

Inspirations



Whew! Here I am!

by Tumaini, online participant, posted on the SMART Message Boards

Well folks, I am on the eve of one year. Tomorrow will mark a full 12 months without drinking.

The days seemed to tick so slowly by in the beginning and now they are racing! I remember sitting here reading posts 12 months ago, thinking how great it would be to just get some time under my belt. I was so uncertain if I could ever do it. It took so much determination and help from people and tools on this website, but I did it.

Now, there is only going forward.

There is now no way that I can imagine my life being what it used to be. For every day, I find that I really, really like the person I'm becoming. And, I know for me, that even starting down the path of one drink can erase all of the growth, confidence, and health that I have gained in the past 365 days.

My sobriety paid off in spades this Christmas. The sobriety which led to me being more in control, being more attentive to my business, creating goals to be more present with my family all came together for one of the best holidays I've had with my family in a long, long time. I never realized how much my issues, my anger, my frustration would ruin the holiday for all of those around me.

None of my family ever knew or felt that I had any problems with alcohol, but it affected them nonetheless. This year, I felt so much love from my nieces it overwhelmed me. It was probably always there, but this year I was present enough to experience it. And, we made new memories because I was engaged with them!

The other beautiful thing is that I don't think about alcohol every day. It just isn't a part of my life anymore. It doesn't fit. I don't venture on to this website much anymore, but that is not to say that I don't appreciate what this site was to me in the early days and long sleepless nights. I guess it's because of the 4th point of this process: Lifestyle

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The SMART Recovery® 4-Point Program®

The SMART Recovery® (Self-Management And Recovery Training) program helps individuals gain independence from addictive behavior.

Our efforts are based on scientific knowledge and evolve as scientific knowledge evolves.

The program offers specific tools and techniques for each of the program points:

- Point #1:** Building and Maintaining Motivation
- Point #2:** Coping with Urges
- Point #3:** Managing Thoughts, Feelings, and Behaviors
- Point #4:** Living a Balanced Life

Balance. There is so much to do in this world; get out and do it.

I know not to get too cocky. I am still just a rookie in this process. I've heard too many stories of others that have let the guard down and had to fight so hard to regain lost ground. I myself have done it time and time again. It took three years before my quitting smoking actually stuck. That was nine years ago this month as well. My journey is only beginning. But, for the first time in a long time...I like the view in front of me.

To those of you are just starting your path, it will get better. I know it feels like hell right now. I remember the agony of the first week. I won't lie. The first few months were very hard emotionally and physically. I did the research and held on to this website and its tools for dear life. And it works.

I'm telling you, you will get better. Amazing changes can occur in your life. You just have to NOT do something. Don't drink. Remember, it takes awhile for the brain chemistry to come back into its natural balance after years of messing with it. Be patient. Be strong. Stay committed to your healing. To quote another poster on a weight loss site which is incredibly applicable here: "Stubborn ruthless commitment. Every. Single. Day."

Thank you everyone for all the encouragement, the sharing, and sometimes just a good laugh in the chat in the middle of the night.

Getting off Opiates for Good

by kholl, Online participant

OK, here's my story of getting off opiates for good; I hope it helps you!

It took a lot of falling down and getting back up to finally commit.

In November 2007, I lost my fiancé (he kicked me out), went to rehab, hit bottom ... and still I couldn't get clean. What finally happened was that the last time I used, July 25, 2010, I ended up telling my fiancé (now my husband-- not the same fiancé as four years ago) that I used. He got into a funk, and I got into a funk.

I spent days trying to get him out of his funk and putting all this energy into trying to repair the damage from using and finally just realized that I'd been spending more energy on this cycle of drugs and relationship damage and relationship repair than I had on ANY OTHER THING IN MY ENTIRE LIFE.

I spent more energy on that than I'd spent on getting the drugs in the first place. And it was miserable. And I was miserable. and my fiancé was miserable. I realized one day, kind of all at once, that on top of that, I was feeling SORRY for myself! I pitied myself for being "stuck" in a cycle that I and I alone was creating!

So I thought, what do I want? What do I really, really want? Because I didn't want to be high or detoxing on my wedding day. I didn't want to be high as a wife or a mother or a friend or a person. I always knew I didn't want that. So why did I think I could just get away with using painkillers (and other pills too,

whatever I could get my hands on, where painkillers weren't available)?

Furthermore, I wasn't the kind of employee I wanted to be. I called in sick to work constantly. I just didn't show up sometimes. I was a major flake. I wasn't behaving the way I knew I could.

I also turned the tables mentally and thought: What it would feel like if my fiancé were doing to me what I was doing to him? And it felt unbearable. Beyond unbearable. Unacceptable. Intolerable. If he were doing to me what I'd been doing to him for the past two years, I would have been a broken woman.

Up until that point I'd still felt sorry for myself, like he just "didn't understand" what it was like to "be an addict." I thought I had some defect and that I was just weaker than other people, or some other bullsh*t that was just another excuse for me to keep using. I



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couldn't believe how sorry I'd felt for my situation. I had to grow the h*ll up and own my responsibility.

I realized that it no longer mattered how hard it would be to quit. In my mind, there was no other option. Either I chose the life I wanted, or I chose drugs. The two simply could not go together, in any measure, for one more second of one more day. The only option in my life was to stop using, no matter how I felt about it, no matter what the circumstance. No. Matter. What.

At first, I carried around a binder with affirmations (I can send those to you if you like) and about 25 blank CBA worksheets. I printed out all the tool worksheets from SMART's website and put them in there. I filled them out constantly. At work, I'd run to the bathroom or somewhere slightly private to fill in a sentence whenever the thought popped into my head. I read the affirmations and tools and worksheets CONSTANTLY.

