

Inspirations



My Surprise Benefit: A Clean Kitchen

by AnnieMG, SROL Participant

When we quit our addiction, we find that all sorts of positives enter our lives. Through doing a Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA) and listing, “things I like about giving up my addiction,” we can come up with positives such as:

- Waking up feeling fresh and revitalized.
- Sleeping the night through.
- Not having to worry about what I did the night before.
- Getting on better with people.
- Having more time for hobbies.
- Etc., etc.

But what about the unexpected positives from quitting that you’d never thought of? Some side benefits that never appeared in your CBA? Something you would never have predicted that has an important effect on your life? Something you now treasure as an important part of your recovery?

Mine is pretty simple: Waking up every morning to find the kitchen clean, instead of piled high with dirty dishes and saucepans from the night before. When drinking, I would head off to bed and leave the mess as it was. Nowadays, I enjoy cleaning up after every meal. Now, when I walk into the kitchen each morning and find it sparkling clean, I’m reminded of how of how good life is.

What’s your surprise benefit?

Four Years And (Almost) Two Degrees Later...

by Caring Hands, Former SMART Message Board Volunteer

Hello to those who remember me and welcome to the newbies; it is nice to meet those I do not know!

I haven’t popped in to write for quite some time. On June 30, 2011 I celebrated four years of sobriety, thanks to SMART Recovery®.

These past four years have had their challenges but I have not wavered or relapsed once on this four-year journey. It was a yo-yo and roller coaster getting to that first year but, once I achieved

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

that, I have not allowed urges to get the better of me. And yes, there are still urges here and there, mostly in the summer for some reason. I look back on all I have accomplished these past four years and would not trade that for any cold glass of pino grigio out there!

I received my BASW (bachelor of arts in social work) this May, graduating *summa cum laude*. I started school the September after I quit drinking in 2007. I have been going to school full time ever since and I will graduate this May with my MSW (masters degree in social work). I will then hopefully get a job as a clinical social worker.

If you had told me that at some point in my life I would finally obtain a college education, I would have shook my head no. I will be 55 years old when I walk up to receive my masters degree. An unthinkable walk will finally come true.

My internship this year is at a day treatment program for alcohol and substance abusers. Everyone there is mandated from some place. Whether it's from DSS or drug court, they don't want to be there and they come kicking and screaming. The most I can hope for during this eight-month internship is to maybe turn one person's mind around—just one would be so rewarding.

The treatment program follows a 12-step program so that has been hard for me with my SMART background. I am trying to explain to the directors and clinicians that there are other options to the 12-step program that work and that I am living proof.

So, my friends new and old, I am a success story. I am never that complacent that I think I have this addiction thing completely licked. I will never

let my guard down that much or get that cocky because I know how sneaky it all can be.

It is NEVER TOO LATE to get sober and change your life around. If you are struggling and trying to string days of sobriety together, keep trying, keep gathering days here and there, and you will find that the days turn into weeks and before you know it, you will have six months under your belt—and then nine months, and then you will be shaking your head saying, “I can't believe I haven't drank in so long.” Then you get excited and don't want to throw that success away and you decide that you are going to do it, and YOU DO!

Good luck and never stop trying.

Now, It Is So Different

by *apmlo*, Online Participant

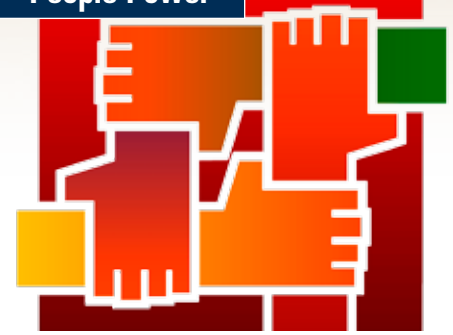
I was just thinking of how different sobriety is for me now than it was that first angst-ridden year that I stopped drinking.

Then, it was all about not drinking: how to organize my life to fill in that hole that not drinking left in my life, how to avoid trigger-ridden social situations, how to keep the anxiety at bay. It was as if my obsession with drinking found its outlet in thinking about not drinking.

Now, it is all about the fullness in my life, the healthy opportunities that abound each and every day, the richness of activity that surrounds me. When I think of how much time I squandered being intoxicated, I just shake my head. I missed so much then!

Sobriety rocks!

People Power



To Those In Early Recovery

by *john11*, SROL Message Board Volunteer

To those of you in the first months of recovery, I extend heartfelt congratulations on beginning the change process.

I remember that phase as being fraught with struggle and inner conflict. I also remember that, although there were a few payoffs in those early days—such as waking up without a hangover—most of my motivation was based on a faith that things would get better and that what I was going through was going to be worth it.

The things in my CBA that measured whether it was worth it were all realistic goals and have materialized. At least I reached the goals I put an honest effort into, or made progress toward. These days, I'm happy with progress; long-term goals are part of my life. We all have different reasons for quitting, and I will say, as will others: The fight was absolutely worth it.

I say that like it's all over. It's not. For me, there is a sliding scale. Early recovery used to mean a few months. Now I can consider the rest of my life, and in that context, being in my third year seems early. So no, it's not over, but it sure is easy to maintain. I have worked hard to develop rational beliefs that are the opposite of what I used to tell myself. I had to foster and nurture these new beliefs until they were stronger than the old. This was accomplished by learning

and using the SMART Recovery® tools over and over and over and . . .

