

~ "This issue's theme is: *Development of Change.*" ~



President's Letter

The 2007 SMART Recovery® Annual Conference

This year we had a new type of SMART Recovery® annual conference. Unlike the years since 1996, we did not have a new facilitator training as the conference centerpiece. Instead, we invited only "family," individuals who are active volunteers in SMART Recovery. There were a total of 28, including Dawn Adamson (Canada), Bronwyn Crosby and Jim Villamor (Australia), Henn Koch (Sweden and Estonia), and Fraser Ross and Tom McIntosh (Scotland). New York City had the most representa-

tives, with six (Michler Bishop, Gary Bagley, Brett Saarela, Ana Cooperwasser, Peter Cusack and Eric Watkins).

The distance training has been effective at training new meeting facilitators, at much less expense to everyone involved. Therefore, this year's annual conference was devoted to a day-long planning session (on Saturday, November 3) involving everyone. The Board met all day Friday. Getting to the meeting location was lengthy enough for most of us that even most US attendees had a full day's travel on either side of the event.

We met at the Stanford Sierra Conference Center, situated on a small lake (Fallen Leaf Lake, perhaps a square mile in size) just south of Lake Tahoe. The setting is beautiful, and allowed for morning and late afternoon hikes, which a

number of us enjoyed, through the trees, up hillsides, scrambling on rocks, and exploring streams and waterfalls.

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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)

The Center is owned and operated by Stanford University for its alumni in the summer, and outside events in the spring and fall. Meals were served in the dining room. Because the other event scheduled for that weekend cancelled, we had the place to ourselves. We may return there in a few years. We'll need to decide whether the beauty and tranquility of the setting makes up for the time it takes to get there. Personally, it was like a great summer camp for grownups. I thoroughly enjoyed the setting and my companions.

The planning session is part of the planning process the Board initiated with an online survey some months ago. Thank you to all who participated in the survey! We are still interpreting the results. The Board will continue the process with a meeting this spring in New York City.

The Saturday session aimed to address the most basic questions about SMART Recovery®: Where are we? Where do we want to be? How do we get there? It was not our immediate purpose to answer these questions definitively. Rather, with the diversity of perspective and location in the room, we wanted to assure that our initial drafts of the answers were addressing all the issues they needed to. In particular the presence of non-US representatives was enlightening, and allowed us to look at how culture, the strength or absence of a national health service, and the relative strength of



2007 Annual Conference Participants

12-step groups need to be taken into account in shaping an international organization, one whose core principles can accommodate all of these differences. Along the way we shared a great deal of information about what is working in different localities (and cultures), and began to make sense of how different situations and cultures give rise to different needs. Because we had Saturday evening to have dinner and socialize, the meeting informally extended well beyond its official end at 5pm.

The questions that emerged out of this meeting are worthy of consideration by everyone involved with SMART Recovery®. Here are a few of the noteworthy ones. What is "core" SMART Recovery®, and what is acceptable variation in different cultures (including SOL)? All recovery approaches establish some ratio of self-reliance to reliance on outside help. What is the ratio we wish to have, and how do we describe it? What roles (in addition to facilitator) can we establish to increase participant involvement? What roles should professionals have in SMART

Recovery® (an especially important issue country by country)? How can we imbed our core messages into all of our language, literature and meeting rituals, even in subtle ways, so that we are clear and consistent? What is the minimal level of meeting availability we need to have in each locality, so that we can say that SMART Recovery® is a realistic option for anyone who wants to attend? Should this minimum level be established as a public goal? How do we simplify our language and literature so that we reach the broadest possible audience, and attract more facilitators, without diluting our core messages? Or should we accept that we are not going to have a broad audience and focus on quality maintenance and improvement rather than on growth? How do we promote increased contributions during the "pass the hat" portion of the meeting? Given the rapid growth in non-US countries, how can this be supported?

I was impressed with the generous and hard-working attitude that attendees brought to this

meeting. "I want to learn how to support my local facilitators better. I want to create the right space for a sustainable, cohesive community. I want to be clearer about my role, so I can perform it better. I want everyone who needs SMART Recovery® to know about us and have access to a meeting. I want to contribute to SMART Recovery® as a global entity. I want to help change the world!"

At the end of the official meeting we each made a commitment to activities we would be engaging in back home. You are likely already seeing some of these commitments in action. On behalf of the Board and the entire SMART Recovery® organization, thanks to all who made the effort to attend and contribute!

Tom Howarth



SMART Progress

Welcome Stephen Baxter, Our Newest Board Member

Effective December 29th, the SMART Recovery® Board of Directors warmly welcomed Stephen Paul Baxter for a two-year term on the Board of Directors.

Stephen is a graduate of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and received his MBA from the Harvard Graduate School of Business. He has held numerous senior executive positions in high-tech companies, with emphasis on management, marketing, sales, customer support, and product management.

A former resident of Massachusetts, Stephen has recently settled in Atlanta, Georgia, to enjoy his retirement.