I labeled everything on each CBA worksheet as short- or long-term consequences, and realized I'd been throwing my life away for not ONE SINGLE long-term positive outcome. All the reasons I used were short-term. Seems obvious, right? But seeing it written down was life-changing.

Fast-forward to the present day. The urges come very rarely. WEEKS go by with no urges, and when they do come, I shoot them down immediately. My addictive voice is a joke. I'm no longer scared of it. Because I know I won't use. There's no question in my mind. This is not true for everyone, but I honestly don't spend any time physically filling out worksheets, etc. I just mentally kill urges quickly now because I put so much time into it the first month or two. It became a new habit.

In the past 18 months, I have done things I thought I could never do. I got off

of my antidepressants a little over a year ago, after being on and off them for 10 years. My mood is consistent and manageable. My relationship with my husband is amazing and my relationships with all the members of my family are improving.

I had a healthy pregnancy and now I have a new baby. The longer I go without drugs the less desirable they become, because I was so unhappy then, and I am so happy now. My body is strong and lean and my energy level is reaching new heights. It took a few months of sobriety to get here, so be patient.

But trust me, sober life is roughly one trillion times better than any opiate high you've ever had.

Trust IS re-earnable

by john11, SMART Message Board Volunteer

When I got out of rehab more than two years ago, there was an understanding that my ATM card would remain in my wife's care and that my pay cheques would be handed to her. If I needed gas or tools, the money was doled out.

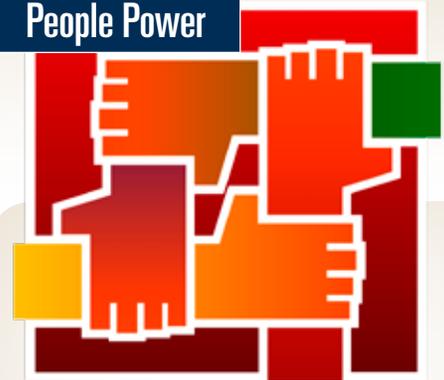
On the one hand, I felt like a middle-aged child (I earned that by childish behavior). On the other hand, I knew that unless I intended to squander vast sums on drugs I had no need for large amounts of cash.

Twenty-seven months later her trust in me has evolved to the point where I take the bank card once in a while to deal with something. Together, we have devised a proper budget but I am more than happy to let her deal with bills, etc. These days, I decline her offers to hand over the reins.

So, yesterday, guess who handed me an envelope with \$500 cash for safe keeping. It was a WOW moment.

We both trust me.

People Power



A, B, C, D and E's

by Alistair Muir, SMART Recovery UK® Facilitator

I look back upon my tawdry life
 Forced to see in therapy
 The ups and downs the pain and strife
 And recognise the triggers for me
 That started off my drinking.
 The action point was not my wife
 That fell to my redundancy
 That cut into me just like a knife
 So evident for me to see.
 What irrational belief did this bring?

I must drink to improve my mood
 To make me happy and forget.
 The consequence though I did conclude
 Was to make me feel even more upset.
 The emotions that I did exude
 Were those of guilt, of loss, regret.
 I overate on spicy food
 Fell in the bath, got soaking wet
 Disaster the result of my belief.

Defy the irrational belief they say;
 You do not have to drink to feel better:
 In fact when this was done that day
 I just felt ill and an awful lot wetter.

So in future I will realize
 That life won't always be fair for me
 I will effect change and thus apprise
 Then write it down for me to see.

PLEASE VIEW
OUR COURT CASES WEB PAGE



www.smartrecovery.org/courts/court-mandated-attendance.htm

A brief summary and explanation of case law pertinent to choice in recovery with direct links to available court rulings.



SMART Ideas

April is SMART Recovery® Volunteer Month!

April is National Volunteer Month, and SMART is jumping aboard with many volunteer opportunities.

We want to offer sincere thanks to our 800+ volunteers worldwide. Without you, SMART would cease to exist.

SMART has a lot of volunteer opportunities available, including:

- Online message board volunteers,
- Online chat room volunteers,
- Online meeting facilitators,
- Online meeting helpers, and
- Face-to-face meeting facilitators.

Position descriptions for online activities can be found here: <http://goo.gl/eUOhs>.*

All SMART volunteers get training before filling a volunteer role. The monthly Facilitator and Support Team (FAST) Distance Training Program has been widely acclaimed by past participants. The training is \$75. However, we have Volunteer Training Grants that have been made available to us through the generous donation of an anonymous SMART supporter. Grant applications will be available throughout April, as a part of Volunteer Month.

To volunteer and to apply for a training grant, visit: www.surveymonkey.com/s/volunteermonthtraininggrantapplication.

We encourage our face-to-face facilitators to share this opportunity with meeting participants, and to promote training and volunteering to your attendees.

* Smart phone and iPad users can use this QR link to access the position descriptions:



Question: Is it true or is It helpful?

by Hank Robb, Ph.D., ABPP

We learn early to determine if something is “true” or “false.” Usually this means something like, “Do the words I am using accurately predict, or accurately describe, something?” Said another way, if we are to declare something “true,” our words are supposed to “match reality”:

“Are the words in this article spelled correctly?”

“Is the article written in paragraph form?”

These are two examples of questions that ask for a true or false answer.

However, we also could ask, “Is this helpful?” Answering this question is not about matching our words to something called “reality.” It is about having some sort of “end in view” and then asking if this or that moves us in that direction. We could ask if this or that “truly” moves us in the direction we picked, but that is largely just asking the same thing twice.

So, what does this have to do with SMART Recovery®? Maybe quite a lot. Suppose you ask, “Do I really want to engage in my addictive behavior?” The answer may very well be “True! I really DO want to engage in my addictive behavior.”

Suppose you ask instead, “Will engaging in my addictive behavior help with the Big Picture I want my life to be about?”