I still get the odd thought pop up from the old me, but because the new rational beliefs are stronger, all it takes these days is a quick mental satirical, “Yeah, right,” and they are vanquished. The rest of the “yeah, right” statement is well imprinted on my brain. A good example: I woke up this morning from a dream where my subconscious was actually disputing the idea of using. I used to wake up with a sense of dread after using in my dreams. My “using” dreams seldom occur these days and it was nice to wake up this morning to the thought, “Well, of course I’m not going to!”

I commend you for starting the process. I hope you continue to do, say, think whatever it takes to see it through. If it seems like a fight then it’s time to fight back. I wish we could time travel and I could show you a possible future that is waiting for you; all I can do is beg you to keep fighting and to have faith.

The Sober Lifestyle: A Brave New World

by Grant Cleveland, Face-to-Face Meeting Attendee

I think it becomes obvious that one needs to undergo a lifestyle transformation to successfully stop drinking. It has as much to do with changes in perspective as changes in events, hangouts, and sometimes, friends. It’s the difference between lust and love, hedonistic cravings and contentedness, high-risk and low-risk behavior, staying out late and getting up early, acting in a dangerous way or in a predictable manner.

When sober, you spend your time differently. You won’t lose hours, days, and weeks to alcohol. Time will become yours—wanted or not. While I still have

to do some professional networking at bars, I’ve found that the perceived value of my drunken business and social interactions was overstated by my formerly drunken mind. I cannot think of one opportunity that I have missed because I was sober and not out until all hours of the night.

In building your new sober life, you may dedicate more of your time to your children, your spouse, or your job. You may want new friends—or you may long for the comfort of your old ones. It’s your choice and your responsibility for how you live. Think about it carefully.

In exploring your new lifestyle, you may uncover your hidden talents. For example, when I wasn’t drinking, I was able to paint. That was something I had done the first time I stopped drinking but that disappeared when I started drinking again. Now, the paintings I create give me a sense of accomplishment and pride I didn’t feel before.

You may not desire to lose all your friends during this transition, and I have a few words of advice about that. You didn’t “outgrow” drinking. You didn’t “move past that stage,” or “grow up.” Rather, you finally accepted that you cannot handle the effects of alcohol and are finally taking responsi-

bility for your past offensive actions.

Be careful not to impose judgment on your friends or associates who are still drinking, even if you think they should quit. There is nothing more annoying to someone who drinks than a holier-than-thou sober person. Remember, it was your bad choices, not theirs, that got you where you are.

Expected benefits of sobriety:

- More energy;
- Less depression;
- Less irritability; and
- Healthier lifestyle.

While I didn’t experience any of these benefits, the painting I mentioned earlier more than made up for it.

One therapist told me that engaging in fine arts has the same effect on the brain as talk therapy. I know that my



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painting brought me happiness I didn't expect. When I paint what I know to be truth, a deeper meaning shines through the finished work.

You have to make your own benefits from sobriety in your new lifestyle.

Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

It's important to remember that when you stop drinking, you will not turn back into the sober person you were before you started drinking. When I was drunk, I exhibited characteristics that I didn't when I was sober, and vice versa. The more heavily I drank, the more my personality split. I soon found myself living a double life. When I blacked out, I was extremely aggressive, hedonistic, and insensitive. When I was sober, I was a different person.

When I was drinking, alcohol still affected me. I felt more depressed and guilty. These feelings drove me to drink, and the cycle would repeat. I account for this as a lack of objectivity and self-control. The alcohol changed my judgment and values, making it difficult to get under control.

When the negative consequences amounted into an undeniable level and I was forced to gain control, I stopped drinking; however, my drunken persona did not disappear. The result is that I am now something

of a combination of my two formerly split selves.

It's important to decide what kind of person you want to be and to own that decision. Maybe you do hold back when you are sober. Now, you cross lines, even when you are sober. Some of this change is good. Hostility, aggression, and impatience may surface. People may accuse you of being a "dry drunk."

You'll fight with yourself, and struggle with who you are. Remember, it's your decision. Form a vision of the person you want to be. Believe in that person. If you do, a better you will emerge; conversely, if you don't, the opposite may happen and your problems may multiply.

Own this internal struggle, as it will help explain the way you feel throughout your healing. It's not an excuse. I'm a firm believer in owning one's faults; however, I think they're important from a personal-growth perspective.


During this transformation, it may be difficult to consider others' needs and wants. However, the sooner you do, the faster those around you will start to recover. Many of your relationships may need repairing. The longer you wait to fix them, the faster those relationships will fade.

I own a manufacturing company. When I stopped drinking, I expected it would thrive even more than it had when I was drinking. The opposite happened, and that took the wind out of my sails. The company broke down in every way conceivable. We had more than a half million dollars in backorders and hundreds of thousands of dollars in lost sales. Backorders continued to plague the first six months of the next year, too.

The explanation was simple: Reality caught up with me. My business had no systems, no inventory control, no processes, no documents, no benchmarks, no effective method of staffing, and no employee training. So the question wasn't, "Why did things go wrong?" but "Why didn't things go wrong sooner?"

I ran my business in the same short-term way I ran my life. My will was strong, even if my judgment was off. When I stopped drinking, and death became less imminent, my will subsided and grew weaker in all aspects of my life, including my business.

To fix my business and my life, I took a long-term perspective on doing what was obviously best for each. In my business, I promoted my best people and invested in training. I went from a




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completely horizontal configuration to one that was triangular. We codified processes and policies to avoid waste. We implemented the fundamentals of a sustainable enterprise.

