

A. Thomas Horvath, PhD, President

Emmett Velten, PhD, Editor

~ “This issue’s theme is: *How to Facilitate Facilitators.*” ~



President’s Letter

“Stealth” Facilitator Recruiting

One of the reasons that SMART Recovery® does not grow more quickly is that the role of facilitator is demanding. Many participants who are devoted to attending meetings have difficulty imagining themselves as facilitators. In this column I’m going to suggest how the principle of “small steps” might be used to increase their confidence about facilitating meetings.

Perhaps the fundamental reason that SMART Recovery® does not grow more quickly is that the US recovery system includes many individuals who do not believe that any additional support groups are needed. Many opportunities that we might have for publicity are not afforded

us. For the moment we will look beyond this problem. If we have more facilitators, we will have more meetings. Let’s look at how current facilitators can replicate themselves.

The role of the facilitator is an authoritative one: The facilitator has authority over the participants. Of course, there are examples of meeting participants’ not honoring the authority of the facilitator. (Experienced facilitators swap stories about these episodes! However, participants are almost always well behaved.)

The job description of the facilitator has two main components: 1) making decisions about how the meeting should unfold, and 2) enforcing those decisions. To be comfortable in this role, one needs to believe statements like: I make good decisions (“Because we regularly have many newcomers in our meeting I focus on motivation”); I change my decisions when circumstances change, and these new decisions are good ones, also (“Tonight we have all regulars, so let’s focus on Point 3 or 4”); I can identify when someone is bending the rules, and I know what to do about it (“You are criticizing another

approach to recovery, but we are here to talk about SMART Recovery®); I can directly tell someone, being firm but not offensive, to stop bending or breaking rules (“I’ve asked you now twice not to criticize AA. Will you agree to stop doing that?”); I can enforce consequences for breaking rules (“You’re being disruptive in this meeting. I have pointed this out to you but you haven’t stopped. It appears you are here just to get a court card signed, without any interest in the discussion. If you do not stop disrupting I will not sign the card, now or in the future. It’s up to you.”).

(Continued on page 2)

Inside:

President’s Letter

“Stealth” Facilitator Recruiting1
4-Point ProgramSM1

SMART Progress

Join us at SMART Recovery® Online! .3
SMART Recovery® “Taking off”
in Australia Prisons5
Are SMART Recovery® Teens Just
Little SMART Recovery® Adults?5
Navigating Teenager’s
Treatment Tensions6
Exhibiting SMART Recovery®
with Intent to Recruit Volunteer
Facilitators7

SMART Ideas

How Some Pacific University Graduate
Students Came to be Facilitating
SMART Recovery® Meetings7
A Goodbye Letter9
Tools and techniques for reducing
the Frequency, Duration and Intensity
(FDI) of Depression10

People Power

Books Behind Bars and Beyond11

Prison Outreach

Beyond the Walls11

3-Minute REBT12

The SMART Recovery® 4-Point ProgramSM

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:** Enhancing and maintaining motivation to abstain
- Point #2:** Coping with urges
- Point #3:** Managing thoughts, feelings and behavior (problem-solving)
- Point #4:** Balancing momentary and enduring satisfactions (lifestyle balance)

Some people seem “naturally” authoritative. In fact, they probably have experience that gave them practice making and enforcing decisions about other people's behavior. Being authoritative is part of the job if you are a teacher, police officer, coach, manager, administrator, etc.

Being a parent gives you the opportunity to practice being authoritative, but many parents are not authoritative! The literature on parenting identifies the two extremes that parents fall into: being lax (or *laissez-faire*; allowing almost anything), or being authoritarian (trying to control too much). Being authoritative is the mean between these two extremes. Virtue as a mean between two extremes was first suggested by Aristotle over two thousand years ago. For instance, courage is the mean between foolhardiness and cowardice. Courage consists of doing what we are afraid to do, because we believe it is important to do. (I've picked courage as an example, because facilitating requires courage!)

Let's expand the job description one more step. Facilitating involves making and enforcing decisions about boundaries in the meeting. To name a few, there are personal time boundaries (“It is time to move on to the next person”), subject boundaries (“I don't understand how what you are talking about, your stress at work, relates to your addictive behavior”), respect boundaries (“I want to make clear that we can examine and question the thoughts you have just been presented. It may turn out that we don't have so much respect for or belief in these thoughts, but it doesn't mean we have any less respect for you. The thoughts you have just stated are ones all of us have had or could have”) and meeting time boundaries (“We have four people who want to talk, but really only time for two. I propose that two of you volunteer to get only a minute each,

so that two can have 15 minutes each. If two of you don't volunteer, I'll pick two to talk [perhaps on the basis of seniority, or who has had time recently, or whose situation seems most urgent, or which subject is most relevant to the group as whole]. Then we'll start with the two longer discussions, saving the two one minute discussions for the end. Maybe the longer discussions will end sooner”).

As the facilitator you can help a potential facilitator gain confidence establishing and enforcing boundaries by providing opportunities to practice. The fundamental idea of stealth facilitator recruiting is that you can pick small enough practice steps (depending on the person) to build confidence about being authoritative without the person necessarily even knowing it! You don't need to start with asking someone if s/he wants to prepare to be a facilitator. Simply identify individuals who you think have potential, and whose circumstances are a good fit (e.g., lives not too far away, can attend regularly, not moving soon), and begin assigning tasks that allow them to function as your assistant, without stating that this is what you are doing.