Stephen has actively served as a volunteer for a variety of non-profits, including homeless shelters, schools for disadvantaged children, and a children's cancer and leukemia program. His interests include bridge, cooking, travel, and golf. His interest in travel has taken him to several dozen countries throughout the world.

The Board looks forward to the many insights and ideas Stephen's expertise will provide!

Welcome Bill White, Our Newest Member of the International Advisory Council

SMART Recovery® is pleased to announce a new addition to our International Advisory Council.

William L. White is a Senior Research Consultant at Chestnut Health Systems / Lighthouse Institute and past-chair of the board of Recovery Communities United. Bill has a



Master's degree in Addiction Studies and has worked full time in the addictions field since 1969 as a street worker, counselor, clinical director, researcher, and well-traveled trainer and consultant. He has authored or co-authored more than 270 articles, monographs, and research reports, as well as 13 books. His book, *Slaying the Dragon: The History of Addiction Treatment and Recovery in America*, received the McGovern Family Foundation Award for the best book on addiction recovery. Bill was featured in the Bill Moyers' PBS special, "Close To Home: Addiction in America," and Showtime's documentary, "Smoking, Drinking, and Drugging in the 20th Century."

Bill's sustained contributions to the field have been acknowledged by awards from the National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers, the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, NAADAC: The Association of Addiction Professionals, the

American Society of Addiction Medicine, and the Native American Wellbriety Movement. The Johnson Institute has just published Bill's widely read papers on recovery advocacy in a book titled *Let's Go Make Some History: Chronicles of the New Addiction Recovery Advocacy Movement*.

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International Development

News from Australia

It is a very exciting time in Australia, because SMART Recovery® Australia is now a not-for-profit, charity organization. SMART Recovery® had a two-year grant from the AERF (Alcohol Education Rehabilitation Foundation), which expired in December 2006. During this two-year period SMART Recovery® managed to set up 45 groups in New South Wales (NSW). This June, a private benefactor, who wanted to assist the organization fulfill its goal of going nationwide and providing SMART Recovery® groups throughout Australia,

approached us. With the support from St Vincent's Hospital, SMART Recovery® moved to its new location at Haymarket in the Sydney Central Business District.

Josette Freeman and Jim Villamor are the coordinators of the program. Both Josette and Jim worked for SMART Recovery® at St Vincent's and were eager to take on the challenge.

SMART Recovery® Australia has spent the last three months re-establishing itself in the community and reaching out to some rural country towns that are in desperate need of a drug and alcohol self help program. Recently, Josette and Jim travelled to Bourke, NSW. Bourke has a high indigenous population and SMART groups would benefit the community in many ways.

The Corrective Services in NSW, Queensland, and Tasmania have adopted SMART Recovery® as their main CBT program for inmates with a drug and alcohol offense. Inmates will receive

training in SMART Recovery® and will attend SMART Recovery® groups when they are released. This means that more SMART Recovery® groups will be needed in the communities to assist these people. The inmates' feedback about the SMART Recovery® program has been very positive.

In other exciting news, SMART Recovery® Australia has been recognized by the Department of Health as a suitable self-help CBT treatment program in New South Wales. This means that we will have the Department's backing, which adds more credibility to the program in Australia.

There is a very strong interest in SMART Recovery® and we are all very excited about its expansion and increased ability to assist the many communities throughout the country. In 2008, Josette and Jim will visit Melbourne, Brisbane, and Perth to assist with getting SMART groups established.

If you plan to visit Australia, please contact both Josette and Jim, because we'd like to show you our beautiful country. We are wishing everyone a safe and happy New Year.

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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Further gains in Scotland

by Tom Horvath, President, SMART Recovery

On December 8th in Edinburgh I made a presentation on SMART Recovery® to the Scottish Futures Forum, a task force set up by the Scottish Parliament to propose improvements in that nation's response to substance addiction.

The day also included two presentations by Linda Sobell, Ph.D., internationally recognized addiction scientist and member of the SMART Recovery® International Advisory Council, on motivational interviewing and self-change, and



an update and dialogue on the Futures Forum proposal thus far and plans for its completion. The dialogue included Dr. Sobell, Fraser Ross, Executive Director SMART Recovery® UK, myself, and four Futures Forum staff. The Futures Forum is having monthly meetings such as this one, over the course of a year, in preparation for releasing their recommendations this summer.

The Futures Forum had gone to some expense to get both Dr. Sobell and I there for the day, and they fortunately were able to leverage our presence. The Futures Forum director and I had a brief BBC Scotland radio interview that

morning, and later in the morning Dr. Sobell and I were interviewed by a leading national paper, The Scotsman. Both interviews focused on the kinds of innovations Dr. Sobell and I were there to discuss, in particular consideration of harm reduction and how to promote self-change (especially using SMART Recovery®).