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Depending on what you want for the Big Picture of your life, the answer may be “yes,” “no,” or “maybe,” and the answer to the first question will remain “Yes, it’s true.” You can find out what is “true or untrue” and you still don’t know if it is helpful. However, if you keep your “eyes on the prize” of what is helpful, you will have a rather different, and perhaps more useful, “prize” than if your eyes are only fixed on what is “true.”

Consider the ABCs of REBT. A basic idea is that Activating events don’t “cause” Consequences. Rather, it is what you Believe about Activating events that are the more direct cause of what you think, feel, and do. This is called, “the B-C connection.” The B-C connection is important because it reminds us that it is not circumstances that necessarily lead to particular consequences, but what we believe about those circumstances. If you

don’t like your C, you can change your B. You can change B whether you can change A or not.

You can ask if your B is true or untrue, but you can also ask, “Is believing this helpful or unhelpful when it comes to the Big Picture of my Life?” The answer to that question is usually rather clear. And, if what you believe isn’t moving you in the direction of the Big Picture that you want for your Life, then pick a way of relating to the Activating event that does move you in that direction—change your B.

The typical next step in REBT would be to ask, “Is this belief true?” You could do that. And you could just stop with, “This belief isn’t helpful,” and move on to addressing A in a way that moves you in the direction of the Big Picture that you choose for your Life. You might say that you don’t have to determine if the B you are buying into is true or not true, and the Dispute beliefs are not true. Instead, you could make the “D” stand for something like “Discern” or “Discriminate” whether what you believe is actually helping, and then keep or change that belief on that basis alone. If your B “doesn’t work,” that’s all you really need to “determine” to start looking for another one.

“I really do want to do my addictive behavior right now, and that doesn’t fit with the Big Picture I want for my life. So rather than do my addictive behavior, I will do something that fits with my Big Picture.”

If the B you have gets you the C you want, then stick with it. If not, get a belief that works and stick with that one. Of course, you do have to discriminate one further thing, “Is this belief getting me what I want in the little picture of this moment, or in the Big Picture of my Life?” Not only do you

have to discern or discriminate or determine if the belief is “helpful” in getting what you want right this second, but also, is it helpful in getting what I want in a much bigger context of what I really want my LIFE to be about.

As I am fond of noting, the trouble with a philosophy of eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die is tomorrow comes and we aren’t dead! We are still here and often with a big mess to clean up. So, if you plan to be around tomorrow, then act like it today. We may not be able to answer “true or false” to “Will I be around tomorrow?” but we will have a pretty good idea what will be helpful if we are.

The SMART GEMS Program

by Bill Cole, Facilitator, wcole01@comcast.net

Since March 2011, I have been giving out recognition awards at the Monday night Concord, Massachusetts meeting.

These awards recognize the accomplishments of attendees in breaking their addiction and provide reminders of what they have achieved. I have been using polished gemstones (SMART GEMS) as the awards. Overall, attendees enjoy and appreciate the program.

Recognition awards help attendees:

- remember what they have accomplished,
- stay on the sober path, and
- because they are goals (rewards) they can achieve.

This reward system is called contingency management.

Attendees also recognize the hard work involved in becoming sober. Many studies have been conducted on the use of contingency management in the treatment of addictions, including smoking, cocaine, and alcohol. Many studies have

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers needed for administrative, research, and special events tasks.

There are terrific opportunities to get involved with helping SMART Recovery® that extend beyond our core activities of facilitating and helping in the online venue. Please contact Dee at cloward@gmail.com if you are interested. These efforts are much needed and extremely flexible. If you like the things we are doing, come help out.

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shown improved retention in the treatment program, increased duration of abstinence, and improved program attendance. Quantifying this, patients were found to be up to twice as likely to have clean samples and continuous abstinence was up to 11 times as likely after 12 weeks. Google “contingency management” for references and more information.

The SMART GEMS are polished gemstones. To an “outsider,” they are an attractive stone and do not show any connection to a sobriety program. However, to an attendee they can be very meaningful. Gemstones also have a long connection to mythology with very strong powers attached to them. Jade was buried with Egyptians to guide them in the afterlife and knights had rubies in their shields to make them invulnerable. I coupled some of this mythology with SMART tools to provide meanings to each of the stones.



At an attendee’s first meeting, I give them tumbled amethyst about ¾-inch diameter. Amethyst has been known as the “Stone of Sobriety” since ancient times. It was used to recover from both physical addictions as well as addictive relationships. A natural stress reliever, amethyst encourages inner strength. Amethyst represents DISARM, or the ability to absorb urges and cravings and take them away. Tumbled amethyst is available from HealingCrystals.com for 50 cents each.



For a month, attendees get a rose quartz coin (about the size of three quarters). Rose quartz represents the

SMART philosophy of Unconditional Self Acceptance. Ancient societies believed Rose quartz enhanced positive self-affirmation, opened the heart to compassion for self and for others, and raised self-esteem. Rose quartz eases guilt and balances emotions, lowering stress and bringing peace. These coins are available from HealingCrystals.com for \$1.13 each.



I award Tiger eye coins for three months. Tiger eye represents mastering the SMART tools of the ABC and CBA to regain personal power over addiction. Tiger eye is believed to help reclaim personal power and self-discipline. It’s also believed to bring brightness and optimism to a situation, and shines insight onto problems. Tiger eye coins are available from HealingCrystals.com for \$1.25 each.



For one year, I award amethyst coins. The amethyst coin represents progress toward sobriety and a balanced life style. Amethyst coins are available from HealingCrystals.com for \$1.49 each.

Presentations are just before meeting checkout. In the presentation, I briefly describe the significance of the gem, its mythical properties, and the SMART tool it represents. I also give a short handout to the awardee that explains the SMART Gem Program and the specifics of the gem they were awarded. The presentations provide examples for new attendees.