“OK, we're going to start by reading the introduction. Shadonna, I think you have been to the most meetings here. Would you read this? It's better if we read it, because that way I don't forget to say something. Thanks.”

“Next, we have the check-in. We have a large group tonight, so I want to limit the check-in to one minute each. John, would you time this? At 50 seconds, raise your hand half way, and at one minute raise it all the way. If they are still talking at 1:10, wrestle them to the floor and gag them... [just kidding]. Sadie, we are going to use the check-in to establish the agenda for the rest of the meeting. Now remember,

everybody, you can say pass if you want to, and you don't have to say your first name if you don't want to. However, Sadie, please write down in a word or two the main topic of each check-in, and the names if people volunteer them. Then we can decide what to focus on when we set our agenda.”

“Sadie, you recorded the topics. Do you have a suggestion about two we could focus on?”

“John, would you again keep track of time? We'll allow 15 minutes. Give us warnings at 10 minutes, 14 minutes and 15 minutes.”

“Frank, would you make a note of any thoughts that Larry says that we might want to examine?”

“Nora, the discussion points to the value of USA. I know you have taken an interest in USA. Would you give us a quick summary of it?”

“Juan, we are discussing now an issue that is similar to one we discussed a few weeks ago. You were an important part of that discussion. Would you summarize the lessons we learned then? I'll help if you need some.”

“Gene, a few meetings ago we used a toolbox tool to handle a similar situation, and you were involved in that discussion. Would you show us how to apply that tool to this situation?”

“Fred, I watched you follow along intensely as Nora spoke. Would you say what she said, but in your own words? The subject is an important one, and we won't really learn it until we have heard about it many times. There was nothing at all wrong with what Nora said, but someone will hear your version and gain additional understanding.”

“Brenda, while I pass the hat, would you read the statement that goes along with

that? I'll let you start reading, then I'll start the hat around. Then when the hat is finished let's pass it back to Brenda and she can count it. That way we'll find out just how much expression she read with!"

"Nadir, I notice that you usually arrive on time or a little early. Next week, would you greet any newcomers, and answer any questions you can, before the meeting starts? I'll be here in case there is something you can't answer."

"Richard, could you come five minutes early next week and help me set up the room?"

"Pete and Sarah, I want to establish a pre-meeting. We are going to keep saying that the meeting starts at 7:00, but it will really start at 7:30. Once you have come at 7:00, you'll know to come next time at 7:30. At 7:00, I'd like the two of you to be here to answer questions for newcomers. You could also show a few minutes of "SMART for Life" or "SMART Recovery®: Who We Are," if you wanted. I'll get here by 7:15, if there are any questions you can't answer."

"Shirley, I'll be away next week. We have a guest facilitator. However, would you bring the key next week and open and close the meeting room?"

I began this column suggesting how demanding the role of facilitator is. I end with the idea that as one masters the role, it can be fun and satisfying. Part of that satisfaction can be mentoring others. If you facilitate meetings, I hope that, once you master the basics, you will consider mentoring one of your most important functions.

Tom Howath



SMART Progress

Join us at SMART Recovery® Online!

Readers of the *News & Views* are aware of several ways to participate in SMART Recovery® Online (SOL), including online meetings, message boards, and chat. I asked the volunteer liaisons for each area to put together a word of welcome and an update, which follows below. Do please join us!

Jonathan von Breton, Director of SOL

Online Meeting News

We have added a new meeting late Saturday nights for a total of 18 meetings per week. There are 14 general meetings, two introductory meetings, one women's meeting and one 3rd and 4th point meeting.

We continue to have very good member attendance of anywhere from 10 to 30 members at each meeting.

We are happy to announce we have eight new co-facilitators training for facilitating. They are Alch3m1st, aslanthelion, Chindi, LeslieHB, LoveMyFamily, Onejay, Muddy_Waters, and Susie. We also have the pleasure to announce the return of three veteran facilitators: Jim, Mellie, and Tom_WY. We can see adding more meetings very soon with these additions to the team, although it is a team priority to not spread ourselves too thinly.

Presently we are working on having a pool of facilitators without meeting slots who might be on call to fill in at meetings, which is especially important during the vacation season. This might also help prevent facilitator burnout.

Because of the new interest of some of our new co-facilitators, we are developing training methods for Evoice facilitating. Due to the size of this particular format, we are working on development of a special session for the volunteer-in-training to learn how to adjust to a smaller group. Hopefully this will come to fruition in the next month.

We have organized some informal training sessions for our facilitators and co-facilitators and then extended it to all SMART Recovery® Online volunteers. We've had three sessions led by Charlie with very good attendance and interest. If there is interest we will continue to offer the training once a month as we are able.

Visit the Online Meeting schedule here: <http://www.smartrecovery.org/meetings/olschedule.htm>

Hope to see you at a meeting!

The SMART Recovery® Online Meeting Team

Message Board News

On the message board, one volunteer challenged all members to spend some time greeting newcomers as it is believed that an enthusiastic greeting goes a long way toward helping new members feel welcomed and invited to participate, and the results have been excellent. New people are quickly and heartily welcomed and directed to a variety of resources on the website.

The heaviest traffic on message board occurs in the Specialized Group Forums and Peer Support Groups section. This message board section has the feel of a support group, but the tools are often invoked in layman's terms by peers. Specialized Group Forums consist of Opiates, etc., Mood Disorders and Substance Abuse, and Concerned Significant Others, and Eating Disorders forums, among others. Peer Support Groups consist of groups of individuals who post regularly on the same thread, discussing their challenges and successes and commenting on the progress of others.