Scotland has a national health service. Most industrialized nations except the US also have one. In Scotland the universal availability of SMART Recovery® would be a cost-saving option for the

government. Individuals who might otherwise seek services might find sufficient help by attending SMART Recovery®. Individuals who might seek after-care services might find SMART Recovery® sufficient for that purpose. Furthermore, 12-step groups do not have the widespread acceptance that they have in the US, and SMART Recovery® is highly compatible with the services addiction clients typically receive in Scotland. With these facts in mind I suggested to the Futures Forum that one of their recommendations be that Scotland completely fund the existence of a Scottish SMART Recovery® Central

Office, to include an executive director, an administrative assistant, office space, travel expenses and related costs. This is consistent with one of their emerging recommendations, that as much as possible of the responsibility for recovery be allowed to remain with the client.

The Scottish Parliament is a dramatically modern concrete, glass and wood structure set in a city of old (and some very old) stone buildings, including Edinburgh Castle, some of whose components date from the 1200s. There was no shortage of rain and wind, temperatures just above freezing, or darkness, with usable daylight available only from about 8:30am to 3:30pm. Perhaps related, there is no shortage of pubs either. It is estimated that in Scotland there are 1 million (of 5 million) with some level of alcohol problems, and over 50,000 individuals with serious other drug problems.

In Inverness, where Fraser lives, I got to meet some of the local facilitators. They have effectively established SMART Recovery® locally and woven it into local treatment services. I also got to have an extended discussion with Chris Darges, SMART Recovery® UK board member, and briefer discussions with Ian Smiley, board president, and Anni Stonebridge, a former board member still active with us.

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It is hard for me to imagine a better host than Fraser Ross. He efficiently oversaw both my visit and Dr. Sobell's, and gracefully managed changing situations including late flights and multiple airports. If there are 5 million Scots, Fraser seems to know half of them. His warm and friendly nature is becoming known to the rest. We had a continuous feeling of being among friends. I stayed a day after Dr. Sobell left, and Fraser gave me a tour of the countryside. In the evening I got to have dinner prepared by his wife Shirley. As previous SMART Recovery® visitors to Scotland can verify (this lists includes Joe Gerstein, Michler Bishop, Jonathan von Breton, Tom Litwicki, Barry Grant and Bronwyn Crosby, as well as previous visits by Linda Sobell), a delicious dinner at the Ross home is a highlight of any visit.

I expect we will be hearing more good news from Scotland. I look forward to visiting again, possibly as soon as this summer, when the Futures Forum releases its recommendations. In the meantime we will be in communication with them, hoping to establish Scotland as a demonstration of what an entire national recovery system can look like when SMART Recovery® is fully integrated within it.

Book Review



Addiction-Proof Your Child

by Stanton Peele, PhD, JD

Reviewed by Rich Dowling, MA, LPC, MAC, Founding Board Member, SMART Recovery®, & Owner, The Thought ExchangeSM Center for Personal Achievement

In his latest book, *Addiction-Proof Your Child*, addiction specialist, lawyer, and author, Stanton Peele, states that “the ultimate goal (of parenting) is that your children find meaning in life and seek positive activity and accomplishment.” He wrote this book not to scare, but to empower parents as they try to balance protectiveness with fostering independence in their offspring. It is that responsibility Peele considers “the most essential task in combating addiction in children.” While he acknowledges “there is no easy formula,” Peele offers sound advice, largely based on solid, scientific research. As well, he warns readers to avoid relying solely on those who claim to be “experts.”

Peele considers individuals “addicted” when their use of mind-altering substances, or involvement in certain activities, “...seriously detract(s) from their ability to function...” This seems

straightforward, but no work by Stanton Peele is without what some will see as controversial issues. An example is his suggestion to allow children to consume a moderate amount of alcohol during family dinners as a way to model and encourage responsible alcohol use. He cautions, however, against doing so if there is a family history of addiction and if the children have emotional problems. Peele offers readers methods for “helping children limit the damage of negative behaviors, keeping them safe so they have the chance to outgrow those behaviors.” This harm reduction idea addresses the fact that some children will use alcohol and other drugs despite a parent's best efforts to encourage otherwise.

In Chapter Two, Peele declares what unfortunately is controversial in America: “Accuracy and relevance are critical elements of successful drug education.” His use, however, of the labels “addict” and “alcoholic,” and the phrase “alcohol and drugs,” may partly contradict his declaration. The term “alcohol and drugs” implies that alcohol is not a drug, and it can imply that alcohol is less harmful than other drugs. In Chapter Two, Peele accurately states, “Regular heavy drinking by youngsters in the United States is much more a problem than drugs.”

Labels such as “alcoholic” and “addict” are overgeneralizations and can cause harm because people identify themselves with the labels, which can set up self-fulfilling

prophecies. However, Peele does encourage parents to avoid creating “self-fulfilling prophecies” and offers them ways to avoid doing so. He also teaches readers to use the terms, abuse and dependence, which refer to behavioral criteria rather than to labels.