In my life, I had to change my reckless behavior to accommodate the needs of my wife and three young children, keeping in mind our long-term happiness. I had to look at my behaviors and actions when I was sober and change them appropriately. Problems that were never mentioned when I was drinking began to surface faster than I could register. Before long, I was in a world of pain.

But, I took responsibility for my actions, words, and delivery. It turns out that people expect a lot more of you when you're not a belligerent drunk.

My business is now running like a well-oiled machine. My personal life is getting back on track. Excessive short-term thinking associated with substance abuse can increase the power of one's will, at great cost to those around you. Abstinence, however, can foster a long-term perspective that allows you to get to your end with less willpower.

This transition, from short- to long-term perspective, is not quick or painless. It's taken me more than a year to get there; I made many sacrifices along the way. I'm periodically rewarded with a sense of contentedness that I never felt before. My entire life is more secure, orderly, and sustainable.

I didn't reap the benefits of sobriety as immediately as I thought I would. Rather, I've had to nurture and coax them into existence. I'm happy I did.

Reflection In The Mirror

by Christopher Thomas, Facilitator, Boise, Idaho

When I look in the mirror today, I see hope and a future full of promise. I see myself for who I really am. I can't say that was always true. I saw myself as the person



I wanted other people to see me as. I thought it was easier to do that, because then I could control how people perceived me or judged me. At least that is what I kept telling myself. I was afraid of the truth, afraid of whom I really was.

I always thought that my drug use was my problem and mine alone. No one needed to know how bad it truly was. I was only hurting myself, so what did it matter. What a selfish belief and lie. It's funny how karma has a way of coming full circle.

Watching other people I care about and love destroy their lives because of drugs has been haunting and emotionally draining. Listening to the chaos, the lies, the manipulation, and excuses has been frustrating. I was that person, never the one on the other end. I had always been in the throes of my drug use or completely removed from it, never the one hurting as you watch someone destroy themselves.

Unfortunately and fortunately, I get it now. I get how I hurt people. I get how I disappointed people. I get that I was so unbelievably selfish. I get that my lies and manipulation got me the justice I deserved. I get that the mirror I had been looking in was broken and falling to pieces.

I have had to remove myself from those people, just as people who loved and cared about me have had to do the same. I have had to be honest with myself. I can lie to everyone out there, but I cannot lie to myself. Having seen my reality through other people and having to see my lies in their mirrors, I have realized many truths about myself.

The mirror I look in today is still the same broken mirror I have always had; however, I choose to take those broken pieces and create a beautiful mosaic that reflects exactly who I am. It reflects the truth. It reflects my faults, it reflects my addiction, it reflects my beauty, it reflects my strengths, it reflects my creativity, and it reflects the person I really am: me. I like who I see in the mirror today.

SMART Poem

by Alistair Muir, SMART Recovery UK® Facilitator

*It's a struggle recovering from dependence and depression
As problem follows problem, an infernal procession.*

*The angst and indignity engenders such stress
As your life lays before you an intolerable mess.*

*Self Management and Recovery Training was key
The program that was chosen to purify me.
Everyone is different but this was my choice
To stamp out the evil and regain my voice.*

*Motivation, problem solving, behaviour and cravings
Were targets as well as the madness and ravings
Of a man with a problem, a lack of direction
With a bent for a drink the worst predilection.*

*Self esteem was at zero and confidence low
My aim was to regain these and upon me bestow*

*A workable ethic of reliance and competence
Not degeneration and negative diffidence.*

*Along with a network of champions and friends
Recovery was possible and I've made great amends.
My life is all changing, the way always up
My chalice is full not a half empty cup.*

*I stand re-invented, my head held up high
Drinking is history such a waste and a lie;
An evil that tempts you to cheat and to hide
From relatives, friends and yourself you deride.*

*I'm positive now not a figure of fun
For I've taken the bull by the horns and I've won.
No-one can take this great victory away
My new life starts now, right here from today.*



SMART Ideas

An Analogy About Skills

by Kacie Best, Florida Regional Coordinator and Facilitator

I've started using the analogy of Sunday school and driving school.

Nothing says a person cannot use what is learned in Sunday school (church) to enhance their driving, especially their safety. But driving well requires the accumulation of a certain skill set, then adequate practice of those skills; otherwise, no amount of faith will likely be sufficient.

SMART's tools are useful in a similar way, and unlike learning how to parallel park, SMART tools help people learn

how to deal with life, even apart from addiction issues.

Truth Or Consequences: Living Deeply

by Hank Robb, PhD, ABPP

We usually think of "truth" as a correspondence between what we think, say, or write and something called "reality." I say I'm 5' 8" tall. If you measure me, sure enough, it's "true." I do measure 5' 8" tall.

Long before Dr. Phil made it his mantra, people were sarcastically, or just honestly, asking, "How's that working for you?" Thus, we have the opportunity to focus on one of two questions: "Is it true?" or "Is it helpful?" I suggest it will be more useful in living the life I most deeply want to focus on the latter.

I had to add the phrase "in living the life I most deeply want to live" because nothing is "helpful" in and of itself. To find out if something is helpful you have to first ask, "for what?" You have to have something you are trying to do in the

first place in order to determine if this or that is helpful or not. You might say that one difference between these two questions is that the first one starts with "reality" and looks for what words correspond to it while the second question starts with "purpose" and looks for what actions help accomplish it.