One of the most dynamic of these is the seven day thread, in which participants discuss the difficulties of the early days of sobriety, including handling withdrawal symptoms and diverting attention away from the undesirable behavior with healthier activities.

A new women's forum was created recently which is accessible by application only and receives a healthy amount of traffic. Women often find certain sensitive subjects easier to discuss in the company of other women, and this forum provides a safe place to do so. Recent topics include past and present abuse, and sexuality, dating, and pregnancy in recovery.

A more social area receiving regular activity is the Creative Endeavors forum in which members post the results of their Vital Absorbing Creative Interests. Poetry and photography are well represented here, much of which is being prepared and offered for auction at the upcoming FUNdraiser.

Hope to see you on the Message Boards!
The SMART Recovery® Online Message Board Team

Chat News

The SMART Recovery® Chat room is open 24/7 and helps members in many areas. There are also discrete meeting rooms to host the meetings that are offered each day.

A typical day in the chat room might consist of a few people discussing day to day events and getting to know each other better. Many wonderful friendships have started in the SMART Recovery® chat room. Soon more people filter in and the conversation gets going faster with more input and different views. Sometimes members get silly and joke around, which is not only fun but very beneficial when people are making big changes in their lives. At other times, someone will bring up a serious issue, and chatters rally around the person to provide suggestions and hope.

About once or twice a day a new person will enter the chat room. These individuals are greeted and asked if they have any questions. This is where the real fun begins ~ sharing the SMART Recovery® tools. Each of us in chat have used different tools and seen firsthand how they work, so the

help we can give is of real life experience. This help is not limited to new people, as sometimes an old-timer goes through a rough patch and comes into the chat room to have those tools reinforced and be encouraged in their self-management.

While we have a number of chat volunteers who regularly visit, we do not and cannot guarantee that a volunteer will be present around the clock. We provide an opening statement to advise visitors that the room may or may not have a volunteer present. All participants are requested to be civil, kind, compassionate, and to share the tools.

Please stop by and share your experiences with how SMART Recovery® has helped you, and experience the joys of aiding others in their road to recovery.

The Technical Corner

It has been four months since we switched from renting a message board to owning and hosting on our own message board on the same server as our dot org site. This is beneficial because all SMART Recovery® Online activities are now easily accessible right from SMART Recovery® dot org. The registration process has been adjusted and simplified.

The new software is working very well and has resulted in reduced expenses compared to the cost of renting the message board. It does have a learning curve, just as anything else, but I encourage all of you to register if you have not done so, and spend some time at SMART Recovery® Online. The wealth of information you will find is amazing.

SMART Recovery® Program Tools & Techniques

The SMART Recovery® 4-Point ProgramSM employs a variety of tools and techniques to help individuals 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

Participants are encouraged to learn how to use each tool and to practice the tools and techniques as they progress toward Point 4 of the program—achieving lifestyle balance and leading a fulfilling and healthy life.

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We generally have about 15 or so new registrations daily, and the amount of new posts and threads on the message board varies.

The registrations for our voice chat (Evoice) are increasing. This medium is being used for business type meetings, such as the distance training, and some of the committees which were formed at the last national training session are also holding their meetings in the voice chat rooms. I encourage you to check out the voice meetings; we have a great bunch of voice hosts who truly love the voice experience.

So all in all this has been an interesting four months. Changes can help with growth and SMART Recovery® is growing.

On a side note, we owe a big thanks to Jonathan, Shari and the Board of Directors who place such confidence in the online community by investing in its growth.

So be sure and visit SMART Recovery® online for a new experience!

Richard

SMART Recovery® “Taking off” in Australia Prisons

by Geoffrey Wilkinson, Program Development Officer, Department of Corrective Services, Sydney, NSW, Australia

I am pleased to report that SMART Recovery® is really taking off in Australia, particularly in prisons.

We have recently completed another training for 50 new SMART Recovery® facilitators. The training consisted of two days and was very well received by all who attended. In attendance were staff from all around the state of New South Wales, including addictions counselors, psychologists, and social workers.

Included in the training were many testimonials of how effective the meetings had been over the past year in certain correctional settings. We continue to make a link between prison and the community

by referring inmates leaving custody into community based meetings.

A fine example of how successful SMART Recovery® is being used is the Kirkconnell Correctional Center (located about 2 hours from Sydney). SMART Recovery® meetings are run four times per week, with differing classifications of inmates. Such is the case in many correctional centres where concurrent meetings are held in large facilities in different locations.

SMART Recovery® is now available in 24 of the 28 correctional centres in NSW and is growing stronger each day. I am pleased to report that at least 50 meetings are run each week throughout the different centres (many of which offer several groups per week).

We are now providing support and will provide training on June 11th to our colleagues in Tasmania where they intend to begin to offer SMART Recovery® meetings in their correctional centres. And we are preparing for the training of new facilitators in correctional settings around Australia.

We are very excited. Things are looking good for SMART Recovery® in Australia!

Editor's Note: Watch out for those Tasmanian devils, Geoffrey! From what I hear, they can be hell.

Are SMART Recovery® Teens Just Little SMART Recovery® Adults?

by Julie Myers, Facilitator, San Diego

It's taken several years to put together a successful SMART Recovery® teen meeting. Most of my early groups closed simply because I couldn't get the teens. Teens don't want to attend unless they are required to, and they certainly don't want to come if their friends aren't there. What it finally took was the cooperation of a local, innovative charter school, which mandated some students to attend. With this commitment, I was able to

gain a quorum of teens, which then attracted others.