This informative and encouraging book offers realistic help for parents who want to prevent addiction in children or who want to seek treatment for children who do show signs of addiction. Through case histories and relevant information, Peele shows how different parenting styles can affect the emotional health of children, and in the case of three of them, increase children’s susceptibility to emotional distress and addiction. He explains why permissive, neglectful, and authoritarian parenting styles easily increase that susceptibility.

Permissive parents allow children “to do pretty much what they want”; neglectful parents generally don’t know what their children are doing; and authoritarian parents are over involved and over directive, telling their children how to think and react. Peele promotes “authoritative” parenting as most appropriate, because it allows for “independence of thought and action,” while expressing “unconditional love for (the) child and establishing clear boundaries.”

Other facets of “addiction-proofing children” Peele covers are

discussions of treatment models and the ever increasing use of medications for children showing signs of addiction. He describes treatment models that prove most effective, noting that research clearly shows traditional options do little good. He points out that most people gain independence from addictions on their own. With regards to medications, he cautions that many of these drugs “haven’t been studied for the conditions for which they are prescribed.”

On the whole, *Addiction-Proof Your Child* is an excellent, readable resource for conscientious parents and professionals, and I recommend it highly. More of Dr. Stanton Peele’s professional expertise is available at www.peele.net.



SMART Ideas

Change or Suffer: The Choice Is Up to You

by Hank Robb, PhD, ABPP

I think the title of this article is a good description of SMART Recovery®’s philosophy. Individuals can continue as they have been, or they can change, and they get to

choose. Perhaps they can change their circumstances, perhaps not. They can always change the way they relate to their circumstances. Even if we cannot immediately change the frequency, intensity, and duration of urges, for example, we can choose not to act on them. As a practical matter of fact, when urges are not acted on, then over time they tend to reduce in frequency, intensity, and duration, such that they may not occur for months or years. So, urges can be changed eventually, if not immediately.

We don’t HAVE TO change. Continuing as we are is a choice the universe allows us to make. This is important because the more we pound ourselves, or others, with HAVE TO, HAVE TO, HAVE TO change, the more we feel like slaves to change rather than people exercising free choice. And, who wants to feel like a slave?! We may not be free to avoid the consequences of our actions, but we are free to choose the actions we take.

Of course, to achieve certain things, there are other things that have to be done. To get paid, you (mostly) have to go to work. Keep chasing down “to get this, you have to do that,” and eventually you arrive at something you WANT. And, you do not HAVE TO get what you WANT! An unfortunate fact of life? You bet! And a fact of life nonetheless.

Choosing to have what we want in life is a choice we sometimes do have, but not always. We may be able to choose a neighborhood, or a dwelling, in which we

actually want to live. But who chooses to have urges to act addictively? Hardly anyone! However, a choice that is always available is to relate to life in one way rather than another. If your current way of relating brings more suffering than you want, then change or continue suffering. The choice is up to you.

What SMART Recovery® Has Meant to Me... or How I Gave Up Hangovers and Poor Sleep

by Rick in Oregon

I attended, somewhat reluctantly, my first SMART Recovery® meeting in early April 2006. I immediately felt at ease with the people and the two facilitators. I had never been to any group to deal with addictive behaviors. I was not totally ready to deal with mine at that time. Over time that changed as I learned to apply the tools that SMART Recovery® offered, and as I adapted to the group. I first came to please someone else and ended up pleased with myself.

If I had to face up to my situation it needed to be done through a system that used scientific reasoning and internal will power. For me, faith-based programs held little or no appeal. I do not believe that one shoe fits all. I had, however, found my shoe with SMART Recovery®, as

this was a program that offered a methodology that I could feel comfortable with and worked for me.

I have attended the same SMART Recovery® meeting for over 19 months. I have continued because it provides me some reassurance about where I am now in my life. It also gives me the opportunity to give back to new people

what I received when I started coming to the meetings. It is a very positive place to be when you can reassure others that there are attainable goals, and where

you can tell them what you have learned and used. I find it very useful to be able to share information and to have a discussion of people's issues and thoughts. A system that moves from anecdotal to shared input is invaluable. Most people seem to

have something useful to share once they become acclimated to the group.

SMART Recovery® provides a toolbox of concepts to work with.

These include the ABC's (also known as the ACB's). The ABC's are a way to write down your beliefs and how those beliefs can lead to addictive behaviors. It then challenges you to dispute

those beliefs leading to one's downfall.

Another useful tool is the cost-benefit analysis. This is a way to list long-term harms of addictive

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 Emmett Velten, Editor, via email: ev_verb@msn.com. Unsolicited material is most welcome!

This was the most useful tool for me. Once I was able to compare the "pleasures" and "justifications" for what I was doing with the benefits of not doing so, it became readily apparent that it was not worth it to continue

behaviors and compare them to the short term "benefits" of those behaviors. This was the most useful tool for me. Once I was able to compare the "pleasures" and "justifications" for what I was doing with the benefits of not doing so, it became readily

apparent that it was not worth it to continue. Armed with these tools I was able to make some rational choices in my life. When I would have an urge I would think about the cost-benefit analysis, and this would help me say no to the urge and help let it pass. There have been many occasions over the last year where it would have been easy for me to justify a drink or two based on my old ways of thinking. These tools helped me through these times. After a while it didn't take much to get past any temptations or to dispute my old irrational beliefs.

