

SMART RECOVERY'S FOUNDATION

In 1995 after much deliberation, the founding SMART Board adopted a Purposes and Methods document that summarizes our over-arching approach to resolving addictive problems.

The opening four statements form SMART's foundation:

- 1. We help individuals gain independence from addictive behavior.*
- 2. We teach how to:*
 - Enhance and maintain motivation to abstain*
 - Cope with urges*
 - Manage thoughts, feelings, and behaviors*
 - Balance momentary and enduring satisfactions*
- 3. Our efforts are based on scientific knowledge and evolve as scientific knowledge evolves.*
- 4. Individuals who have gained independence from addictive behavior are invited to stay involved with us, enhance their gains, and help others.*

The remainder of the document is commentary. Nearly 25 years later, consider some additional thoughts:

In #1 we emphasize that SMART focuses on the whole person and their entire life. It is not enough to resolve addictive problems. Are you leading a meaningful, purposeful, connected, and happy life? Only then have you “gained independence from”

addictive behavior – a compelling and inclusive concept suggested by Rich Dowling.

In #2 is the origin of SMART's 4-Point Program. In his clinical work, Tom Horvath had been using the first three points. The Board adopted them and added a fourth. The language of Point 4 has since changed, but the idea remains the same (lifestyle balance). Michler Bishop suggested the language of the 4-Point Program.

In #3 we state the ultimate foundation of SMART – scientific findings. SMART should be an evidence-based and evolving approach to support positive change based on science, and secularity, to provide a contrast and alternative to the dominant 12-step program.

In #4 we invite those who have recovered through SMART to remain a part of our helpful community. Although most participants do not become volunteers, the ones who do often say that being a SMART volunteer is one of their most meaningful activities.

The founding Board consisted mostly of psychologists who wanted scientific literature to be SMART's foundation. The current Board is composed mostly of peers without clinical training who know SMART through personal experience. They understand the science and the statements but focus on their practical value in recovery and enhancing life quality.

The fact that the four opening statements have changed little over time suggests that they capture the essence of SMART in a fundamental and enduring way.