SMART does not encourage tracking sober time. Hence, I have been using the

time element as what the attendees interpret it to mean to them and say it is. They can use the time since they attended their first meeting, entered a detox program, or actual “sober time” – whatever is important to them. I listen during the check in to determine if anyone has an anniversary at that meeting. I found that everyone, even those that don’t track time, have a good estimate of the longevity of their sobriety.

Many of the attendees have gone out of their way to talk to me after the meeting and express their appreciation for the award. Many have also come specifically to this meeting on their anniversary to receive their gem, even in some cases when they have moved out of the area. However, the value of the program is what they do with the awards and what it means to them.

At a recent meeting, an awardee of the first meeting gem said, “And what am I supposed to do with this?” Two attendees immediately pulled out their wallets and showed him their SMART GEMS. They kept them with them as a reminder of what they had accomplished, where they were before SMART, and where they were now.

Because there were only six attendees at the meeting, this was remarkable. Some other attendees keep the gem in their pocket and use it as a “worry stone.” Another attendee told a story of how he kept the three-month award on the dashboard of his car. It fell off and he cleaned out his car several times looking for it. He finally found it under the carpet.

Other attendees said they keep it on a shelf or in a drawer to remind them when they see it. Since the gems are attractive and unmarked, they are not

embarrassed to have them around. Rather, if questioned, they can just say they thought it was attractive or a reminder of a place they had been. No one has said this is a bad tradition.

Overall, I have found awarding of SMART GEMS a valuable addition to our SMART meetings at a nominal cost. The SMART Board of Directors adopted the following statement at their January meeting: "To allow facilitators the freedom to explore ways to acknowledge participant self-established anniversaries (if any) and report back on these explorations."

I hope that other facilitators explore ways to acknowledge participant anniversaries and collaborate to develop this into another SMART tool in the Toolbox.

Special Events Update

by Dolores Cloward, Special Events Coordinator

We are thrilled to have been able to collaborate with Dr. Bill Knaus, prominent clinical psychologist and famous author, in a brand-new medium to produce the first two sections in a new video series:

Combating Procrastination, available on SMART'S Youtube channel.

These videos amplify material presented in Bill's unique month-long online workshop on Procrastination hosted last summer by SMART Recovery®. The highly visual presentations showcase a complex topic in (we hope) an engaging, memorable way. We are having a blast working on these!

The design and execution is by SMART volunteers Ben (audio) and Suzy Whalen (design and visual). The clips also feature artwork from SMART participants and friends. There is such

wonderful talent in our community! Stay tuned for more to come. This is a wonderful resource and we are very grateful to Dr. Knaus.

Following a successful year of online SMART events in 2011, we are pleased to have kicked off a new season of events featuring Hank Robb: **Is It True? Or Is It Helpful?** We will share details about upcoming SMART events when confirmed, but future events will include conversations with:

Richard C. Bozian, M.D., long-time SMART advisor and tireless supporter, on current research about addiction and the brain.

Bill Knaus, Ed.D., will present a workshop on depression coinciding with the June release of his new book on that topic. This is ground-breaking material, and will be fascinating.

Ed Garcia, M.S.W., will initiate a series of broad conversations about core ideas in life. He will use an interesting format presenting quotations, then asking questions carefully designed to provoke thought, insight, and fascinating conversation.

Please watch the main website: www.smartrecovery.org and the SMART Blog: blog.smartrecovery.org for announcements.

I'd like to remind everyone about SMART's podcast site: www.smartrecovery.libsyn.com. Our podcasts continue to get wonderful traffic and the number of downloads grows and grows. We will be well over 15,000 podcast downloads by the time this is published. I am happy to report that our very own Tom Horvath's end-of-year **Discussion on Relapse** hit record numbers of downloads during its first two months... We continue to have wide and growing listenership spread across all podcasts!



SMART Progress

Annual Conference Planned for the Windy City

by Brett Saarela, Chair, Conference Planning Committee

Save the date for the 6th Annual SMART Recovery® Conference: The Road Travelled, The Journey Ahead, September 21–23, 2012 at the Holiday Inn Midway in Chicago.

This year's event will celebrate the vast community of volunteers who created this organization and are continuing to lead us into new directions. Highlights include the first-ever "call for presentations" from SMART volunteers to share their experiences and ideas; a panel discussion with "Master Facilitators"; advanced skill-building sessions for facilitators; and updates on the organization from an international to local level.

The conference planning team has incorporated many helpful suggestions from past participants and included more "down-time" to relax and socialize. We have slated more optional activities, including an on-site SMART Recovery® meeting, thanks to the energetic efforts of Patrick G., Mike, and the Chicago volunteers. Some of these offerings include: city boat tour, evening foosball, hot tub relaxation, swimming, and morning yoga.

Finally, in appreciation of our speakers and key volunteers, we will have a (slightly) more formal dinner on Saturday night to present some awards before turning it over to the "secret" host of "SMART Jeopardy!"

Additional information and registration form will be coming soon.

SMART Recovery® 6th Annual Conference: "The Road Travelled, the Journey Ahead" September 21–23, 2012 ♦ Holiday Inn Midway, Chicago

ANNUAL CONFERENCE PROPOSAL SUBMISSION FORM

Instructions

1. Submissions open to the SMART Recovery® community of volunteers (online, face-to-face, behind the scenes, committee members, international, BOD, etc.)
2. Accepting brief presentations only (5 to 15 each minutes so we can include as many perspectives as possible) on Saturday, September 22:

"Sharing Our Experiences"

Presentations may be about past milestones or achievements, present-day initiatives, or future plans. Suggested topics include: models or strategies for growth of meetings; positive results with outreach, marketing, court systems, fundraising, volunteerism, training, social media; research projects; innovations on meeting format or tools; recent developments in areas of the organization, such as the blog, Family & Friends, etc. Creativity and new ideas welcome!