I use a different approach than I do with my adult groups. I spend a lot of time building rapport and making them feel comfortable. I bring snacks and music (they plug their i-pods into my radio), which goes a long ways towards creating a non-formal atmosphere. It took some time to gain their trust, and it was important for them to know that I wouldn't tell their parents anything. I never try to fool them about how much I know; they can see right through me. They need me to be real, and open, and understanding. Beyond anything, they need me to be non-judgmental.

In my adult groups, I do activities on a big easel; members seem to like this. But when I use this with teens, they instantly go into “school mode,” something which I can only describe as blank. They participate superficially, putting out as little energy as possible. Now, I consciously avoid anything that vaguely reminds them of school. Using REBT is particularly challenging.

Discipline is rarely an issue in adult groups. But despite my attempts to create a “discipline-free” group, in the end, teens are simply not little adults: They laugh, talk, get up, put their head down, and all those other little annoying things that teachers have put up with for centuries. To have productive meetings, with reasonable norms, I simply have to set limits and sometimes even ask them to leave.

In general, most of the teens in my group have not had enough bad experiences to generate strong motivation for change. Few have had severe legal, medical, or economic problems, and rarely do they recognize their using as anything besides having “fun.” They feel impervious to danger, and this reckless attitude sometimes generates boasting. Although we, as

adults, may recognize the paths down which they are headed, they seem blind to potential consequences, except short-run penalties that are imposed by adults. There seems to be little I can do to influence them. But they are not impervious to the influence of their peers. They will change because a friend begs them to, or because they have a new beloved, or because they want to help a friend to stop. Peers help initiate change. Whenever there is an opportunity to build on this, I milk it for everything it's worth.

Last week, I ran into a former teen member at the grocery store. She grabbed me, gave me a big hug, and told me how much she missed the group. While it can occasionally be frustrating and challenging, I wouldn't give up my SMART Recovery® teen program for anything. If others of you are working with teens and wish to share ideas with me, please contact Jodi at the Central Office, info@smartrecovery.org. Jodi will then put us in touch.

Editor's Note #1: People who fall into the clutches of the mandating authorities are not a representative sample of the population. Julie's ideas, including snacks, music, and not telling the authorities, might even increase participation on the part of mandated senior citizens, and yes, there are such people.

Note #2: It is a solemn, accepted, universal truth, that teens and other youth believe they are "immortal," and therefore won't bother with things like safe sex, seat belts, and the rest of that type thing. Yet, I once read a study that showed that adults score the same as kids, on the average, on that type of irrational belief. Thus, one could ask, are SMART Recovery® adults just little SMART Recovery® teens?

Navigating Teenager's Treatment Tensions

by John C. Gamulgia, MBA, LICSW, LADC, LCS
CEO of Community Improvement Associates
(A portion of this article was included in the summer 2007, volume 3, 8th edition of *Recovery Solutions Magazine*)

Editor's Note #1: Read the last paragraph of this article first.

Here's how it happened:

John C. Gramuglia of Community Improvement Associates (CIA, www.cianh.com) has been facilitating adolescent group therapy in conjunction with the Hampshire/Franklin Juvenile Court and the Division of Youth Services (DYS) in Massachusetts for approximately five years. The groups consist primarily of adolescent offenders with substance abuse issues. A hefty percentage of them also have some other co-occurring mental health diagnosis.

Upon referral to the program, CIA assesses each adolescent's status. The result of this assessment is coupled with information from other sources, such as probation, DHS, school teachers and administrators, parents/guardians, and other professionals. After a thorough assessment, a youth is entered into the group.

The age range for participants in the program is thirteen to seventeen, but most are fifteen to seventeen. Group sessions are held two days per week at the courthouse. This model facilitates communication among the adolescents, probation, DHS, and treatment providers, and it expedites effective responses to relapse and other crises.

CIA uses Albert Ellis's Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT), (www.rebtnetwork.org) as its treatment methodology for the teen groups, and it finds REBT's self-help recovery progeny, Self-Management And Recovery Training (SMART Recovery®, www.smartrecovery.org)

(www.smartrecovery.org) particularly useful. Although the principles of SMART Recovery® are concrete and effective, most literature describing them is not accessible to youth, and it became apparent that a teen-focused version of the SMART Recovery® Handbook would go a long way toward helping the program participants succeed.

Thanks to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) — led by the efforts of Carolyn Castro-Donlan and Ruth Jacobsen-Hardy, who collaborated with the Community Coalition for Teens in Franklin County, Massachusetts — the initiative was funded to produce a manual specifically for teens. Mr. Gramuglia wrote the SMART Recovery® Teen Handbook, and the staff at SMART Recovery® responded quickly to edit the manuscript and produce the manual. The book was released in the summer of 2006.

It is important to remember that SMART Recovery® emphasizes self-management and recovery. Adolescents are not particularly fond of adults telling them what or how to think; therefore the empowerment aspect of SMART Recovery® is attractive for them.

SMART Recovery® is based on rational, concrete concepts and is not a mystical, dogma-driven intervention. SMART Recovery® allows each individual to be in charge of his or her own destiny, which is particularly appealing to adolescents. SMART Recovery® does not require people to label themselves as an alcoholic or addict, nor does it demand a belief in a Higher Power or require reliance on a sponsor. SMART Recovery® is an excellent intervention for people who have an internal locus of control (those that are self-motivated).