I have reached the point where drinking holds no appeal to me. I have been around people who are drinking and find myself to be more bemused by their conduct than anything else. As time has gone by, I have been intrigued by how little I miss it—and I thought I would never want to, or be able, to quit.

I know my experiences are unique, but I believe that the SMART Recovery® program contains useful tools for almost anyone who is struggling with addictive or compulsive behaviors. While a different type of program may suit some people better, I think even they could gain some valuable insight from SMART Recovery®.

9th Circuit Rules Government Officials Personally Liable for Mandated 12-step Attendance

by Tom Horvath

Reprinted by permission from the newsletter of the Division on Addictions of the American Psychological Association (Div. 50)

In September the 9th Circuit ruled 3-0 that the unconstitutionality of government mandated 12-step attendance is clearly established and therefore a government official who mandates 12-step attendance to any person is personally liable for damages. The ruling extends rulings beginning in 1996, by the 2nd, 3rd, 7th and 8th circuit courts, as well as by several state supreme courts. These rulings were all based on findings that AA and other 12-step groups are religious enough that mandated attendance violates the establishment clause of the constitution's first amendment ("Congress shall pass no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibit the free expression thereof"), popularly referred to as the "separation of church and state."

The 9th circuit ruling is the first to set aside a government official's qualified immunity from liability in this area. The case involved Inouye, a Buddhist and parolee, who refused to attend AA/NA meetings. Because of this refusal, his parole officer, Nanamori, ordered Inouye back

to prison, where he died. The case has been remanded back to the district court to determine damages.

The ruling is divided into Background, Analysis and Conclusion. From the Analysis: "This case comes to us on a grant of summary judgment...and we must make all inferences of fact in favor of the nonmoving party, Inouye...we assume that Inouye's participation [in] the AA/NA program was a compulsory condition of parole. Inouye had objected in advance of parole to such a program but was assigned to participate in one anyway, and was also "ordered" to continue in the program after threatening to sue program officials. There is no evidence that Inouye was ever told that he had a choice of programs. Under these circumstances, a jury could infer that participation was coerced rather than voluntary... Nanamori does not argue that ordering Inouye to participate in a religion-based drug treatment program was constitutional. Instead, his defense, accepted by the district court, is that the law on the matter was not clearly established at the time he supervised Inouye's parole and that he, therefore, is immune from suit. We hold, on the contrary, that the law was and is very clear, precluding qualified immunity, and on that ground reverse the district court."

In a footnote to the Conclusion (#16) the court also raises the question of whether allowing 12-step attendance to fulfill a support group attendance mandate is unconstitutional: “We do not decide when, if at all, non-coercive endorsement or encouragement of participation in AA/NA or other religion-based programs is unconstitutional or when, if ever, a parole officer simply allowing or encouraging, but not requiring, such participation would lose qualified immunity.”

Full text of the case, *Inouye v. Nanamori*, #06-15474, filed September 7, 2007, is at <http://www.ca9.uscourts.gov/ca9/newopinions.nsf/>

Commentary: There is a large potential impact of this ruling. In many areas non-12-step treatment and/or support groups may not be available. Will these alternative programs become available quickly enough? Who will staff them, and how well? Would “equal protection under the law” (the 14th Amendment) require the government to provide alternative programs if requested, just as it provides a public defender for those who cannot afford an attorney? Would courts decide to stop mandating treatment and/or support groups rather than face the current or potential requirements of this decision, particularly

if 12-step based treatment or group attendance were ruled to be not allowable for complying with this mandate? Given that criminal justice referrals to the US addiction treatment system are a major source of clients, this ruling and possible subsequent rulings have the potential to dramatically alter the size (up or down) and orientation of the system.

Volunteer Rewards

As posted on the SMART Recovery® message boards in November 2007 by Yesterdaywas

Hi everyone!

One of the things some of us take advantage of is the option of volunteering at SMART Recovery® Online. I have found it a useful tool for my own recovery.

It feels good to greet people here, take responsibility in a sense and give a little back of what I got. And it's important to help SMART Recovery® continue to thrive so it can remain an option for people. I remember a little of what a horrid, shattered life a person can be living upon arrival here. I figured if I can assist just one person in finding a way to a

better life, then I can be satisfied! It would be worth my time and energy. By volunteering, I “hammered the tools” into my mind because I repeated them so often for other people! And it is pretty hard to recommend tools if I have not used them myself! So that meant I would be learning and using the tools first and foremost for mySELF. If you don't believe in the tools, just try them!

SELF Enlightened Interest involves our focusing on ourSELVES and the goal of living

a more satisfying life for ourselves, but when you do so, it goes full circle: others gain from it. In turn, we gain from their satisfaction, and back it comes to us, because a small part of the world is a happier place and that is good for us. We are better examples for our children, too. Showing my son I can make mistakes, change my life around and donate my time, also helps

him live better.