3. Individual, team, or group presentations welcome.
4. Live demonstrations or interactive presentations welcome.
5. Please complete all information on this form.
6. DEADLINE is May 1, 2012.
7. Accepted presenters will be informed via e-mail by June 1, 2012.
8. E-mail this completed form to Olive, Submissions Coordinator, mmmhatch@sbcglobal.net.

Application

Presentation title: _____

Brief description of presentation, maximum 125 words (*This may be edited for use in conference material*):

Audio-Visual needs: (*options: Easel, VCR/monitor, LCD Projector for PowerPoint*)

Lead presenter name: _____

(*to receive all correspondence*)

Affiliation(s) with SMART: (*e.g. Message Board volunteer, member of Materials Review Committee*):

How long have you been volunteering with SMART Recovery®? _____

Please be advised that your name and other contact information may be printed in the conference brochure or distributed on other mediums (i.e. News & Views, SMARTCAL) for promotional purposes unless you explicitly inform the Conference Committee you wish to keep some or all of your personal information confidential.

Secondary Affiliation (*optional—your employer or professional credentials*):

Mailing
address:

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

If more than one presenter, list all others, their affiliations with SMART and their contact information. (Other presenters on your team may be SMART participants or trainees, and do not have to be active volunteers):

2nd presenter name: _____

Affiliation(s) with SMART: _____

How long have you been volunteering with SMART Recovery®? _____

Secondary Affiliation (*optional—employer or professional credentials*): _____

Mailing
address:

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

3rd presenter name: _____

Affiliation(s) with SMART: _____

How long have you been volunteering with SMART Recovery®? _____

Secondary Affiliation (*optional—employer or professional credentials*): _____

Mailing
address:

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

4th presenter name: _____

Affiliation(s) with SMART: _____

How long have you been volunteering with SMART Recovery®? _____

Secondary Affiliation (*optional—employer or professional credentials*): _____

Mailing
address:

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Additional information, if needed: _____

Please be advised that your name and other contact information may be printed in the conference brochure or distributed on other mediums (i.e. **News & Views**, SMARTCAL) for promotional purposes unless you explicitly inform the Conference Committee you wish to keep some or all of your personal information confidential.

SMART Recovery® Online growing by leaps and bounds

by Jonathan von Breton, Director, SMART Recovery® Online

Okay, it's 7 p.m. on March 1. This article is--well, was--due earlier today but I can still tell myself I have until midnight. So, this isn't really the last minute.

I'm wondering what to write about. I usually like writing and I love writing about SROL. I really have no topic in mind. Everything is running smoothly. The Chat, Message Board, and Meeting Volunteers are all doing outstanding work.

Fortunately, in times like these, there are always numbers. So, let me regale you with tales of how SROL has grown over the past few years.

In January of 2012, we had 1,110 new people register on the Message Board. That was a record. It beat the previous record of 914 in December 2011. This is the number of new people registering in a single month.

This growth has been fairly consistent since 2008. In that year, 7,487 people registered, which averaged out to 624 a

month. The only year to see a drop was 2009; 6,788 people registered that year (566 a month average).

SROL saw gains in 2010 and 2011: 7,361 (613/month) and 9,098 (757/month), respectively. As I said, 2012 started with 1,110!

Now, not all of these people actively participate. Many come, register, and never return. Many others lurk, that is, they read posts on message board but don't post anything themselves. Others just use the Chat room or attend meetings. However, the fact the overall numbers are growing means more and more people are in the "lurking" and "Chat" categories.

Meetings are easier to measure. Each facilitator logs the attendance of their meetings. Our meeting rooms hold a maximum of 35. I no longer have to look at the logs. The meetings are almost always full. The voice meetings I facilitate are now regularly full. Meetings where I used to get maybe 20 people, are now always full. Quite a few are there because of court, probation, or some other

mandate. But a large percentage of them do actively participate.

With ongoing growth in all areas of SROL, we need more volunteers. There are many ways you can volunteer.

Chat volunteers spend time in the chat room. They help keep the conversation focused, help new members, provide support, and give information, all in real time.

Message Board volunteers do the same thing on the Message Board. They also greet new members in the Welcome section and report posts that may be out of place.

Online facilitators do the same things as their face-to-face counterparts, except SROL facilitators have much larger groups. It sounds overwhelming at first, but I assure you it isn't. Meetings are either text or voice. There is a new volunteer job called Meeting Helper. (Note to self: find out if there is a job description. If not write one, or better yet, tell someone else to write it.) Oh, back to the article.

Meeting Helpers do things that enable meetings to run more smoothly. They greet late comers and tell them what is going on when they arrive. They post links for the facilitator. They answer questions that may be off-topic but nonetheless important. I now have a meeting Helper, OzTim, and I can't begin to say how much I appreciate it.

All SROL volunteers complete the

SMART Recovery® Program Tools & Techniques

SMART's 4-Point Program® uses many tools and techniques that may help you gain independence from addictive behavior.

These tools include:

- Change Plan Worksheet
- Cost/Benefit Analysis
- ABCs of REBT (Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy) for Urge Coping
- ABCs of REBT for Emotional Upsets
- DISARM (Destructive Images Self-talk Awareness and Refusal Method)
- Brainstorming
- Role-playing and Rehearsing
- Hierarchy of Values

We encourage you to learn how to use each tool and to practice the tools and techniques to help you progress toward Point 4: Living a Balanced Life.

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Distance Training program. There is a relatively painless application process. Once you, yes *you*, become an SROL volunteer, there is a lot of support from the other volunteers to help adjust to and feel good about your role.

