



Becoming Whole Again: A Recovery Guide for Moms

Gentle Guidance for your journey to Healing and Hope



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hi, I'm **Brescia Bianco-Badenhorst**.

I am a mom in recovery.

I know firsthand the battles, the guilt, the shame, and the overwhelming love that keeps us fighting for better days.

My journey through addiction was not a straight line, and neither is my recovery — it's a daily commitment to healing, for myself and for my family.

For years, I wrestled with the feeling that I wasn't "enough" — not as a woman, not as a mother, not as a human being. Recovery taught me that worthiness is not something we earn once we are "fixed." It's something we reclaim by standing up every day and choosing life.

Today, I have the honour of being a brand ambassador for **Elim Clinic Rehabilitation Centre**, a place that believes deeply in second chances and true healing. My connection to Elim is personal and powerful — it's a relationship built on trust, mutual respect, and a shared passion to reach those still trapped in addiction.

Together, we work to break the stigma and offer real, practical hope to those who need it most.

This eBook was born from a simple, powerful idea: no mother should have to navigate recovery alone. These ten tips come from my heart to yours, shaped by my own path and the countless courageous women I've met along the way.

If you are reading this, know this much: you are not broken beyond repair. You are not alone. And you are stronger than you think.



“RECOVERY IS NOT ABOUT BECOMING SOMEONE NEW. IT'S ABOUT REMEMBERING WHO YOU WERE BEFORE THE WORLD TOLD YOU DIFFERENTLY.”

Motherhood, addiction, and recovery are each life-changing journeys on their own. Mix them together, and it can feel like you're juggling chaos while walking a tightrope. I've lived it. I'm a mom who found sobriety before motherhood, and even then, combining the two was still a major learning curve. That's why I'm sharing my ten biggest tips to help other moms in recovery.

These are the things I wish someone had told me.

Tip 1: Prioritise Yourself — Without Guilt

Being a mom and being in recovery are both full-time jobs — and when you're doing both, it can feel like you're barely holding it together. I know. I've been there.

I was already sober when I became a mom, and still, it shook my world in a way I didn't expect. The biggest lesson I've learned? If I don't look after myself, everything else starts to fall apart.

Self-care isn't selfish. It's survival. It's those small daily choices — taking a breath, drinking water, asking for five minutes of quiet — that help us stay steady.

You're not just a mom. You're a woman healing, and you deserve care too. You matter just as much as your children. And when you show them what it looks like to care for yourself, you teach them to do the same.

Tip 2: Choose Honesty Over Hiding

Addiction taught me how to lie — to others and to myself. I lied to protect the addiction, to avoid judgment, and sometimes just to survive the shame.

Recovery taught me that healing starts when you tell the truth, even when your voice shakes.

Being honest isn't always easy, but it's lighter. It's real. And it's how we stop hiding and start living fully.

Say what you feel. Own your truth. That's how trust grows — with yourself and with the people who matter.

When we live in truth, we create space for peace and authentic connection, and we give others permission to do the same.

Tip 3: Boundaries Are Your Superpower

Before recovery, I was a yes-person. Yes, even when it broke me. Yes, even when it left me drained.

But here's what I've come to understand: boundaries don't push people away — they protect your peace.

Saying no isn't cruel. It's kind — to yourself. And guess what? You don't owe anyone access to your time, your energy, or your healing if they can't respect it.

Boundaries remind you and others that your recovery is sacred. The more you practice, the easier it gets.

Start small and hold your ground. It's a skill, and you'll get stronger at it with time.

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*"Recovery didn't just give me my life back.
It gave my children their mother back."*

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Tip 4: Cut the Noise That Keeps You Stuck

Sobriety changed my circle.

Not everyone who walked with me in chaos could walk with me in clarity. Some people just didn't get it. Some didn't want me to change.

Letting go of relationships that pull you backward isn't heartless — it's necessary.

Choose people who respect your growth. Choose peace over drama. If they don't support your recovery, they don't get a front-row seat in your life.