I found once I was on pretty solid ground with recovery that I could be more generous with others. In other words “I got out of myself” because I was living better than I had in years. It

I figured if I can assist just one person in finding a way to a better life, then I can be satisfied!

wasn't all about me anymore. In my case, using drugs was a very selfish act. Giving of my time, knowledge, and experience rewards me with further satisfaction. I have been a volunteer almost four years at SMART Online, and I can truly say it has been an excellent tool for my own recovery.

You could ask, "SMART Recovery® is all about learning the tools, changing our behaviors, and moving on, so why don't you graduate?"

Actually, I graduated a long time ago! Graduating does not necessarily mean leaving altogether! The old me seems very remote nowadays. I don't stay "out of fear" for my own recovery, but rather coming here has become a part of what I do, a VACI. A life enhancing tool. I think giving feels better to the givers than the receivers! And working here as a volunteer has given me a great many opportunities to practice frustration tolerance and self/other/life acceptance, which helps me. I love watching others take control in their lives.

It is great to be part of a team, in this case the SOL Team!.... a place that helps others help themselves. A place that affects lives and betters the world.

If you think volunteering might appeal to you, check out this link:

<http://smartrecovery.org/vol/volunteerdesc.htm>. There are different ways you can volunteer here. I wish you all the best with your recovery and your lives.

I would love to hear what other volunteers get from their volunteering.

Jump in—the water is fine!
And enjoy!



Founding Members of SMART Recovery® Online (SOL) Share Thoughts

by Dee, SOL Volunteer

We were privileged to have two of our founding SOL members, Arby and Betty, join the 9th anniversary celebration of SOL for our ending extravaganza. It was so nice to be able to hear their perceptions and their descriptions of what SOL has meant to them over the years. We obtained their permission to excerpt a few of their very gracious comments, after-the-fact. The time they spent with us in

the chat room was charming and delightful, and we are so lucky to have had these folks establish this wonderful place for all of us, members, volunteers, and f2f facilitators alike!

From Arby:

It was both an honor and a pleasure to have been at the SOL 9th birthday celebration. It was special to me too, for nine years ago I wasn't even thinking, nor had any idea, that from that very first meeting our Ville would have grown into the metropolis that it has now become. SOL had, and still, holds a very special place in my heart. For it was on these shores I learned to challenge my thinking (beliefs) and made room in my SELF to CHANGE. I'm so very fortunate to have had such wonderful teachers along the way (Do=path), with folks like Betty, Skywiz, Marky, and my old friend Rookan, and so many others that to name them all would more than fill these pages.

I want y'all to know that even though I may be scarce around the Ville these days, every person, volunteer, and member of SOL continues the "legacy" of the grass roots movement that was started on Oct. 16, 1998.

I respectfully ask of you to please never forget the inner strength, the power of the people, and that little grass roots movement that laid the structural foundation that lives deep within SMART Recovery® OnLine still today. If you listen closely to the

Make sure you keep your eye on the prize that IS you. Enjoy the feelings of belonging, but don't deny extending them well out beyond the city limits when you're ready.

lyrics that Betty wrote, to "A River," you'll perhaps better understand that most all lives are "A River" — a river, that just doesn't end. SOL offers a safe harbor to any and all who wish to drop anchor in that harbor on their river of life, and for that I will ALWAYS be thankful. Thank you for everything you've given to SOL over the years. And thanks so very much for thinking about me, folks! I appreciate it greatly!!

Respectfully,
Randy a.k.a. Arby

From Betty:

Oh, now this IS just like old times.... Feeling that when one of the members of the former steering committee spoke it was almost ALWAYS something that I could resonate with... Randy has spoken for me as well... I couldn't have said it better myself. (But of course I CAN'T shut up easily.)

It was wonderful to visit SMARTcity (I used to call it SMARTville), but it has grown out on the edges... but please don't get a WAL-SMART!

I remember feeling ... as though belonging to "something" was very important to me. I think Arby's words are gentle and well spoken. Make sure you keep your eye on the prize that IS you. Enjoy the feelings of belonging, but don't deny extending them well out beyond the city limits when you're ready. You and I, all of us... we belong everywhere we are.

I'm so glad I was able to participate in the celebration. I enjoyed seeing Randy and anticipating how he'd reply—and being right! It felt good to believe I still know him. We old timers are still on our individual rafts on the river and sometimes we drift downstream and away from each other, only to come round a bend and find one hauled up on a bar (sand, that is!). The memories of SMART are highly concentrated in my life... I just add each new day to them and they go a long, long way.

Much Love and Light,
Betty

Note: The lyrics to the song A River follow...