It is now 8:09. I'm done well before the midnight deadline.

Editor's Note: Be sure to check out the article "April is SMART Recovery® Volunteer Month" on page 4.

SMART Community: A Story of 'Halves'

by Kacie Best, F2F Facilitator and Regional Coordinator for Florida

Last fall's annual participant survey, in which approximately 400 people answered questions online, indicates SMART Recovery®'s community divides down the middle on numerous characteristics.

Those responding included therapists and counselors. Face-to-face (F2F) peer facilitators comprised half of the total sample. This skewed several other characteristics (all numeric values in this article are approximate for concision and are based on the total number of respondents per question):

- Half have participated in SMART for two or more years;
- Half rated SMART as an "excellent" resource for recovery;
- Half reported that the Handbook is used regularly in meetings, and half have read most or all of the Handbook (although fewer than half use the Handbook for their recovery, at least, not at their current stage); and
- Half use no other recovery program besides SMART.

Overall, respondents visit the website 2.7 times a month on average, which includes online meetings and excludes

time spent in a formal volunteer capacity. The internet was the source of first awareness for half of the survey respondents. The other half attend online SMART meetings less than once a week on average (attendance is similarly low at F2F meetings in which the respondents do not facilitate themselves.)

Respondents gave facilitators the highest marks for having comprehensive knowledge of the SMART program; however, they rated overall facilitation skills (group management) significantly lower (guiding discussion, staying on track, and dealing with disruptors).

A large majority reported using the SMART tools regularly in meetings, (remember, F2F facilitators dominate the sample, therefore, they are predominantly self-reporting).

Tools used most in personal recovery included:

- Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA);
- Disputing Irrational Beliefs (DiBs);
- Unconditional Self-Acceptance (USA).

The most frequently used tools that facilitators use were:

- Role-Play/Rehearsal;
- Urge Log;
- Hierarchy of Values; and
- Brainstorming.

More males responded than females by a thin margin. Half of the respondents have bachelor's or master's degree; two-thirds are age 40-59; two-thirds consider themselves in the maintenance or independence/gradua-

tion stage. Hobbies and activities of personal interest ("VACI"), and meditation and mindfulness were each cited by two-thirds of the respondents for ongoing recovery support.

A vast majority of respondents were U.S. residents and identified themselves as Caucasian.

Alas, an overwhelming majority in this survey stated no readership or previous awareness of *News & Views*. Therefore, they will miss this summary of the survey in which they generously participated!

The raw survey data are available at goo.gl/OifS5. A more comprehensive analysis, including comparison with prior surveys and strategic implications from the total findings, will be presented to SMART's Board of Directors.

Thanks to the 2011 survey committee members who assisted in this project: KacieB (chair), Ana Stella, Bandita, and PatrickG, plus advisors Shari Allwood and Dr. Joe Gerstein.

Announcing SMART's new and improved Quick-Start CD, V 2

by TwoPutts, SMART Recovery® Online Volunteer

The Quick-Start SMART Recovery® CD was developed as a compilation of some



of the best parts of SMART Recovery® Online (SROL).

The genesis of this CD was to give new members a jumpstart on their experience at SMART. This new version offers a good first impression for the new member. We organized the basics, some “best of” pearls, and some important elements a first-time user might have difficulty finding. If you participate in face-to-face meetings, this CD will help you, too.

By supplying these assets early in your recovery, we hope to enrich your experience with SMART and improve your recovery efforts. You also may find that your early exposure to these resources assists you in using the website and finding those areas most interesting to you.

The CD updates include:

- Redesigned for easier navigation.
- CD for offline use.
- Traveling reference library.
- F2F benefits without online requirements.
- “Best of” edition.
- Quick start bundle of tools.
- Apply Best of SMART early in your recovery.
- Hotlinks to the “get acquainted” areas of the SMART website.
- Introduction to SMART videos, podcasts, and blogs.
- Good investment to assist you with future choices.

You’ll also find:

- Information about SMART and SROL.
- SMART tools and worksheets.
- Selected articles, essays, and posts compiled from the online message boards.

- Participant success stories.
- A sample of SMART’s *News & Views*.

Each document on the CD V.2 is in PDF format. They can be opened and printed with ease using Adobe Acrobat. You can file and store them for future reference—you don’t have to be online or logged into SMART to access the information.

Order your Quick-Start SMART Recovery® CD for \$10.50 at the SMART Bookstore: smartrecovery.org/SMARTStore/.

We hope you find the CD to be a simple and informative investment in your future. May your SMART experience be a rich one.



President's Letter

National Summit on Recovery 2010: Moving in the right direction

The report of the National Summit on Recovery from Substance Use Disorders: *Bridging Together the Head and Heart of Recovery*, in Washington, DC, held in September 2010, was released last month.

The summit was jointly sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP). That both organizations sponsored the event indicates that prevention and treatment, rather

than just enforcement, are now elements of the ONDCP’s approach.

As ONDCP Director R. Gil Kerlikowski said in his remarks that day, “We can’t arrest our way out of this problem; we have to direct our attention to prevention.” Even better, in my opinion, would have been the statement, “We choose to direct our attention to prevention, treatment, and recovery support”; however, his statement still indicates a significant shift in federal policy with respect to the drug war.

As with the 2005 National Summit on Recovery, convened by SAMHSA alone, I was present to represent SMART Recovery®. At the 2010 summit there were more than 150 participants from 35 states. Most of these participants identified themselves as being in recovery. Remarkably, there was very little about the event that had the “feel” of a 12-step meeting. Many events for recovery professionals have such a feel to me. The attendees here almost entirely separated their personal approaches to recovery from what national policy about recovery should be.