It's okay to grieve those losses, but it's more important to protect your peace.

The people meant for your healing will never ask you to compromise it.

Tip 5: Learn to Live Without the Numb

When I was using, alcohol and substances were my answer for everything — stress, loneliness, celebration, boredom. Take it away, and suddenly, I had to learn how to actually *feel* things again.

Recovery gave me tools: journaling, deep breathing, honest conversations. Not instant fixes, but real ways to cope. And now, I get to pass those tools down to my kids.

I'm not just surviving anymore — I'm growing, learning, and living for real. It's not always easy, but it is always worth it.

The more I face my feelings, the more I realise they're not here to destroy me — they're here to guide me.

Tip 6: Speak Up — Your Voice Matters

Silence kept me sick. I bottled up my emotions because I didn't know how to express them — and I was terrified of being misunderstood.

But silence becomes pressure, and pressure always finds a release.

Speaking up — even clumsily — is strength. Whether it's asking for help or saying how you feel, your voice has power.

Say the hard thing. Ask the scary question. You're allowed to be heard. And you deserve to be understood.

Communication is a muscle. Keep using it. And remember: the people who love you want to hear you.

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"You are allowed to be a masterpiece and a work in progress at the same time."

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Tip 7: Dig Deeper Than the Surface

Addiction isn't the problem. It's the response to a deeper pain.

For me, it was old wounds I never spoke about, anxiety I didn't understand, and shame I carried like armour.

Recovery showed me that if I wanted freedom, I had to face the roots — the real stuff underneath. It was messy and painful, but worth every tear.

You can't heal what you won't face. But when you do, real freedom begins.

Therapy, journaling, even just sitting with hard truths — that's where real growth lives. Go there. It's scary at first, but it leads to the deepest healing.

Tip 8: It Won't Always Feel This Heavy

In early recovery, everything felt like too much. Too loud, too hard, too emotional.

I questioned whether I could keep going. But I did. And you will too.

The hard moments pass. The fog clears. And one day, you'll look around and realise you're living a life you never thought you deserved — and loving it.

It does get better. Not perfect. But real. And real is beautiful.

Be gentle with yourself in the hard moments. You're not doing it wrong — you're just doing something that matters.

Tip 9: Don't Do This Alone

Asking for help doesn't make you weak — it makes you human.

I didn't get here by myself. Therapists, support groups, family support, friend support, treatment teams and **Elim Rehabilitation Centre** — they carried me when I couldn't stand.

You don't have to figure it all out on your own. There are people who care, who've walked this road, and who want to help you walk yours. Let them.

Open your heart just a little, and you'll see — connection is one of the strongest tools in recovery.

Community saves lives.

Tip 10: You're Worth the Work

I used to think I was too damaged, too far gone, too broken to get better.

But recovery whispered what addiction never did —
you are worth it.

You're not just a mom in recovery. You're a warrior rebuilding a life, healing generations, and becoming the woman your children deserve.

You matter. You're worthy of love, health, peace, and joy. Don't ever forget that.

And if you do forget, read this again until you believe it.

Because it's true.

Final Thoughts

Recovery is not a destination — it's a daily commitment to yourself and your family. Every day you choose healing over hurt, you rewrite your story and break generational chains. These ten tips are not rules; they are tools — reminders that you are stronger, braver, and more capable than you sometimes believe.

You are not alone on this road. You were never meant to be. Help, hope, and healing are always within reach. Keep showing up for yourself.

Keep choosing life.

About Elim Clinic

Elim Clinic Rehabilitation Centre is a registered treatment centre specialising in substance abuse, behavioural addictions, and related mental health challenges. For decades, Elim has stood as a beacon of hope for individuals and families battling addiction, offering professional, compassionate, and holistic care.

As a proud brand ambassador for Elim Clinic, it is my privilege to walk this journey alongside you, and to create resources like this one — grounded in lived experience and professional care — to support your recovery. Together, we believe that healing is possible for everyone.

lead the **PAST**
live the **PRESENT**
dream the **FUTURE**