A River – © B. M. Wlodyka
(a.k.a. online as Betty)

Once, when I was so many pieces
❖ So many pieces I was ❖ Like
water that was rain ❖ I was tears
before I came ❖ To this river. ❖
And then as we'd found ❖ Our
ways ❖ On different days ❖ To
this place that became ❖ This
great river ❖ We came together ❖
Yes, so slow ❖ Came together to
help ❖ Grow ❖ This river ❖
When this river's moving ❖ Slow
❖ Get on your knees (Note: a
reflection reference not a religious
one) ❖ Look down and know ❖
What you'll hear ❖ Behind the
face you'll ❖ See below ❖ Listen
well ❖ So you can be ❖ All you
searched for ❖ Now you'll see ❖
Was with you all the while ❖ You
journeyed wide ❖ Seeking out ❖
While you kept it ❖ Deep inside.
❖ When you rise up from the ❖
River ❖ Look around ❖ And then
deliver ❖ To the outside ❖ What
you have found ❖ Within. ❖ For
surely ❖ You can mend ❖ And
offer to a friend ❖ And in that ❖
We're a river ❖ A river ❖ That
just ❖ Won't end.

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- \$5 FREE donation when you shop within 45 days!

I hope to see you at iGive.com soon!

Charlie

P.S. iGive.com would like you to know that all the causes at iGive.com have been listed by members for their own and others' benefit. They don't endorse the causes, and the causes don't endorse them. But I DO! So, c'mon, click on that link above.

Sober for Good to Books Behind Bars & Beyond

In the Spring '07 issue of SMART Recovery® *News & Views*, we acquainted readers with BBB&B. We are delighted to report that Houghton Mifflin, publisher of Anne Fletcher's *Sober for Good* has kindly donated

numerous copies of the book on cassette to SMART Recovery®. The books on tape will be provided to inmates via Books Behind Bars & Beyond. Many readers of *Sober for Good* have begun participating in the SMART Recovery® program based on this excellent book. Thank you Houghton Mifflin for this generous donation!

SMART Recovery® Attends Compulsive Gambling Conference

by Rich Dowling, MA, LPC, MAC

SMART Recovery® was represented at the 8th Annual NCRG Conference on Gambling and Addiction: *Responsible Gaming, Regulation and Recovery: Testing Conventional Wisdom*.

The conference, co-sponsored by Harvard Medical School and the National Center for Responsible Gaming (NCRG), was held November 11-12, 2007 at the Paris Las Vegas in Las Vegas, Nevada. Say what? A compulsive gambling conference in the gambling capital of the world? Following my initial surprise, I found the location to be very appropriate to the purpose.

A description of SMART Recovery® was given in the conference brochure and a room was provided for a SMART Recovery® "Meeting." Six people took advantage of the opportunity

to learn about and discuss the SMART Recovery® model and its application to addictions, including gambling. The participants included individuals from South Africa, England, Jamaica, Las Vegas, and Wisconsin. Those interested in starting groups were referred to SMART Recovery® Headquarters and www.smartrecovery.org for further information.

The conference was topnotch in every way, providing attendees with the latest research outcomes for preventing and treating compulsive gambling disorders with CBT showing the most promise. The organizers are to be commended!! Additional information can be found at: www.divisiononaddictions.org/institute and www.ncrg.org.



Rich Dowling representing SMART Recovery® at the event.



InsideOut® — A Profile in Success: Tri-County Community Corrections

InsideOut® has always been a program that sought to empower people. Inner personal strength and proper decision-making are at the core of its message: teaching people how to make the right the decisions and not telling them what to do.

Nick Rajacic, LCSW, an InsideOut® facilitator at Tri-County Community Corrections (TCCC) in Houghton, Michigan, sees first-hand the positive effects that come with this type approach. He has been an InsideOut® facilitator since its inception in 2002 and has helped dozens of people change their beliefs and behavior. At Tri-County Community Corrections, a correctional institution that provides community service work, rehabilitation and other community-based programs, Nick has adapted InsideOut® to the needs of the facility.

A court order, which is part of probation, assigns most of the people who enter any of the programs at TCCC. As a result, the participants receive outpatient treatment, which strays from the

traditional use of InsideOut®. But, Nick notes that this is what makes the InsideOut® program at TCCC unique and says, "The focus of this program is to empower people, so they can be in control of their behavior and their lives. InsideOut®'s versatility makes it easy for them to receive effective treatment, even though it is outpatient."

Naturally, Nick has nothing but great things to say about InsideOut®. The participants feel the same way. Many of them go into the program angry and bitter, but Nick says that the InsideOut® approach, one that teaches understanding and empowerment, leaves participants believing they can lead better lives. He recalls many participants commonly saying, "I didn't want to be here at first, but I found that I learned a lot of valuable information and actually liked going through the program." It shows. The recidivism is down in the Tri-County region, the very goal that InsideOut® seeks. Much of that is due to Nick and the great work he has done to help people develop rational, constructive control of their lives.

The work at Tri-County Community Corrections is a great example of how InsideOut® can effectively help parolees develop rational decision-making. If you have any questions about the InsideOut® program or you would like more information about this article, please contact Tyler Achilles at (617) 614-0376 or tachilles@inflexxion.com.

