

Journey to



LIFE

"You have shown me the path of life."
Psalms 16:11



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Editorial Perspective Mental Disorder — Addiction

Winter with its gloomy, cloudy, cold days often aggravates negative feelings and emotions. The health of the mind is diminished. Comfort foods, alcoholic beverages, pills, video games, pornography and other addictions are used/abused by many to "feel better." This is particularly true for people who suffer from a mental health disorder. Thankfully, warm days filled with sunshine, green grass and singing birds follow the winter days to grace the world with an atmosphere of health and happiness.

Negative emotional baggage or chemical imbalances in the brain that may lead to the diagnosis of a mental health disorder often lead to "self-medication" and addiction as a way to cope. When this is the case and a person is suffering from a mental health disease and the disease of addiction, proper simultaneous treatment is required for both. Our feature article, "Dual Diagnosis: The Link Between Addiction and Mental Health Disorders," by Adam Cook will address this very important subject.

Recently I took another look at a dramatic skit simply titled, "Baggage," which

is accessible on YouTube. In the video clip, the Skit Guys portray several forms of "baggage" which we "get from other people – the things they do or say to us." Their message can be summed up in the following words: "sticks and stones can break my bones, but names will never hurt me. That's one of the biggest lies we teach children. Words hurt. They cut deep and if we carry around the words of other people, essentially what we do is – we're collecting baggage. We can't find our self-worth based on what other people think of us. We have to find our self-worth based on Christ and our relationship to Him."

"None need abandon themselves to discouragement and despair. Satan may come to you with the cruel suggestion, 'Yours is a hopeless case. You are irredeemable.' But there is hope for you in Christ. God does not bid us overcome in our own strength. He asks us to come close to His side. Whatever difficulties we labor under, which weigh down soul and body, He waits to make us free." *Ministry of Healing* 249.

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ARMin Mission and Vision

Our Mission:

Promote healing and freedom from harmful practices by providing resources and training to facilitate recovery.

Our Vision:

Healthy people growing in a relationship with Christ by using principles of God's Word and choosing healthful practices aimed at finding freedom from harmful habits and addictive behaviors.

Potential Objectives/Goals:

- Promote healing (individually and corporately) utilizing the healthy, balanced principles of God's Word
- Provide resources to churches and individuals in order to raise awareness and educate regarding the root of dysfunctions that create disunity within individuals, families, churches and communities through unresolved trials, troubles and tragedies
- Train individuals to facilitate ongoing support groups and mentoring in a safe, nurturing environment

We believe that as we heal from life's trials, troubles and tragedies, we become inspired and committed to reach out to others as a result of gratitude for our personal healing; to care for others because our lives are so enriched by Christ's forgiveness; and the blessing of the freedom we have experienced due to His unending grace and mercy.



Focus on the Recovery Process

The Healing Value of the 12 STEPS

Step 7—

“We humbly asked Him to remove all our shortcomings.”

Biblical Comparison

“Create in me a clean heart, O God.”
—Psalms 51:10

Steps to Christ Chapter 6
Faith and Acceptance



Upcoming Events

- March**
Problem Gambling Awareness Month
<http://www.npgaw.org/>
- Brain Awareness Week**
March 13 – 19, 2017
www.dana.org/brainweek
- April**
Alcohol Awareness Month
www.ncadd.org
- Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month**
www.rainn.org
- Sexual Assault Awareness Month of Action**
www.nsvrc.org
- May**
Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month
www.rainn.org
- Sexual Assault Awareness Month of Action**
www.nsvrc.org
- Mental Health Month**
www.mentalhealthamerica.net/go/may
- National Alcohol- and Other Drug-Related Birth Defects Awareness Week**
May 13-20, 2017
www.ncadd.org
- World No Tobacco Day**
May 31, 2017
www.who.int/tobacco/wntd/en

12 STEPS to Recovery STEP #7 Who Am I?

After admitting that I was powerless to stop drinking without the help of God, I then made the wholehearted commitment to turn my life over to the power of God (even though I didn't yet have full trust in Him) and then began the adventure of, for the first time, making a searching and fearless inventory of my life up until that time. Upon completion of that inventory and sharing it with God and my sponsor (someone I trusted), I then asked God to remove my shortcomings and defects of character as revealed to me in my inventory. Over the years I have continued to take a periodic inventory of my life on this journey of recovery.

I have through daily study of His word, prayer and meditation remained willing for God to remove my faults and shortcomings such as: a haughty spirit, my tendency to gossip, selfishness and using my sense of shame to elicit pity from others. However, I have found that at any given time, my tendency to fall back on these defects of character as a coping mechanism can be found amongst the writings of my daily prayer journals. I have faith, that as I rely on God to give me the victory over these faults for today, victory can be mine! The same creative power that brought this world and me into existence is the same power that recreates me to be victorious in Jesus today!

Harlene Smith

Some people would say an alcoholic, and others a person dealing with a bipolar mental disorder. The tirades with my verbally abusive language directed at an ex-girlfriend concerning the custody of our 8-month old daughter made national news. My past outbursts in which I used anti-Semitic language and made sexist remarks along with arrest for drunk driving, I attributed to a drink of vodka.

