### Average Age of Onset of Substance Use

- 14 years old

#### Average Age of Initiation of Substance Use

- 17% of patients have experienced an overdose, suicide attempt/self-harm, and car crash

#### Average Age of Initiation of Substance Use

- SUD, most commonly for injuries, infections, and neglect.

#### Average Age of Initiation of Substance Use

- Over 83% experienced household dysfunction, 90% experienced adverse childhood events

### Trigger Events

- **Pain**
- **Trigger Events**
- **Change**
- **Relief**

- **Trigger Events**
- **Health**
- **Pressure from Loved Ones**

- **Trigger Events**
- **Social**
- **Drugs**

- **Trigger Events**
- **Mental Health**
- **Change**

- **Trigger Events**
- **Relief**
- **Pressure**

- **Trigger Events**
- **Treatment**
- **Support**

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### Lifestyle Changes

- **Healthcare: Medications**, **Alcohol Use**, **Healthcare: Exercise**, **Nutrition**, **Sleep**

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### Ongoing Support

- **Support Groups**
- **Volunteering & Community**
- **Mental Health/Counseling**

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### Problems Caused by SUD

- **Mental Health**
- **Physical Health**
- **Work/School**
- **Legal/Financial**
- **Social/Relational**

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#### Insights

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The scoring of the map is often identified by previous patients as an extremely valuable tool to help them understand their own unique experiences, along with misperceptions from family and friends. It highlights the importance of being honest with oneself and provides hope to those who are currently in treatment.

Understanding both the ups and downs during the treatment process is crucial for patients to become engaged and interested in the continuation of treatment. It is important for patients to know that this is a long-term process and that they should be prepared to deal with new stresses and challenges.

Patients share that the things mentioned every day play a crucial role in supporting their journey. The personal stories and real-life examples of others provide motivation and encouragement. Patients find comfort in knowing that they are not alone in their struggles and that others have gone through similar experiences.

The Patient Journey Map is a helpful tool for patients, caregivers, and healthcare providers to understand the complexities of addiction and recovery. It highlights the importance of support, resilience, and self-discovery in the journey to recovery.

The map is divided into several sections, each representing a different stage of the journey. These sections are:

1. **Onset & Progression**
2. **Get Help**
3. **Obtain Help**
4. **Treatment & Recovery**
5. **Lifestyle Changes**
6. **Ongoing Support**

Each section contains specific events and experiences that patients typically encounter during their journey, helping to provide a comprehensive understanding of the process.