When it comes to "purpose," I like to think of those television screens that have a "picture within a picture" feature. There's a "little picture" and a "Big Picture." On fall Monday nights at my house, one picture has the football game, and one has Dancing with the Stars. Which picture is "Big" and which is "little" depends on who has the remote!

Fortunately, when it comes to living the life one most deeply wants to live, each of us is holding our remote. Though we are all living in the "little picture" of the moment, we don't have to live ONLY in the little picture. In any moment, we can focus on the Big Picture, the life we most deeply want to live.

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We can ask, “How does doing this or that right here, right now, fit with my Big Picture, the life I most deeply want to live?” I find that if I bother to actually ask the question, the answer comes quickly and clearly.

The trouble is that, more often than I would like, I think something like, “To heck with the Big Picture. I want this—NOW!” And, that thought is true. I really do want whatever it is NOW; but, when it comes to the consequences for the life I most deeply want to live, it often—not always, but often—just doesn’t work. So, what do I focus on, truth or consequences? I get to choose, and so do each of you.

Sometimes folks want to argue the truth of thoughts or statements like, “I’m an addict,” “I’m an alcoholic,” or “My addictive behavior is a disease, or the result of a disease.” Suppose that each of these statements is true.

How helpful is it to focus on those truths when it comes to living the life you most deeply want to live? “I’m an addict, I’m an addict, I’m an addict, etc.”

I’m can’t answer for you because I don’t have the data from your life. You do! If you switch from focusing on, “Is it true?” to, “How does it work in terms of living the life I most deeply want to live?” you’ll know quickly how it actually works in your life. If you really don’t know, try it and get the data on how it works—for YOU!

You can learn from others what kind of life they most deeply wanted and the actions that helped them pursue that life. SMART Recovery® meetings are an especially good opportunity for such learning because that is a main focus of the meetings.

It’s nice to know what doesn’t work but even more useful to know what does.

Only living people can focus on pursuing what they most deeply want in life. We’re still here. The consequences of addictive behavior simply won’t work with the life you most deeply want to live.

Truth or consequences? Reality or purpose? It’s a choice—even an exciting choice. And, you get to choose.



SMART Progress

Choice In Recovery And The First Amendment

by Claire Johnson Saénz, Esq.*

At SMART Recovery®, we believe that there is no right or wrong path to recovery, and that individuals seeking recovery have the highest chance of success when they have the opportunity to choose the pathway (or combination of pathways) that best suits them. Therefore, it is a secondary mission of SMART Recovery® to support choice in recovery, and we are devoted to getting the word out about the variety of recovery options that exist today. As part of that mission, we want individuals in the judicial system and other government systems to be informed not only about the existence of a variety of recovery paths, but of their legal obligation to offer options to those they serve.

One important and ongoing development in this area is the growing number of courts which have declared that mandated attendance at 12 step

programs (such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA), without providing the option of a non-faith-based alternative, violates the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

The First Amendment is part of the Bill of Rights, and begins with the statement that, “Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. . .” The first part of this statement is called the “Establishment Clause” and is sometimes referred to as the doctrine of separation of church and state. The Establishment Clause has been interpreted by the U.S. Supreme Court to mean that governmental bodies cannot establish a religion, prefer one religion over another, prefer religion over non-religion or prefer non-religion over religion. The second part of the statement is called the “Free Exercise Clause” and is sometimes referred to as the doctrine of freedom of religion. The Free Exercise Clause protects the individual’s right to freedom of conscience and free expression of religious beliefs.

Over the last 15 years, a number of appellate courts at the state and federal level have considered cases in which correctional departments and institutions, drug courts, probation officers and other state actors have required attendance at 12 step meetings. In these cases, failure to comply with such mandatory attendance carried serious penalties such as being sent or returned to prison, loss of parole opportunities, and loss of prison privileges such as family visitation.

Although not every court in the land has heard such a case (and, to date, the Supreme Court has not spoken on the issue), courts which have considered the constitutionality of mandated 12 step attendance have almost universally declared the practice unconstitutional, particularly where no non-faith-based option has been made available. Most

cases are decided under the Establishment Clause, but a few have been brought under the Free Exercise Clause. In general, although the courts have not declared 12 step programs to be formal religions, they have recognized that the programs are based on belief in a Higher Power, involve prayer, and contain sufficient religious components for mandatory attendance to give rise to a First Amendment violation.

In our efforts to make SMART Recovery® available to individuals involved in the criminal justice system, we discovered that a significant number of justice system personnel, from judges to prison administrators to probation officers, were unaware of the constitutional issues involved in mandatory 12 step attendance without choice. This was particularly troubling to us since at least one federal appellate jurisdiction—the 9th Circuit, by far the largest of the 13 federal courts of appeal, comprising the states of Alaska, Arizona, California, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, the Northern Mariana Islands, Montana, Nevada, Oregon and Washington—has declared the law on the matter so well established that parole officers should be aware of it and can be sued for monetary damages for ignoring it.

Therefore, in an effort to provide a resource for criminal justice personnel, individuals involved in the criminal justice system, and other interested parties, we have put together a list of a number of First Amendment/12 Step cases, including a brief synopsis of each and, where available, a link to a copy of the court decision. The list is available on the SMART Recovery® website at this link: <http://goo.gl/2FYxh>, and will be updated on an ongoing basis. The list does not constitute legal advice, but we hope it will serve as a convenient resource for those interested in this issue.

