Guest Writing Guidelines

for Blog Contributors at Sober Speak

www.soberspeak.com

Welcome to the Sober Speak Community

Thank you for your interest in contributing to Sober Speak. Since 2017, our platform has served millions of people in addiction recovery, their families, and the broader recovery community through our podcast (3M+ downloads, top 1% globally) and our blog.

Your words can reach someone who needs them most. These guidelines will help you craft a submission that aligns with our editorial standards and serves our readers well.

Who You Are Writing For

Every sentence you write should serve one or more of these readers:

- People in addiction recovery at any stage, from early sobriety to long-term recovery •

Family members and loved ones affected by a family member's addiction

- Supporters, sponsors, and allies within the recovery community

Keep This in Mind

Our readers come to Sober Speak looking for hope, connection, and practical guidance. They are not looking for sales pitches, clinical jargon, or fear-based messaging. Write as if you are speaking to a friend who is finding their way in recovery.

Topics We Welcome

We publish content centered on recovery, sobriety, and the journey toward healthier living. Strong submissions typically explore one or more of these areas:

- Personal recovery stories and sobriety milestones
- Addiction treatment approaches and rehabilitation resources
- Mental health, dual diagnosis, and co-occurring conditions
- Family support, codependency, and intervention strategies
- Wellness in recovery (nutrition, fitness, mindfulness, sleep)

- 12-step program insights and related recovery frameworks

- Sober living tips, relapse prevention, and coping strategies
- Navigating relationships, employment, and daily life in sobriety

Topics and Content We Do Not Publish

The following types of content will be automatically rejected. Please review this list carefully before submitting.

Off-Limits Topics

- Gambling, casinos, sports betting, or any gaming-related content
- Adult content, dating services, or sexually explicit material
- CBD, THC, kratom, or other mind-altering substance promotion
- Alcohol moderation approaches (our audience pursues full sobriety)
- Legal services
- Content targeting healthcare administrators, clinicians, or insurance professionals rather than people in recovery

Promotional and Marketing Content

Sober Speak is an editorial publication, not a marketing platform. We do not accept blog posts that function as advertisements for treatment facilities, legal services, pharmaceutical products, or any other business. If your primary goal is to promote a product, service, or brand, your submission will be rejected.

This includes content that reads as a thinly veiled advertisement with a recovery angle added for appearance.

Language Standards: How We Talk About Addiction

Language matters. The words we choose shape how people in recovery see themselves and how the world sees them. Sober Speak follows strict language standards rooted in compassion and clinical accuracy.

Person-First Language Is Required

Always separate the person from the condition. Addiction is a medical condition, not a character flaw or an identity.

Addicts, junkies, drunks	People with addiction, people in recovery

Heavy drinkers, problem drinkers	People who drink heavily, people with alcohol use disorder
Substance abusers	People who use substances, people with substance use disorder

Clean or dirty (referring to drug tests)	Tested positive, tested negative, in remission
Alcoholic (as a noun)	Person with alcohol use disorder, person in recovery from alcohol addiction
Addict mom, addicted baby	Mother with substance use disorder, newborn with neonatal abstinence syndrome

Framing Addiction

Addiction should always be framed as a medical condition, never as a moral failing. Avoid language that assigns blame, shame, or judgment. Recovery is a journey, and your writing should reflect that with honesty and encouragement.

- Frame setbacks as part of the process, not as personal failures
- Emphasize hope, resilience, and the possibility of change
- Avoid fear-based messaging designed to scare readers into action

Formatting and Structure

Our blog is read primarily on mobile devices. Every formatting choice you make should support readability on a small screen.

Paragraph Length

Keep paragraphs to two or three sentences. Walls of text cause readers to disengage, especially on phones. When in doubt, break it up.

Headings

Use H2 and H3 headings to organize your article into clear, scannable sections. Headings should incorporate relevant keywords that reflect what the section covers. Think of headings as signposts that help readers find the information they need quickly.

Punctuation

Do not use em dashes (—) anywhere in your submission. This is a firm editorial rule across all Sober Speak content. Use commas, periods, colons, or restructured sentences instead.

Recovery is hard — but it's worth it.	Recovery is hard, but it's worth it.
She found three things — hope, community, and purpose.	She found three things: hope, community, and purpose.