The two goals of the 2010 summit were to assess gains made since 2005, and to identify next steps toward achieving ROSC (the Recovery-Oriented System of Care), particularly as these steps may be influenced by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA, also known as “Obamacare”). Attendees were asked to consider a broad vision of recovery, one which could encompass both mental health and substance problems (because they so often go together).

The 2005 summit had established a working definition of recovery, guiding principles of recovery, and the major elements of ROSC. The theme of the 2010 conference became how to establish a National Recovery

Agenda. The items needed to establish and advance this agenda were grouped into the following areas: Collaboration and coordination, standards, measures and outcomes, innovative practices, social inclusion, and training and education.

There were 10 breakout groups. I attended the breakout group on "The Role of Peer Services in Recovery." Among the action items this group suggested were:

Strengthening connections between the prevention and recovery communities.

Encouraging the National Institute on Drug Abuse and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism to support research of peer services.

Developing standards for accreditation and certification for individuals and organizations working in peer support.

Requiring the involvement of peer services and support as a condition of government funding.

SMART Recovery[®] will consider how to become more involved in these developments.

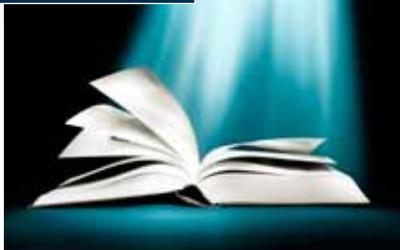
Overall, the summit reassured me that the U.S. government, however slowly, continues to move in a direction that makes our culture more hospitable to SMART Recovery[®] in particular, and self-empowering recovery approaches in general.

You can read the 2010 summit report at: [www.pfr.samhsa.gov/docs/National Recovery Summit 091410.pdf](http://www.pfr.samhsa.gov/docs/National_Recovery_Summit_091410.pdf)

You can read the 2005 summit report at: [partnersforrecovery.samhsa.gov/docs/Summit Rpt 1.pdf](http://partnersforrecovery.samhsa.gov/docs/Summit_Rpt_1.pdf)

Tom Howarth

Book Review



GYLOS author goes a little deeper in *Motivating Substance Abusers to Enter Treatment*

Book Review by Dolores Cloward, SMART Volunteer

Motivating Substance Abusers to Enter Treatment, by Dr. Robert J. Meyers and Jane Ellen Smith is a worthy addition to the bookshelf of any therapist, as well as those who have loved ones they hope to help.

Its framework is one of relationship, communication, and coping with practical reality. It's filled with examples that ring true in illustrating the way day-to-day life happens, how we react to it, and how we can better frame our interactions positively. The stated goals of the Community Reinforcement and Family Training (CRAFT) method, as expressed in this book are:

- Reducing use,
- Getting someone to treatment, and
- Enhancing our own lives through the lessons of behavioral psychology.

This book is written for therapists; however, it reads like a manual for those in these situations and would be very useful as a step-by-step guide, with many appropriate cautions, as to how to implement CRAFT in our daily lives. Their audience is clear, but also leaves room for the layperson to read and follow a clear blueprint to help enhance their own lives and that of their significant other.

Dr. Meyers' more recent book, *Get Your Loved One Sober without Nagging, Pleading or Threatening* (GYLOS), with Brenda Wolfe, takes the same material but simplifies it and speaks directly to loved ones. For those caught up in situations of abusive substance (and behavior) use, it would be a wonderful follow-on to the introductory GYLOS. He is always clear, and has a powerfully positive and caring tone.

Dr. Meyers has been in the addiction field for 34 years, 23 of those at the University of New Mexico. He is currently the director of Robert J. Meyers, Ph.D. & Associates, and a research associate professor emeritus in psychology at the University of New Mexico's Center on Alcoholism, Substance Abuse, and Addiction. He has been involved in more than a dozen clinical trials funded by the National Institutes of Health.

Dr. Meyers began his work with the Community Reinforcement Approach (CRA) in 1976. He developed the new innovative "intervention" program used to engage resistant substance abusers to enter treatment, CRAFT. This is an evidence-based protocol, which has been shown to be superior to more traditional interventions in several randomized clinical trials. His work is one of the 14 featured segments of HBO's 2007 Emmy-winning series, *The Addiction Project*. He is an internationally known speaker and trainer who has delivered trainings throughout the United States and in 13 countries. He's published more than 80 scientific articles or chapters, and co-authored five books on addiction treatment.

Some important topics for anyone coping with their loved one's maladaptive behaviors are clear assessment of our individual situations, safety, reward systems, communication, and focus on improving oneself. This is an outline for

creating a healthy lifestyle for ourselves and our loved ones in a balanced way.

The two most arresting things to me in all of his work is the clear connection with reality (including domestic violence) of people's lives and the tremendous compassion he exhibits in his writing and speaking.

The book Dr. Meyers is deservedly so well known for, *Get Your Loved One Sober*, is a fantastic book for the public. In *Motivating Substance Abusers to Enter Treatment*, he delves a little deeper, and it's well worth reading and re-reading.



International Development

SMART Recovery Australia® Update

by Jim Villamor, Coordinator, SMART Recovery AU®

Be SMART: Family and Carers Program

In February, the Be SMART: Family and Carers Program (Facilitator and Participant Manual) were sent to the USA SMART for final approval from the Materials Review Committee. Working in conjunction with the USA, we aim to make this program available outside of Australia for SMART facilitators who wish to run a family and carers program.

Training in Wollongong

Wollongong (wuul-lɒŋ-gɒŋ) is a seaside city located in the Illawarra region of New South Wales. It is 82 kilometers (51 miles) south of Sydney.

Wollongong has a population of 292,190, making it the third-largest city in New South Wales after Sydney.