**Member of the SMART Recovery® Board of Directors and SMART Recovery® Court Team*

2011 Annual Conference Report

by Shari Allwood, Executive Director

Baltimore was the site of this year's SMART Recovery® Annual Conference, hosted on October 7–9.

Attendees from 18 states and three countries (Australia, India, and the UK) participated in the event. This year's conference shared a mixture of SMART tools, as well as an update on Recovery in the National Drug Control Strategy, the sciences of recovery, three spheres of health and their implications for recovery, and how to present SMART to treatment programs and referral resources. Participants also enjoyed an update about SMART Recovery Australia® and SMART Recovery UK® activities.

In addition to a big thanks to our local volunteers in Maryland, DC, and Virginia, we'd also like to thank our conference sponsors:

- ATON Center (www.atoncenter.com);
- Kolmac Clinic (<http://kolmac.com/>);
- Practical Recovery (www.practicalrecovery.com); and
- St. Gregory Retreat Center (www.stgregoryctr.com).

What was the buzz about the conference?

Here are some comments attendees wrote on their evaluation forms:

“As a first-time attendee, I did not know what to expect for group size and content depth of presentation. I met several people I know through the online community; I learned of additional resources and valuable information. The group was warm and outgoing.”



Friday afternoon's beautiful day for the Inner Harbor Tour.

“The educational sessions and quality of speakers was quite good; I am new to SMART and it was good to see the organization is growing and reaching out and very in-tune with getting the message out through current technology.”

“Excellent—presenters were knowledgeable, available, and had a wealth of ‘useable’ information.”

“Great, professional speakers, good content—much better than I had anticipated!”

“I came away from the conference with a ‘to do list’ that’s 21 points long!”

Can it get any better?

We strive to improve each conference based on participant feedback. The Annual Conference Committee will review this year's comments to make future improvements. Some of the comments the committee will consider are:

- More on sciences and recovery (more facts and research we can use in meetings).
- Make more time for interaction between attendees.
- More handout materials, including all speaker presentations.
- Provide a SMART “State of the Union” update.



Friday night's proud SMART Jeopardy Team winners!



Steve Gumbley, Chairman of the Board of Directors of *Faces & Voices of Recovery (FaVoR)* shared an update of FaVoR on Friday evening.



Reid Hester, PhD, presenting information about the SMART Recovery® web course development and study recruitment.



David Saenz, PhD, gave a great presentation entitled *Sciences and Recovery*.



Josette from the SMART AU office, and Richard from the SMART UK office.



Peter Gaumont, Chief, Recovery Branch, Office of National Drug Control Policy, provided an update on recovery in the National Drug Control strategy and ONDCP's new Recovery Branch.



Joseph Gagliardi, M.A., M.D., provided an outstanding presentation on *The 3 Spheres of Health: Implications for Recovery*.

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Saturday's lunch featured a presentation by SAMHSA's (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) Ivette Torres, reviewing Recovery Month. (It's been suggested that Ivette and her enthusiasm need to be cloned in the recovery community!)



Dr. George Kolodner, M.D. (right) gave an outstanding presentation on how SMART volunteers can best approach treatment programs and referral resources. Hugh Delaney, SMART Regional Coordinator, presented Dr. Kolodner with a bonsai tree as thanks for his support and the support the Kolmac Clinic provides in the DC area.



The "Volunteers Make a Difference" hour featured updates on committee activities. Featured in this photo are the SMART Recovery® Online (SROL) volunteers who attended at the Conference.



Sunday morning featured Tool Time, led by Jonathan von Breton, Clinical Mental Health Counselor and Director, SMART Recovery® Online, (left) and Dr. Joe Gerstein, SMART's founding president.



Participants broke into groups to role play a SMART meeting.

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2012 conference: When and where

We welcome one and all to next year's conference. Mark your calendars and plan to join us September 21–23, 2012 in Chicago! More details to come throughout the year.

**Annual Online Auction
Raises \$3,000**

by Jonathan von Breton, Director, SROL

On November 5, we had our annual celebration and fundraiser. This was the 12th anniversary of SMART Recovery® On-Line (SROL).

As usual, we had an amazing line up of guest speakers with excellent volunteer hosts.

Bill White, MA, Author, SMART Recovery® International Advisory Council, *The Changing Culture of Recovery in America*, hosted by Knittingkris.

Dr. Michael Edelstein, clinical psychologist, author of *Three Minute Therapy*; *The REBT Roots of SMART Recovery®*, hosted by Dee.

Jonathon Von Breton, Counselor, MA, LMHC, LCDP, *An Insider's Guide to the ABCs*, hosted by Aeptennislv.

Dr. Henry Steinberger, Psychologist, MSSW, PhD, APA-CPP, Acceptance: *The ABCs of REBT Version 2.0*, hosted by Jib.

Bill Knaus, Ed.D., Clinical psychologist, author of 25 books on practical applications of psychology, including *End Procrastination Now*; *Procrastination & ADD/ADHD*, hosted by Ohansen.

Joe Gerstein, MD, FACP, SMART Recovery® *Growth in Australia, the UK, and Africa compared with the US*, hosted by Bill D.

Anne Fletcher, author of *Sober for Good and Thin for Life*; *Many Routes to Recovery*, hosted by MomRox.

Steve Gumbley, Director of NE Addiction Technology Transfer Center at Brown University, MA, LCDP, *Being a Face in Voice of Recovery*, hosted by JvB.

Robert J. Meyers, PhD, internationally known speaker and trainer on CRA/CRAFT, author of *Get Your Loved One Sober*; *CRAFT and Trust Issues*, hosted by TwoPutts.