The SMART Recovery® program is non-judgmental and does not demand that people adopt alien belief systems. Instead,

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it facilitates the processing of beliefs already in place. Adolescents in the group feel free to speak their minds without having to conform to a curriculum that dictates what they “must” think or do, one day at a time, for the roughly 25,000-30,000 additional days of their lives. SMART Recovery® teaches skills that are useful and practical, not facts to be memorized or meant as threats to scare people. This approach is engaging and instrumental in developing participation.

CIA has found SMART Recovery® to be effective in helping adolescents to think and evaluate for themselves. SMART Recovery® allows for open and honest discussion. It is imperative for adolescents to have an opportunity to speak their minds and thus generate their own cost/benefit analysis for behavior. Adolescents like to see themselves as being in control and SMART Recovery® is designed to leverage that. In fact, people using SMART Recovery® are in control of their thinking and behavior, and therefore it is an empowering treatment model.

SMART Recovery® essentially brings focus to thought processes that previously were left unexamined. For example, many people have a habit of unwittingly shifting responsibility from themselves to others; this is evident in comments such as, “You made me mad.” SMART Recovery® dispels the myth that one person can “make” another do something or feel a particular way. It places responsibility for emotion and behavior squarely on the person having the thoughts. It also encourages individuals to realize that because they can control their thinking they can thereby modify their feelings and behaviors and create better outcomes for themselves.

CIA has implemented simple outcome measures to track the success of its SMART Recovery®-based teen program.

Since 2004, approximately 160 adolescents have participated in this program. Two thirds of them have completed probation without having been detected for drug use or other violations that would necessitate a return to the group. The model’s success is the reason it is currently being expanded to other juvenile courts in the state of Massachusetts.

Editor’s Note #2: I love this article for lots of reasons. For one, we once again see the usefulness of respecting people’s ability to think for themselves. It’s a shame that our society doesn’t operate under that assumption normally, but it doesn’t. Let’s keep changing that! Second, John’s article shows how hard work, good sense and good hearts, which he understates with respect both to himself and to the administrators in the Massachusetts state government, can pay off. Third, it shows the value of a terrific program, which we obviously have. Fourth, it shows loud and clear: we have got terrific Central Office resources. Hear! Hear!

Exhibiting SMART Recovery® with Intent to Recruit Volunteer Facilitators

Henry Steinberger put together a three poster-board panel and staffed an exhibition table at the Wisconsin Association on Alcohol and Other Substance Abuse (WAAODA) Spring Conference, held in Madison. He aimed at recruiting Volunteer Facilitators to start face-to-face SMART Recovery® meetings around Wisconsin and hoped that the counselors and other concerned professionals attending the conference would take SMART Recovery® to their cities and counties.

The participants of the Madison SMART Recovery® meetings, through their generous hat-filling donations, and Henry Steinberger, by donating 16 volunteer hours to WAAODA in

conference-related work, paid for the exhibition fee. The Madison participants uniformly agreed that it was fine to spend local funds to promote SMART Recovery® throughout the state and anywhere that people might benefit, and Henry had the opportunity to get to know the administrators of this influential organization.

Many attendees expressed interest in taking SMART Recovery® meetings to their towns, but Henry figures that a lot of one-on-one follow-up will be needed to launch the hoped for meetings.

Editor’s Note: I’ve said it before, and I’ll say it again, ON, WISCONSIN! The text for the panels is adaptable to anyone’s locality, and you can get it through the SMART Recovery® Central Office. Henry’s and the Madison SMART Recovery® set’s generosity and energy are not available online, regrettably, but require individual rational programming.



SMART Ideas

How Some Pacific University Graduate Students Came to be Facilitating SMART Recovery® Meetings—Could It Happen Elsewhere?

by Hank Robb, PhD, ABPP

In the fall of 2000, I had once again been asked to supervise second-year practicum students in Pacific University’s doctoral level Clinical Psychology Program and at

that program's Psychological Service Center (PSC) located in downtown Portland, Oregon. As an adjunct, part-time faculty member, I had been asked from time to time to perform this function when some glitch prevented full-time faculty, who are preferred, from doing so. As was common, there were five supervisees. A couple of them knew of my association with SMART Recovery® and asked, "Why can't we run a SMART Recovery® meeting?"

It had been some years since I had conducted a meeting myself, but, also for some years, I continued, as a local Volunteer Advisor in the Portland, Oregon area, to meet monthly with volunteer Facilitators, "Coordinators" in those days. However, these students didn't want to participate in that arrangement. They wanted their activities to generate the same practicum credit generated by their individual or couple sessions or that would be generated if they conducted other types of groups, e.g., group treatment of panic or social phobia. I didn't know why not, so I began asking, "Why not?"

Fortunately, the then Associate Director of the PSC was very much in favor of encouraging all kinds of group treatment, and she readily went to bat against the university bureaucracy to pave the way for a SMART Recovery® group. This was not as easy as you might think. A SMART Recovery® group was not a traditional "therapy" group, with members doing paperwork, such as giving their full names, dates of birth, SSNs, next-of-kin contact information, agreeing to pay set fees, and so on, to register as "clients" of the clinic and to begin to create standard "therapist-client" relationships. SMART Recovery® is a self-help group. Each meeting is self-contained in that at least some participants may never return to that group again. Each

group meeting must be useful both to those who have attended groups before and to those participating for the first time. However therapeutic the experience, it is not legal "psychotherapy."