The Illawarra-area health services have taken up SMART Recovery® in their communities with six SMART meetings in the region. As a motivational and support strategy, the Illawarra SMART facilitators hold quarterly forums in which they can debrief, discuss relevant issues, and network.

SMART AU attended their February forum and conducted a facilitators' training on SMART and Be SMART. It is SMART AU's aim to support our volunteer facilitators and assist with any trainings or debriefing required.

SMART Vietnamese Project

The Drug and Alcohol Multicultural Education Centre (DAMEC), in partnership with Corrective Services NSW and SMART Recovery Australia®, are running a Vietnamese SMART Recovery® Project, with funding from the Network of Alcohol and Other Drug Agencies (NADA).

A pilot Vietnamese group started at the Fairfield District Office on February 29. The group will run for 12 weekly sessions from 6–7:30 p.m. The group will be run in Vietnamese, facilitated by two bilingual Vietnamese drug and alcohol workers who have taken the SMART facilitator training.

Teen/Youth SMART Recovery®

SMART AU has been working with Juvenile Justice, NSW to develop Teen/Youth SMART groups in the community to assist with through care after the teens and youths leave one of their centres. A service called Youth Off The Streets, which since 1991 has provided services to homeless and disadvantaged youth, piloted the teen program in March.

SMART AU will continue to partner with Teen/Youth services in 2012 to develop more groups.

Conferences

SMART AU has been accepted to present at the National Indigenous Drug and Alcohol Conference (NIDAC) in Western Australia in June. We will present our ongoing work with indigenous communities across Australia.

As the leading voice in Indigenous alcohol and drug policy, NIDAC provides advice to government, based on its collective expertise and knowledge from those working in the field, health professionals, and other relevant experts.

SMART AU Facilitator Training

We're will offer training at Canberra, ACT, Bathurst, NSW, Newcastle, NSW, Port Kembla, NSW and Albany, Western Australia over the next 3 months.

Alberta Update

by Curtis Boudreau, SMART Recovery Alberta®

Hello again to the SMART world from Alberta.

I'm starting by directing you to an article that was written about my story of recovery, and of course, SMART.

<http://calgaryjournal.ca/index.php/healthyliving/539-eva-colmenero>

I was wondering what would be some good fodder for the article this month, and have decided to share exactly what is working in Canada.

The philosophy that I subscribe to is the "Four Pillars" in recovery. These are: mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual. What we do in SMART is work on the first two. I don't give our members a diet to follow, or a work out plan, and I don't teach them how to get spiritual. We leave that up to the participant to work on outside of SMART to "balance" their recovery pie chart.

Because we have a self-graduating program, I try to bring everything we teach to a "curriculum" of sorts. To graduate, one needs to learn something. Most people are looking to be taught

because not everyone can absorb everything the Handbook offers. For example, I know that Econ 201 has a textbook, but having a good instructor was the key to my absorbing and applying the theory.

I like to bring everything we do in meetings back to the point or tool that is applicable, time and time again. Point, tool, point, tool, point, tool. The Four Points are key and we discuss them at each Monday and Wednesday meeting.

Everything we teach can be brought back to one of our five tools:

1. ABC Method of Problem Solving,
2. Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA),
3. DISARM techniques,
4. Unconditional Self-Acceptance, and
5. Unconditional Other Acceptance.

We have many different techniques and strategies in our program, but at the end of the day, I can always put them under one of the five tools.

Part of our Monday and Wednesday meetings are instructional, where I spend about 30 minutes going over the 4-Point Program®, and cycling through the five tools in four sessions (USA and UOA are done together).

We continue to cycle through the four sessions, and people have let me know that they are “hearing” different lessons from the sessions, which helps them continue to improve. After one year, if they come every Monday and Wednesday, they’ve seen each tool 25 times. I do know that there is at least 25 points of information for each of our tools, and if they can take just one point from each meeting, over time it will sink in and they will start using the tools intuitively. The majority of our members

still continue to come to our educational meetings every now and then so they can be “refreshed” and keep everything in the forefront of their minds.

To the newcomer, the overload of information is daunting. That is why I let them know the only goal is to take one point of information from each meeting that they can use to stay clean.

People love to see a graduation point in their recovery path, which is a huge selling point for SMART. Many participants have absorbed the information, and use it effectively, so each Saturday they come to “check in” with the group and share how they are using the tools to stay clean each week, or if there was a problem, we discuss that as well.

Note: I use the terms “using” and “clean” because we don’t focus on a specific substance or activity.

I’ll wrap up with my telephone pitch to people new to SMART: Our program is based on four points and five tools. We learn to live the four points, and depending on what situation comes up, we can apply one of our tools, and life gets better.

Our whole program is based on our Handbook, which is the only cost for the program, and it is \$20. I let new attendees know that if they can pick one up right away, it’s awesome, but it’s not required for the meetings. We provide pens and paper for notes, and of course, coffee. Because we’re self-supporting, we also “pass the hat.”

I have been “knocking on doors” for almost six years, and continue to present our points and tools in 50-minute presentations for anyone interested in what we do.

This is what is working in Alberta, and we have been given the “thumbs up” by the Court of Law, the psychological community, the medical community, the social work community, Child Protective Services, Calgary Police Service, and the Alberta Community Corrections Department (probation system).

Final note: The detox centres continue to be a steady source of new participants because they are only there for about five days. I present at two centres each week, time permitting, and always have new people to introduce to SMART. My presentations are mandatory for all the clients of the centres at which I present.



From Beyond the Walls

Look for articles in future issues...

Articles are Welcome!

If you have a story or information you would like to see published in the *News & Views*, please feel free to submit a copy to

Rosemary Almond, Editor,
via e-mail: rosemaryalmond@gmail.com.
Unsolicited material is most welcome!

SMART Recovery® relies on volunteer labor and donations. Please be generous with your time and money!

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