Dr. Hank Robb, PhD, ABPP, *Being Where You Are and Doing What's Important*, hosted by GJBXVI.

There was also a Volunteer Hour, presented by Kalar.

All of the speakers and hosts deserve a round of applause!

As this is one of SROL's major fundraising events, we had an auction (surprise, surprise) with more than 70 items on which to bid. Dick Bozian put up a \$250 matching pledge challenge. I volunteered to sing four rational humorous songs, one with my own lyrics (see below), if people pledged \$250. All told, the auction raised nearly \$3,000.

Events like these don't organize and run themselves, so a huge thank you to these organizers:

- Hammer: Main Organizer
- Allie: Auction Diva (Olive as assistant)
- Mata and Hammer: Auction photos
- John11: Auction list
- Richard and Hammer: Auction posts
- Momrox: Auction results
- Dee: Speaker lineup
- Kalar: Volunteer Hour
- Jodi: Telethon

A second thank you to Jodi at the central office. She organized the auction items as they came in, then packaged

and mailed them to winning bidders. This was no small task.

Now, as promised, here is a rational humorous song with my very own lyrics!

**Sung to the tune of
Old McDonald Had a Farm.**

Old MacNutty had a should, e i e i o.
And on his should should he had a must, e i e i o.
With a must-must here and must-must there
Here a must, there a must, everywhere a must-must.
Old MacNutty had a should, e i e i o
Old MacNutty had a should, e i e i o.
And on his should should he had an awful, e i e i o.
With a awful-awful here and an awful-awful there
Here an awful, there an awful, everywhere an awful-awful.
Old MacNutty had a should, e i e i o
Old MacNutty had a should, e i e i o.
And on his should should he had LFT, e i e i o.
With "I can't stand this!" and "I can't stand that!"
Here "I can't!, there "I can't!, everywhere "I can't stand!"
Old MacNutty had a should, e i e i o
Old MacNutty had a should, e i e i o.
And on his should should he rated folks, e i e i o.
With an "I'm a ****!" here and a "you're ****!" there.
"He's ****!, she's a ****!, everyone's a ****!-****!"
Old MacNutty had a should, e i e i o

Spreading The Word About SMART Recovery® To Treatment Professionals

by Patrick Garnett, Chicago, IL Facilitator and Regional Coordinator, IL

One of the challenges in SMART Recovery® is getting the word out about meetings because many people, including behavioral health professionals, have never heard of SMART.

To overcome this challenge, we decided earlier this year that it would be beneficial to give a presentation to local professionals to educate them on what SMART is and how it works. To do this, we realized a few things: we needed to find a location, contact local professionals, and create the presentation. Thankfully, we obtained a conference room at our Saturday meeting location (we are very grateful to Howard Brown Health Center for their continued generosity).

We then found a list of local professionals at www.psychologytoday.com and e-mailed each therapist to let them know about the presentation. This took a lot of time as there were almost 200 therapists in and around Chicago. We realized that, even if they couldn't attend, we would still be spreading the word about SMART, letting them know that it's available for their clients.

We also contacted multiple treatment facilities and half-way houses to let them know about it, and our local Volunteer Advisor helped out by inviting other therapists who are on his local listserves (Thank you, Kurt!).

Now, we just had to create the actual presentation! Instead of "reinventing the wheel," we posted on the SMARTCAL listserv and asked if anyone had a presentation they'd used. We were in luck (Thanks, Rod!). Rod sent us a wonderful PowerPoint presentation about SMART. We made a few minor changes to fit our presentation style and to make sure we were comfortable with it, and we were good to go.

On the morning of the presentation, we brought bagels, coffee, and juice to provide a comfortable networking environment for the attendees. Eight professionals attended the hour-long presentation and felt it was a great success! They asked many questions about SMART and told us that they felt SMART was a great option for their clients because it fit well with their therapy.

We were highly encouraged by the results and we intend to keep spreading the word about SMART by holding another presentation in January 2012.



President's Letter

A Glimpse Into The Differences Between SMART And The 12 Traditions

by Tom Horvath, President, SMART Recovery®

Although SMART Recovery® has been around for almost 20 years, there's still confusion in the recovery community, public, and treatment providers about the similarities and differences between SMART and 12-step groups.

Before I jump into this, I want to be clear: Every road to recovery is different. I encourage you to take the road that leads YOU to recovery.

Similarities

SMART and 12-step programs are nonprofit organizations that support individuals addicted to substances or behaviors. Both promote abstinence over moderation management.

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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Both kinds of groups ask participants for donations, sell copyrighted literature, protect trademarks, and have active websites.

Because we're all nonprofits, we must have a board of directors and meet the legal requirements of being a nonprofit. SMART and 12-step programs conduct the same basic business operations: lease space, pay for utilities, hire legal counsel, etc.

The primary differences in which the recovery consumer is interested are the programs SMART and 12-step groups offer. Some individuals recognize that both kinds of groups offer useful ideas about abstinence, and won't see important differences.

Differences

SMART's foundation is science, not spirituality. The SMART program evolves as new scientific findings about addiction and recovery emerge and become well established. Twelve-step programs—based on the AA model—haven't changed much since 1935 when Bill W. and Dr. Bob founded AA.

SMART teaches self-reliance rather than the 12-step programs' powerlessness. At SMART meetings, participants talk with one another rather than to one another. SMART encourages attendance for months to years, but generally not for a lifetime. SMART doesn't use sponsors and discourages labels such as "alcoholic" and "addict."