Another slight obstacle: at the time, the clinic specifically excluded substance misusers from its services!!

I believe we were fortunate that staff members favoring empirically supported psychological treatments had recently gotten into the driver's seat in the graduate training program.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the most difficult problems arose not with the university's clinical faculty but the university attorneys. "What is the liability?" was the much-ballyhooed question. Again, only the perseverance of the Associate Director kept the opportunity from slipping away. She doggedly pursued resolution of "the question," which required not an insignificant expenditure of funds to get answered. The answer? It was the same liability that the university incurs when a student-in-training makes professional contact with *anyone else*. Whew! Finally, we were ready to go, and so, our first university student-facilitated SMART Recovery® group began functioning.

Over the next few years the student interest in facilitating such groups continued to grow until the university was willing to fund my one-hour weekly supervision of the students participating in SMART Recovery® facilitation. It was one thing to oversee the work of four or five student facilitators, but something else when the number rose to over a dozen. Students are asked to commit to facilitating for an entire year beginning in the fall. Most, but certainly not all, have kept their commitment. Others have "been allowed" to enter later in the year. Groups

in some locations have come and gone and others have remained stable. Former students have started groups in new locations as they advanced in the program and were no longer part of the practicum credit process. For example, we have had more than one group started in a prison and one in the state psychiatric hospital.

Three giant realities encourage participation by students as SMART Recovery® facilitators:

1. Positive reinforcement continues to be a law of nature. (This is despite the fact that university attorneys view it with alarm. Coaxed by those billable hours, the attorneys eventually overcome their qualms.) As those who have facilitated meetings know, it is a powerfully positive experience to see people who actually change their lives by learning and implementing the principles facilitators provide in SMART Recovery® meetings. It is also positively reinforcing that regular weekly meetings help insure that students garner their required number of "client contact hours" necessary for completion of their training.
2. Possibly due to the fact that such a large number of students are now in training compared to the good old days, more and more training authorities are dealing rationally with the practical reality that there aren't enough "pure" mental problems to go around. About one third of individuals with problems such as depression or anxiety also have problems with addictive behavior, and about half of those with addictive behavior problems also have more "traditional" psychological difficulties like depression and anxiety. In the old days, most psychological training programs intentionally provided no opportunity for students to make direct contact

with individuals who are dealing with addictive behavior.

3. An important factor that has emerged over time is the terrific desirability of those with this kind of experience when it comes to selection for psychological internships. Currently there are more students every year seeking internships than there are certified internship opportunities. Some students don't get an experience required for graduation in the year they are "slated" to get that experience. Over the years, it has proved rare that those with SMART Recovery® experience have failed to get an internship placement the first year they have sought one.

I believe the requirements to reproduce this experience in other educational settings will require pluck and luck. Pluck is required to bring to the "right people" the notion that facilitating SMART Recovery® meeting would provide a powerful learning opportunity. It also takes pluck to pull your vita together and jump the hoops necessary to convince university faculty that you are "worthy," and then to meet with the students for the "institutionally approved" hours. However, the experience will provide many great opportunities to dispute, "It shouldn't be this hard," and "I'm such a loser because otherwise they would see what a positive contribution this would make!" It also likely means doing this virtually for nothing for the one, two or three years it takes to really get something established. At Pacific University we now have established a process where incoming facilitators watch meetings facilitated, review materials, and co-facilitate with the outgoing year's facilitators as they transition into their new year. "Getting all this started" takes more PLUCK than just keeping it going.

Luck is also a factor. Without the determination of that Associate Director, nothing would ever have happened. Who is the right person? How do I make contact with them? What will be the thing that is persuasive? Oft times LUCK is the critical factor. On the other hand, pluckiness can increase luckiness!

It would not be right to end this article without saying a few words of tribute to the wonderful young people I have met who have made this possible. Some spent three months arriving for a 7:00 AM meeting that never got off the ground. Others gave up months of Saturdays to make a mid-day Saturday meeting happen, a meeting that has continued for several YEARS. They have supported each other whether they felt like it or not and they have met their meetings week after week, whether they felt like it or not. They were discouraged and they persisted. They realized that their efforts had a chance of making a real difference in someone else's life, *and they made that difference*. It has been an honor to have the opportunity to work with them.

Editor's Note #1: Please contact Hank for poop on how to short-circuit the worries about legal liabilities that college and university authorities will have in your localities.

Editor's Note #2: Luck? Well, yes, but as Hank kind of hints, we partly create luck. Richard Wiseman's trailblazing work shows that more open, sunny dispositions considerably create luck. (How do you spell Hank Robb?) And, as Seligman's research on optimism shows, optimistic people are better problem-solvers, all other things being equal. His research also shows that any of us can train ourselves toward optimism, so please don't say that Hank lucked out and is "just that way." Nor should we forget Al Ellis's constant refrains: (1) PYA! (2) Let go of ego.

A Goodbye Letter As posted to the SMART Recovery Message Board in April, 07

by Steph, a.k.a. Alch3m1st

Hey Everyone,
I thought I'd share a letter I wrote while I was in rehab. It is a goodbye letter to alcohol. It is not long. I wrote a goodbye letter to Lisa before this, and that letter was longer, quite a bit more descriptive. At any rate, I read this the last day I was in New Opportunities.

Dear Friend Ethyl,
I was planning to write a nice long goodbye letter to you, but I have decided to cut to the chase. I met you and your extended family, marijuana, LSD, all of you at an early age. I have worked hard here at New Opportunities, and I am making the choice to let you go.

