Recognising progress

Look beyond the number of days

Notice the everyday changes

Progress can include asking for help sooner, being more honest, keeping a commitment or pausing before reacting. Some changes are small enough to miss unless you look for them.

Compare with your own starting point

Example: a difficult conversation still feels uncomfortable, but this time you call someone instead of drinking. The discomfort is real, and so is the different choice. Another person's milestones do not set your pace.

Be honest about what is still difficult

Sleep, mood, confidence and relationships may not improve together or straight away. You do not need to report benefits you have not felt. Ongoing difficulties deserve attention and appropriate support.

Use progress to guide your next step

Write one example you feel proud of and one area where you need help. Recognising progress can sit alongside continued recovery work. Keep the supports that helped you get here.

Before you change your drinking

If you drink heavily or regularly, need alcohol to feel steady, or have had withdrawal before, speak with a doctor before stopping or sharply reducing. Alcohol withdrawal can be life-threatening. Shaking, sweating or feeling unwell after cutting down needs prompt medical advice. Call 000 for seizures, severe confusion or hallucinations.

Australia: Alcohol and Other Drug Hotline 1800 250 015 (free, confidential advice). Lifeline 13 11 14 (24/7 crisis support). Call 000 if there is immediate danger or a medical emergency.

Make it personal

Write a few words. You can leave questions blank or talk them through with someone.

One choice I make differently now...

A recent example of honesty or asking for help...

Something I have noticed in my everyday life...

What is still difficult, and support I need...

One next step and one achievement I want to acknowledge...

You do not have to do this alone.

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Safety and support sources: healthdirect.gov.au/alcoholism; adf.org.au/insights/safely-withdrawing-alcohol/; lifeline.org.au/131114; medicarementalhealth.gov.au/provider/national-alcohol-and-other-drug-hotline-16469. Checked 1 October 2026.