Beliefs about God or a higher power are not part of the SMART program, although 60 percent of respondents to this question in the 2010 SMART Recovery[®] annual participant survey said they believe in God or a higher power.

Participants in SMART may believe that addiction is a disease or a maladapt-

ive behavior or compulsion. SMART doesn't require participants to believe in one model or the other. Twelve-step programs subscribe to the disease model of addiction.

SMART doesn't require participants to:

- Take a moral inventory (although it encourages participants to engage in moral behavior as they define it);
- Make amends (although many participants do); or
- Reach out to others with similar problems (SMART invites participants to volunteer as meeting facilitators or to support the organization in any way they can).

Co-attendance

Many individuals attend SMART and 12-step groups. For them, the help they get from both kinds of groups outweighs the groups' differences.

In the 2010 survey, 85 percent of respondents who answered the question about joint attendance said they attend both kinds of groups (unfortunately, only about 40 percent of the 500 individuals who took the survey responded to this question).

Nevertheless, SMART participants who also attend 12-step meetings aren't uncommon. Perhaps future research can determine how these individuals use joint attendance.

In a future column, I'll examine how the 12 traditions set the "anonymous" programs apart from SMART.

I wish you all a safe end to 2011 and a joyous new year.

Tom Howarth

Book Review



Dealing With Addiction—Why the 20th Century Was Wrong

Book Review by Michelle M., Volunteer Facilitator, Wisconsin

In *Dealing With Addiction—Why the 20th Century Was Wrong*, Peter Ferentzy tries to show how today's practices of addiction professionals, the 12-step movement, and treatment centers damage and even kill people who are suffering from addictions. He's trying to wake people up, help addicts find a political center, and generally change the treatment industry and recovery culture.

Ferentzy has a PhD in social and political thought from York University. He is also a self-proclaimed crack head. Two women to whom he was close recently died from their addictions. Their deaths moved him to write this book. He feels today's ideas and practices of dealing with addiction contributed to their deaths and to the deaths of others with addictions.

He doesn't believe that addicts need to hit bottom or that abstinence is the only real solution. Ferentzy cites that improvements of other medical conditions are celebrated when when they don't hit the 100-percent mark. His example is that a blind person who regains 50 percent of his sight through surgery is successful, while an 80-percent decrease in drug use is a failure. He writes that if total abstinence is the only marker for success, 95 percent will fail. I found these examples muddled and in need of greater coherence.

Ferentzy speaks highly of moderation management, harm reduction, and substitute drugs. In chapters on co-dependency and enabling, Ferentzy disagrees with the tough-love approach. He describes how we're all dependent on one another. His theory is that enabling an addict is really the only compassionate solution.

Ferentzy believes 12-step programs are unsuccessful. He questions the rigidity of the of the programs' processes. He criticizes the "one addict helping another" theory, writing that a person entering recovery needs more help than just the experiences of another addict. He writes, "The kind of serious knowledge we need is constantly sidelined because the system is packed full of undereducated, or semi-educated, loudmouths who overestimate the power of their own stories" (page 29).

He observes that history reveals changing viewpoints about addiction. For example, in the 19th century, society didn't stigmatize little old ladies drinking cocaine-laced tea. Nobody noticed anything amiss with the "coke" in Coca-Cola.

Although Ferentzy wants his book to be "short and fun to read," I found no fun in reading. He uses harsh presentations and excessive repetition of examples that are often confusing. If you find offensive language distasteful, this book might not be for you.

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!

Ferentzy begs addicts to stand tall together to defeat political oppression and to change the industry and society's understanding of addiction. However, I feel his repeated use of derogatory labels keeps people with addictions chained to the gutter.

If you're looking for an updated approach to treating addiction, you might find this book useful. His suggested reading section is extensive; however, while his ideas are interesting and fresh, the book lacks clarity, has too much offensive language, and is repetitious.



International Development

SMART Recovery Australia® Diverse Projects Touch Diverse Lives

by Jim Villamor, Coordinator, SMART Recovery AU®

Indigenous project

Josette from the SMART AU office, and Cathy Cooper, indigenous consultant, will travel to Batemans Bay, NSW, to conduct facilitator training for 16 indigenous workers who live and work in this area. This was organized through the Aboriginal Medical Services (AMS). Cathy will help us gain the trust of and respect within the indigenous community across Australia.

SMART AU was invited to Alice Springs, Northern Territory, by the Grog

Mob and the Bush Mob to conduct a two-day SMART facilitator training in September. The Grog Mob is a treatment program that helps Aboriginal people with addictions to alcohol and drugs.

The Bush Mob runs programs for young people who are disengaged or marginalized in their homes or communities, or are at risk. These youths may be subject to substance abuse, violence, unsafe living environments, and disempowerment. The Bush Mob takes kids to the desert so that they can reconnect with their culture and incorporates SMART during these experiences.

SMART will soon be a court-mandated program in the Northern Territory, so it's crucial that we get community groups running by 2012. We continue to write grants to fund these programs.

Vietnamese project

The Drug and Alcohol Multicultural Education Centre (DAMEC) completed translating its manual from English to Vietnamese. It will begin piloting SMART in jails and in the community in February 2012.

Working with DAMEC will hopefully open more doors so that we can translate SMART into other languages, which is imperative in Australia. We'll learn a lot from the Vietnamese Project.