According to my CBA, you stopped working for me pretty much from our first meeting. Though you offered comfort, the short-term benefits, the disadvantages of using are so damaging that it makes no sense to continue drinking. The long-term benefits of sobriety easily outweigh the short-term benefits of using. Sorry, but no more.

I also wrote a goodbye letter to Lisa while I was in New Opportunities. While I take all responsibility for my loss, I cannot ignore the fact that you were my conduit for destruction. Not only did I lose Lisa, I also almost destroyed myself. Drinking is not an option today.

Ethyl, I could express my anger, my disappointments and sorrows, but I think you already know I am sick of you. It's time to say farewell. If you are planning to leave a light on for me, don't bother. I look forward to a happy, full life without you.

Forever NOT yours,
Steph

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Tools and techniques for reducing the Frequency, Duration and Intensity (FDI) of Depression

by Tom Larkin, SMART Recovery® Facilitator

The goal is to reduce the frequency, duration and intensity of feelings of hopelessness, helplessness and worthlessness and replacing these exaggerated, painful feelings with healthier emotions. Instead of feeling depressed, you could feel sad, concerned, unhappy, regretful, resolved, sorry, irritated, determined, resourceful, remorseful, aggravated, upset, annoyed, or accepting.

First, acknowledge that you have a problem with depression and that you reinforce these unhealthy feelings with demanding, exaggerated, self-downing and/or self-pitying thoughts. Then commit to practice changing your unhealthy thoughts, feelings and behaviors to more healthy thoughts, feelings and behaviors. Keep a journal that states your goal, your successes, and failures, and a list of coping self statements.

Thinking Tools

1. Use the ABCs, identify irrational thoughts and replace them with rational thoughts. Use the REBT Self Help Form regularly.
2. Compare irrational with rational thoughts, for example;

Irrational Thoughts

If I fail, I am a failure
I must succeed, or I am worthless
I need respect
I cannot stand these feelings
I should be treated fairly

Rational Thoughts

Failure at a task is not failure as a person
I will do the best I can and accept myself as fallible
I would like respect but cannot control others

I can stand these feelings while not liking them

The truth is what is, not what should be.

3. Make a list and practice *coping self-statements*, when feeling depressed
 - A hassle is not a horror, it is not terrible or awful. It is just a normal part of life.
 - I never need what I want. I only prefer it.
 - Failure is a learning experience, not a condition.
 - Things could be worse, a lot worse.
 - I can stand it. I am proud of my high frustration tolerance.
 - Life is worth living, despite the inevitable frustrations.
 - What's past is past. Today is the first day of the rest of my life.
 - Perfectionists are doomed to failure. I accept myself, with my imperfections.
 - I will change the things I can and accept (not like) the things I cannot change.
 - Adversity is normal. Life is filled with tragedy. Depression is an over-reaction.
 - Live and let live. If you love someone, let them go. You cannot control others.
 - Blaming myself (or others) does nothing to change the situation.
 - "Life's goal is to enjoy oneself, not prove oneself." Albert Ellis

Emotional Tools

1. Practice Unconditional Self-Acceptance
 - Rate your behaviors but not yourself.
 - Every human being is a work in progress.
 - Change your self-defeating behaviors and take responsibility for them.

- Your future can be different from your past.
- All people are of equal worth.
- Depression is not failure.
- Failure plus self-downing leads to depression.
- Failure itself can be a positive learning experience.

2. Rational Emotive Imaging (REI)

Imagine a feeling of depression. Close your eyes and allow yourself to feel inappropriately worthless for about 2 minutes. Then, slowly push yourself to change these blue feelings to appropriate feelings of sadness and self-acceptance. Use coping self-statements to reframe your feelings:

- I can stand it; this is unfortunate but things could be worse
- I can be sad without personalizing and feeling worthless
- I can put down the situation, but not myself

I am a fallible human being who can change.

Gradually, you will feel less depressed. Open your eyes and feel the healthier feeling of sadness and acceptance. Practice this exercise several times a day.

Behavioral Tools

1. Exercise is one of the most effective and least expensive techniques for reducing the frequency, duration and intensity of depression. Walk, jog, swim or choose any activity that keeps you moving, then make that exercise a habit.
2. Find an absorbing interest such as cards, sports, books, golf, hiking, etc., then join a club and keep busy at your new hobby.
3. Socialize. Go to meetings. Engage in church, political or self help meetings. Read philosophical books on "life," whether spiritual, Buddhist, existential, psychological or some of

the great literature and then discuss these ideas at book clubs or self-help meetings.

4. Find active people in your family or among your friends who have coped with adversity. Hang out with them, pick their brains and use them as models.
5. Practice unconditional acceptance of people you do not like. Put down their behavior but not the person. Once you learn to accept an obnoxiously behaving person ask yourself Why am I harder on myself than on others?
6. Use frustrating experiences as opportunities to practice patience: Waiting in lines, slow servers, late arrivers, sluggish drivers, etc. High frustration tolerance is a skill that can be learned with practice, using coping self statements and the ABCs to dispute low frustration thinking.

“Do not blame anyone, including yourself, for anything and you will find it almost impossible to be emotionally upset.”
Albert Ellis

People Power



Books Behind Bars and Beyond

“Finding the key to unlock the prison bars of one’s mind”

by Rich Dowling — President

I appreciate the opportunity to introduce the readers of the SMART Recovery® *News & Views* to Books Behind Bars

And Beyond (BBB&B), a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization. The organization’s mission is to provide cognitive-behavior and educational self-help materials to juveniles and adults (both females and males) in correctional and related facilities.