Although I have never acknowledged having a mental illness, I have stated that I have experienced really good highs and some very low lows. According to a quote in Huffington Post, July 13, 2010, I stated: “I found out recently that I am manic depressive.” This is an older way of saying that I am bipolar.

I am a well-known movie director. The Christian community and many others know me for a film I wrote and directed which focuses on the final 12 hours of Jesus Christ's life here on this earth. Another recent film which caught the attention of the larger community as well as the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its members features the life of a Seventh-day Adventist who joined the Army during WWII. He served as a conscientious objector with the intention of saving life rather than taking life. He believed the war was just, but taking life was wrong. In Okinawa, under heavy fire, described by many as the bloodiest battle, he managed to save 75 men without firing a single shot. His story and the movie won great acclaim and I was nominated for a Best Director Oscar as a result of directing this film.

So even though some of my past behavior and habits might be described as reprehensible, I realize that somehow, even with that knowledge, I can find the best in people who have lived exemplary lives and contributed in so many positive ways to the blessing and benefit of all mankind.

Featured Article *continued from page 3*

is under the influence. A co-occurring mental health disorder is likely when these symptoms continue after the drugs wear off. For example:

- Chronic drug and alcohol abuse increases the risk of becoming a victim of rape or sexual assault, which leads to more issues like PTSD, depression, or eating disorders
- Development of anxiety from poor decision-making while under the influence
- Contracting HIV or hepatitis C from unprotected sex or sharing needles, which can also lead to depression and grief over life-changing circumstances
- Depression is a common effect of drugs like crystal meth and alcohol when they wear off, and can intensify and deepen into a disorder over time
- Many, if not most, addicts have additional psychiatric issues like psychosis, ADHD, and various personality and mood disorders.

Treatment

When there is a dual diagnosis of both a mental health disorder and a substance abuse issue, it is imperative for the patient to enroll in a treatment program that covers both problems at the same time. Untreated symptoms of a mental health disorder can cause a patient to remain dependent on substances, and untreated substance abuse issues can make mental health treatment futile.

Treatment of addictions requires that professionals trained in mental health understand the full range of psychological treatments and be knowledgeable about the use of both addiction and psychiatric medications. Other alternative treatments, such as holistic therapy can also be very beneficial. Another thing to note: With or without a diagnosable condition, there are always reasons behind someone’s substance abuse, and it is important that those reasons be addressed and respected.

**[Editor’s Note: Adam Cook is the founder of Addiction Hub <http://addictionhub.org/> which he began after a friend died from substance abuse and suicide. Adam is interested in helping people find the necessary resources to save their lives from addiction.]*

NEWS

On February 10 - 12, 2017, sixty-eight individuals attended the Adventist Recovery Ministries Facilitator Training at the Soquel Campground Conference Center, Soquel, CA. Attendees were treated to a surprise “Unhooked Live” interview session. We especially thank our partners Dr. Lorayne Barton, Health Ministries Director for the Pacific Union Conference, and Steve Horton, Health Ministries Director for the Central California Conference.



We welcome a new Journey to Wholeness group in Clovis, California, which began the week following the training.

We also welcome a new Journey to Wholeness group in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, which began on January 9, 2017, and is specifically ministering to the needs of women.

If you have an active group, please send us an email at health@nadadventist.org. We want to hear your stories and share about what’s working with each other.

SEND US YOUR NEWS

Recovery related news, pictures (protect anonymity of individuals in meetings) and upcoming recovery and awareness events can be sent for future newsletters. Please send these to Ray Nelson, *Journey to Life* Editor – adventistrecovery@gmail.com and/or Angeline David, Adventist Recovery Ministries Director – recovery@nad.adventist.org

Director’s Message



We all have a story. Unfortunately, for many it involves a chain of pain. Hurts that began seemingly small snowballed into anguish that seems to have no end, and perhaps eventually led to destructive habits.

But in order to counteract the undesired evils of this world, God has planted in each of us a “measure of faith” (Romans 12:3). It is His will that we turn our battered hearts and gaze upon the One who is altogether lovely, pleading for hope, for victory, for peace. But it takes effort and perseverance and growth.

The apostle Peter speaks of a chain of growth in his second epistle. It is grounded in that seed of faith, then adds on goodness, followed by a knowledge of God. This leads to increased ability for self-control and encourages perseverance, which develops godliness. To godliness comes the characteristic of mutual affection, and finally culminates in love – love for God, for others, and for oneself (2 Peter 1:5-7, NIV). Peter then spurs us on with the words “brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall” (2 Peter 1:10, KJV).

“It is the glory of God to give His virtue to His children. He desires to see men and women reaching the highest standard; and when by faith they lay hold of the power of Christ, when they plead His unfailing promises, and claim them as their own, when with an importunity that will not be denied they seek for the power of the Holy Spirit, they will be made complete in Him.” Acts of the Apostles, p 530.

God does not want us to suffer the evils of this fallen world or of our own brokenness. But knowing that it is inevitable, He gives us hope and promises victory. We can each exchange the shackles of sin for the laurel of victory. Will you accept this gift?

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