Volunteer program

SMART AU joined forces with Volunteers Australia to train volunteers that will facilitate new and existing SMART meetings. So far, we've trained 12 volunteers. The organization also supports SMART on current projects, including "Be SMART: Family and Carer's Program". We placed another ad looking for a volunteer to write grants for SMART AU.

Juvenile justice, NSW

SMART AU conducted two successful in-services to juvenile justice, their drug

and alcohol workers, counsellors, and psychologists to launch SMART in their centres next year. A lot of juvenile justice workers will participate in the SMART facilitator training. They will create more teen and youth SMART groups so teens leaving juvenile justice will have SMART support groups to attend. Organisations such as Holyoke, Catholic Care, and Oasis are interested in partnering with SMART AU to provide teen and youth recovery services.

Facilitator training

SMART AU's facilitator training is booked until late February.

Since September, we have provided facilitator training at Alice Springs, NT; Newcastle, Brisbane, Queensland, Bateman's Bay, Hobart, Tasmania, and Gundagai, NSW.

Richard, a consultant, and I completed facilitator training at the Centre for Addiction Medicine in Parramatta, NSW. The Centre for Addiction Medicine programs help to minimise alcohol and other drug-related harm for residents of the Western Sydney area. The entire community has access, and the centre provides interpreters for most languages. Specialist areas include a drug-use and pregnancy clinic, a youth drug and alcohol service, a hepatitis C clinic, a cannabis clinic, and inpatient and outpatient services.

We increased our in-house trainings to twice a month to keep up with demand. We hope this will equate to new SMART groups beginning next year.

USA Annual Conference

Josette attended the annual SMART USA Conference in Baltimore in October. She met other facilitators, participants, and Board Members at the

conference. These conferences allow SMART AU to connect with people from across the globe, which helps to bridge the distance between us.

Final notes

Jim and Josette thank everyone for their 2011 contributions. We look forward to moving together in 2012. The summer is quiet for us over Christmas and New Year so we'll take some time off to visit family and friends. We'll resume work in mid-January. Here's wishing everyone a happy and healthy holiday season.

SMART Recovery UK® Update

by Richard and Carol, SMART Recovery UK® Office

Progress continues to be strong in the UK. We are particularly pleased to have recently published a new UK Facilitators Manual which is being considered by the US team as the basis for a new US / global document. We are also working on other materials, both for the UK and with the Document Update Team that will produce new materials for the US and elsewhere.

Our training continues to grow, with over 200 completers so far this year—roughly half of which are aiming to be peer facilitators and the other half are treatment professionals in our partnership sites. There are now roughly 200 care and treatment services working with us to help get meetings started in their local communities and within their services.

This high level of interest has been encouraged by a refocusing of national drugs strategy by our government toward recovery. Treatment providers are under enormous pressure to help their service users sustain abstinence after leaving treatment and they increasingly understand that SMART Recovery® groups can help a great deal. They are therefore

keen to help us introduce their service users to SMART—and most treatment here is not 12-step based.

We have also moved offices. Our new mailing address is: 27, Huntly Street, Inverness, IV3 5PR.

There are challenges in growing rapidly and we only have a small number of facilitators who have run more than a few dozen meetings. Over the next year we are confident the network will deepen as well as widen and hope to develop a network of regional coordinators. The to do list is long but the energy and commitment of our facilitators carries us all forward!

Canada Is Getting SMARTer As More People Attend More Meetings

by Curtis Boudreau, Facilitator, Western Canada Regional Administrator

Hello to the SMART Recovery® world from Alberta!

It seems like perfect timing that right around the time that the winter *News & Views* is published, a great topic was brought up on SMARTCAL: How can we effectively market the wonderful product that we have to offer the addiction community? All I know is what we've been doing up here in Alberta is working wonders in growing our brand in Canada. I have a presentation that takes less than one hour, and at the end, everyone is not only smiling, but also feeling empowered. Empowerment is one of the things we can offer someone struggling with addiction. All I wanted to know when I got into recovery was, "What can I do to get better?" and "Please give me some tools."

In the September issue of our newsletter, I outlined some of the things we're doing that are working very well. On

SMARTCAL, I'll share what is actually working, not just theories that might work. It will be wonderful to share our hard-won successes with the rest of SMART.

In Calgary, we now have four well-attended meetings each week. Twenty to 30 people attend our Monday and Wednesday meetings. We still average three to five newcomers per meeting. The format for these two meetings is somewhat educational because we help attendees to use our tools.

On Thursday we put the tools to use by using ideas from the check-in. Saturdays are our Lifestyle Balance meeting. We share how we're using the tools to stay clean each week. Thursday meetings average about 15 participants; on Saturdays, we usually get about 30 participants.

Edmonton is running smoothly. Tim said attendance is always in the double digits. A core group shows up each week. He is looking forward to having some attendees take facilitator training to expand SMART in Edmonton.

Lethbridge is almost up and running. Micheline came to Calgary to see how we're running our meetings. She'll use some of what she learned to get the Lethbridge meeting going again.

Carrie now runs a weekly meeting in Medicine Hat. I'm hopeful that we'll soon see weekly meetings in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan; Winnipeg, Manitoba; and Red Deer, Alberta.

Things seem to keep rocking and rolling up here in Alberta. It has been a lot of work, but it sure has been worth it. When someone comes to a meeting and I get to see the light bulb come on over their head, and they realize that "Yes, I can do this," it keeps me coming back.



From Beyond the Walls
Look for articles in future issues...

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.

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

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