Beyond the Walls

The 4-Point Focus: Challenging Irrational Thoughts, Feelings, and Behaviors

by Barry A. Grant

Of the many challenging endeavors people undertake, one that appears to be the most demanding is to go beyond a constructed belief system supported by vague and oftentimes irrational evidence. All too often, these mental models are based upon something or someone we allowed to have power over us in an attempt to avoid taking responsibility for our own thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

The energy and persistence of a truly motivated person are marvelous. The work such a person does can be almost rapturous in its focus and determination. This is what the first of the 4-Point focus of SMART Recovery®, Building and Maintaining Motivation, is all about. It surely is not from eating breakfast cereal, sandwiches or coffee yet those elements are inclusive in our lives if we so choose. Undoubtedly the ingredients are a part of life's ongoing desire to nurture the body and I suppose on some level a minimal desire to satisfy the natural urges associated with social traditions and cultural norms. However, the caveat is that "any principle taken to the extreme results in error."

If an urge pushes one toward impulsive reactions, then would it not stand to reason that a rational system of belief could be adopted to counteract self-destructive, defeatist thinking and behavior, thereby re-"versing" that process in such a way that it encourages a healthy lifestyle? That is what Coping with Urges by using our DISARM tool is about. In short, it is listening to what you tell yourself about yourself, especially when those messages take you to places you don't want to be, keep you there for longer than you intended to stay, and cost much more than you were ever willing to pay.

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For those who have been following SMART Recovery® News & Views for some time, you may know that I have the justification for claiming that whether "Inside The Walls" or "Beyond The Walls," there are almost always things in life that we probably would not prefer. That is where the Problem Solving component proves to be of enormous value. It is important to remember that when we choose our behavior we choose our consequences. Moreover, at root, a consequence simply means

the result of a belief about a given stimulus. Understanding this can help reduce the perception that someone or something is causing a disturbance within us. It is highly unlikely that we can solve a problem with the mindset with which we caused it. A problem is only as big as we ourselves make it.

As stated previously, any principle taken to the extreme results in error, which segues right into the Lifestyle Balance of SMART Recovery®. The very fact that I can revisit this illustrates the flexible use of SMART Recovery®'s 4-point focus. Being alert in the here and now for the purpose of achieving

an evidenced-based philosophy of life allows us to be constant collectors of new information. Furthermore, our opinions, attitudes, and actions (the difference

between an action and a reaction is thought) grow as we become flexible, thoughtful decision makers.

The 4-Point Focus of SMART Recovery® can work with most other methods of recovering what we had before lifestyle imbalance began to occur. The 4-Point Focus of SMART Recovery® is invaluable in recovery from addictive behaviors and the shackles of irrational thinking.



3-Minute REBT

Developing a Passion for Living

by Philip Tate, PhD

Author of *Alcohol: How To Give It Up and Be Glad You Did*,
1996, See Sharp Press, Tucson, AZ.

In order to radically change your life, it helps to have a passion. Passion is awareness, feeling, and action—a total involvement.

Passion is not pleasure—a delight that can be sustained and enhanced by thought. Sexual pleasure, for instance, can be enhanced by exciting thoughts, or thoughts of a novel partner, etc. Instead, it is an involvement where our attention, actions, and their consequences are the fulfilling qualities.

Thinking can interfere. Have you ever focused on a task when you were completely absorbed and unaware of both time and yourself? When you do this, what happens when you start thinking? Don't you become more detached? If there was any joy before, didn't your thinking destroy it?

Where can you start? What better place than your daily living?

Most of the time we go about our days doing ordinary necessary activities with the clamor of thoughts going through our heads. Not only are these thoughts unnecessary, they detract from our activities.

What can you do? Concentrate, which is the deliberate exclusion of distractions, including distracting thoughts. Then, allow your entire existence to be awareness of what you are doing.

One way you can understand this is that it's a meditation on your daily life and actions. Meditation as it usually taught is a specific activity developed aside from day to day activities. You read a book, go to a guru, come home, sit quietly and focus on a word, a sound, or an object. That practice is an escape from living and not an involvement.

The meditation that I am suggesting is simply a greater awareness of your actions and what is going on that entails a greater ability to see yourself and the world as you are and not as you think you are.

Do you have to spend a lot of time learning how to focus? No, you can do it now. As a matter of fact, if you attend to what you are reading now with a mind uncluttered by thoughts, you gain more. You may learn something new as represented by the ideas presented here. The ideas themselves are not what you want to learn, but the facts they represent.

Would you like to create a passionate interest in life that is beyond your ordinary day to day activities?

Then develop an absorbing hobby, do volunteer work, or get a job that you find interesting. Throw yourself into it. And maintain the same approach: one of attention to what is happening and reacting to what you see more than what you think.

Featured Quote of this Issue

If your current way of relating brings more suffering than you want, then change or continue suffering.

Hank Robb

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