Twenty years ago I began giving self-help materials to individuals in a county correctional facility where I worked. The recipients’ responses were overwhelmingly positive. For example, one individual reported that he didn’t know he had a choice when it came to getting angry until he read, *Anger: How to Live With and Without It*, by Albert Ellis.

Seeing the benefits accrue for many people over the years inspired me to think on a “grander scale” in terms of donating self-help materials to incarcerated individuals. Finally, four years ago, with the help of Barry Grant, author of the *News & Views* column (From Beyond the Walls), Darlene Smith, a juvenile advocate with the New Jersey judicial system, and my wife, Susan Akers, who is an educator, Books Behind Bars And Beyond was born.

Our purpose is to raise funds for purchasing and donating materials to individuals and institutions, offering opportunity to enhance individuals’ ability to think and reason in order to make healthier emotional and behavioral choices, both within and (one day) beyond the prison walls.

To date BBB&B has donated cognitive-behavior based books, including SMART Recovery® Handbooks, to individuals in county and state correctional facilities in New Jersey, Wisconsin, Indiana, and Arizona. (Oh, I almost forgot—books have also been donated to a prison in Scotland! Hi Fraser!)

For security reasons, BBB&B must purchase materials directly from “source of sale,” (i.e., publishers, bookstores) and have them sent directly to the requesting individual in the correctional facility.

As with most nonprofits, fundraising is an ongoing process and we continue to pursue various strategies and resources. If you are interested in making a monetary donation or know of someone interested in receiving materials, please check our website for contact information:

www.booksbehindbarsandbeyond.org.



Beyond the Walls

Channeling Energy with a Motive

by Barry A. Grant

The energy and persistence of a motivated person are truly marvelous. The work that nourishes us, the work that is a form of rapture, a form of praise, is magical. Where does our energy come from? Surely not from breakfast cereals, sandwiches, or coffee: It is a magical transformation of earthly food into our pure spirit.

For those who are attentive to the tools of SMART Recovery® and assist in the interpretation and understanding that we are our own best resource on behalf of others, it is essential that we remain open to all healthy possibilities. Moreover, I wholeheartedly believe that this is what motivates us towards the persistent energy that drives our personal vision. The important thing is not so much what we move away from, but what we strive for as facilitators and policy makers.

Expending our energies in those areas of our lives we struggle with the most, such as impatience, control, energy, or procrastination, offers opportunities for greater victories – as long as they are frames of reference. But even more, they offer greater

3-Minute REBT



All or Nothing Thinking

by Philip Tate, PhD

Reprinted from the April 1996

News & View

Author of *Alcohol: How To Give It Up*

and *Be Glad You Did,*

1996, See Sharp Press, Tucson, AZ.

learning and the greatest chance for further growth and development when we relinquish our struggles. It is then that we can be certain that any Activating Event attracting our involvement will provide chances to demonstrate both our positive qualities and questionable decision-making.

Our human irrationalities and beliefs can hamper our progress and keeps us stuck in old behavior. However, when we examine how we make decisions, we can capitalize on what we learn. One way to look at it is that our thought processes—otherwise known as we ourselves—need time to learn from experience and to turn our mistakes and irrationalities to advantage.

By realizing the potential of our energy, especially in the context of good, healthy and productive motives, we will know that all experiences teach us something—if we are willing to learn. Yes, there may be some pain along with the wisdom, but growing pains are necessary in all healthy organisms—and in the long run growth is good for us all.

Positively Speaking: Today offers time to practice becoming a stronger self. My words and my thoughts are my protectors.

Editor's Note: Which reminds me of my favorite poem: "A word is dead when it is said, some say. I say it just begins to live that day."

Dichotomous thinking is often called Black and White or All or Nothing thinking. It occurs frequently in the thinking of many, and it's one of the several main irrational beliefs in REBT. This kind of thinking is absolutistic and neglects conditions and consequences.

We in SMART Recovery® often tell people, "We will not tell you that you have to quit drinking. What you do is your choice. We recommend you look at the consequences of drinking for you and decide for yourself."

You may reply, "So, you're saying I can drink." Notice what you are thinking that leads to that comment. It may be something like, "either I can drink or I can't drink, and since you're not telling me strongly that I absolutely can't drink, then you are telling me that I can." (This is all or nothing thinking.)

Of course that is not what we are saying. We know people can drink, but their drinking comes with consequences, and that's what they came to us for: the lousy effects. We presume they'll get better consequences from abstaining. But the reason we believe they'd better decide for themselves is that they will do better to look clearly at the consequences of their behavior. This provides motivation and shows that one behavior leads to another.

Thus, we teach people to get away from an absolutistic "just say no" approach to quitting. And we ourselves do not believe in telling people to "do it because I am an authority and you should not question my wisdom." Instead, we teach you to decide after looking at the results.

When you notice this kind of absolutistic, all or nothing thinking, begin to gain a more complete understanding of your thinking. It may contain musts that precede your black and white thinking such as: I must be able to quit, and I must not drink. Also, you may be making excuses for failing to quit such as, People like me can't quit, and It's really too hard for me to quit. Dispute these musts so you can see things more realistically. Then challenge your simplistic notion that "either you can or you can't" and learn more about your motivations, both in drinking and in your desire to quit.

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