Lists and Bullet Points

Use bullet points sparingly and only when presenting a genuine list of items. Do not structure your entire article as a series of bullet points. Prose is preferred.

Tone and Voice

Write in a warm, conversational tone. Imagine you are sitting across from someone at a coffee shop and sharing what you know. Avoid clinical jargon, academic stiffness, and overly formal phrasing. Be genuine and human.

Do not use excessive hedging language such as “it’s important to note that,” “it goes without saying,” or “needless to say.” Say the thing directly.

Article Length

Most published guest posts range from 1200 to 2,000 words. If your topic requires more depth, that is welcome, but every word should earn its place.

Link Policy

Each accepted guest post may include up to two (2) permanent links to your website. These links must meet the following requirements:

1. Links must point to genuinely helpful, recovery-relevant content or resources.
1. Links to legal service intake forms, gambling sites, CBD/THC product pages, or any unrelated commercial content will be removed or will result in rejection of the post.
2. Anchor text should be natural and relevant to the surrounding sentence.
3. Links to authoritative external sources (SAMHSA, NIDA, AA.org, peer-reviewed research) are encouraged and do not count toward your two-link limit.

What Makes a Good Link?

A strong link adds value for the reader. It points to a resource, guide, or tool that helps someone in recovery take the next step. If a link exists only to drive traffic to a sales page, it does not belong in your article.

SEO Best Practices for Guest Posts

Our editorial team handles final SEO optimization, including the SEO title, meta description, URL slug, and excerpt. However, your submission will be stronger if you keep these basics in mind while writing:

• Use your primary topic keyword naturally in the article title and at least one H2 heading. • Incorporate related keywords throughout the body text without forcing them. Write for humans first. • Avoid keyword stuffing. If a phrase sounds unnatural when read aloud, rephrase it. • Write a compelling

opening paragraph that clearly signals what the article will cover.

Common Reasons for Rejection

Understanding why submissions get rejected can save you time. The most frequent reasons include:

2. The article is promotional in nature. It reads more like an advertisement for a treatment center, legal service, or commercial product than an editorial piece.
4. The topic does not serve our audience. Content written for clinicians, administrators, insurance professionals, or other non-recovery audiences will not be published.
5. The article uses stigmatizing language. References to “addicts,” “junkies,” “substance abusers,” or similar terms result in automatic rejection.
6. The content promotes alcohol moderation or mind-altering substances. Our editorial position supports full sobriety.
7. The writing appears to be AI-generated with formulaic structure, excessive hedging, and list-heavy formatting that lacks a genuine human voice.
8. Links point to prohibited content. Gambling, adult content, CBD, or unrelated commercial sites will not be linked from our platform.

Submission Process and Terms

How to Submit

Complete the submission form on our Digital Marketing Services page at www.soberspeak.com. Our editorial team will review your submission and respond with an acceptance, a request for revisions, or a rejection with specific feedback.

What Is Included With Your Guest Post

• Up to 2 permanent, dofollow links to your website

• SEO optimization with internal linking, SEO title, URL slug, meta description, and an excerpt • If an image is not supplied, our team will select an appropriate image for your post • Author bio section

• Promotion on the Sober Speak Facebook page

• Homepage placement on soberspeak.com

Ownership and Rights

Once a blog post is published on www.soberspeak.com, it becomes the property of Sober Speak. The organization reserves the right to include additional paid links within the article after publication. By submitting your post, you agree to these terms.

Quick Reference Checklist

Before submitting, run through this checklist to make sure your post meets our standards:

The topic is relevant to people in recovery or their families	☐
Person-first language is used throughout	☐
No em dashes anywhere in the article	☐
Paragraphs are 2–3 sentences for mobile readability	☐
H2 and H3 headings include relevant keywords	☐
Warm, conversational tone (not clinical or overly formal)	☐
No promotional or advertising language	☐

No more than 2 links to your own website	☐
No references to gambling, CBD, alcohol moderation, or adult content	☐
Content is original and not AI-generated boilerplate	☐
The article is between 1200 and 2,000 words	☐

Questions? Reach out to us at shannon@soberspeak.com.

We look forward to sharing your voice with the recovery community.