

Staying with Sobriety



LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY BEHAVIORAL MEDICINE CENTER

Summer 2005

Living with Chronic Pain

Meaning and Spirituality

It is easy to talk about meaning when everything in life is going well or even when the difficulties in life are still within the normal expectations. How does one find meaning in trauma and continual pain? This is where the challenge comes in and it is this particular challenge that chronic pain patients have to face on a daily or even hourly basis. Can one find meaning even in the midst of pain itself?

I have the privilege of working with Kelvin Thompson, a graduate student in the MA program at Loma Linda University, Leigh Aveling, Director of Spiritual Care and Art Earll, Director of Chemical Dependency Unit at Loma Linda University Behavioral Medicine Center on trying to understand how chronic pain patients find meaning and how they use spirituality. We interviewed 15 chronic pain patients who had been through some form of therapy at BMC and had completed detoxification. The outcome was most encouraging and surprising as well.

There is a marked decrease in the level of pain for those

who have been through BMC. One patient said, "When I came in it (the pain) was six or eight, but now it's zero." Another participant stated, "I'd say about a one." Those who mentioned 7 or 8 on the scale of 1 to 10, informed us that when they came in it was 10 plus or 20. The question becomes: what is it in the program at BMC that resulted in this significant decrease in the level of pain?

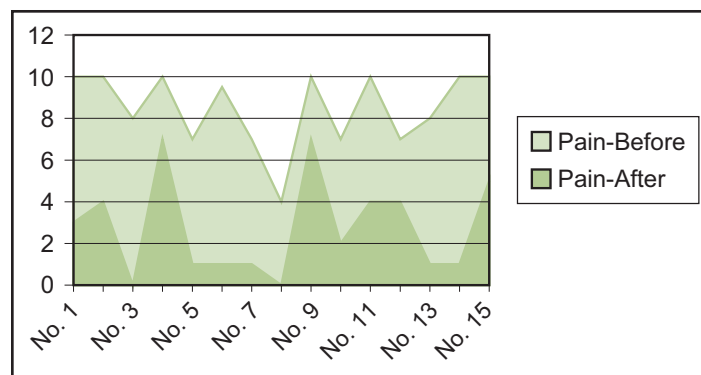
We were surprised to learn that self-understanding, in relation to emotion, addiction, and pain (through group therapy and educational sessions at BMC), played a major role in this healing process. Through self-understanding they were able to find meaning in comprehending who they were in relation

to their experiences with chronic pain.

We learned that all patients initially described meaning as the ability to be active, to do things, to form relationships with others. Hence, in the presence of continual pain, they were not able to experience meaning in their lives. The persistent need for meaning drove them to seek relief from pain in order to gain meaning. This, according to all participants we interviewed, was done through medication. The continual use of medication led to addiction and addiction resulted in complications such as guilt, shame, manipulation, low self-esteem, etc. These conflicted emotions contributed significantly to the level of pain. Hence

addiction resulted in a downward spiral. Through BMC, these individuals came to understand themselves in relation to addiction, feeling, and medication. This newly acquired self-understanding played a significant role in deterring addiction and relieving pain. They have come to realize the possibility of experiencing pain and meaning at the same time. Philosophically, they learn that pain and meaning could co-exist. This newly acquired self-understanding offered them a new tool to deal with chronic pain in a much more effective way than the use of self-medication. Spirituality formed a basis for the new self-understanding. Through spirituality they came to the realization that stress was caused by their intense desire to see life move in a certain direction, to expect the world to be in a certain way—all about them. They wanted to control life. Spirituality taught them to learn to live life according to life's own term. To let God be God. ■

Written by
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For more information call 909-558-9224.

The Source

The following sources will assist with any questions or concerns regarding sobriety.

Publication:

Title: Staying Clean
– Living Without Drugs

Source: Hazelden
Foundation

Review by: Elaine Coyazo

This is a very simple explanation of the many common principles from Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous. Each section of the book focuses on one of 33 proven ideas for staying drug-free, such as finding new friends, using the serenity prayer, dealing with insomnia, and praying. This is a helpful introduction to the basics of understanding life in recovery.

Web Sites:

LLUBMC
www.llubmc.com

Recovering
Alumni Association
www.bmcraa.org

Alcoholics Anonymous
www.alcoholics-anonymous.org

Narcotics Anonymous
www.na.org

Southern California
Narcotics Anonymous
www.todayna.org

AA Newsletter
www.aagrapevine.org

Recovery source for
upcoming events
www.anonymousone.com

Life's Journeys

Fathers and Recovery

Ironically, at times the traditional role of a providing father takes a turn and leaves that very individual unable to provide for themselves. Depression, stress, and broken families are a few reasons many of our fathers turn to harmful substances for comfort. Slowly, their world begins to crumble around them and they are left helpless on how to rebuild.

Tom, Eric, and Cory are three fathers in various stages of the chemical dependency program at the BMC. While their stories are different, they share a common desire of trying to heal with their loved ones. These men are incorporating their family into the treatment by giving them the opportunity to share their experiences and feelings while learning more about the disease. Sadly, like many recovering fathers, Tom has been confronted with the realization that his 16 year old son is using. Tom admitted that his son is now the third generation in his family faced with addiction. With a mission to lead by example, Tom hopes his son too will be able to fight the disease with the help of the BMC.

Initially, Eric's thirteen year old resisted the idea of participating in the treatment, but soon found the program to be enlightening. The BMC counselors created a safe atmosphere for

his children to interact with other kids going through the same turmoil. For the first time, they were able to realize they were not alone in having a father who is a recovering addict. Eric admits he is still learning how to be a father and deal with anger issues. While conflicts with the children are still frequently heard, he is grateful for the tools he received at the BMC of how to deal with his own emotions and those of his adolescents.

"The biggest gift I got from the BMC is the realization that I am a father," states Cory, father of four and eight year olds. He has seen a dramatic change in both of their behaviors – one becoming more outgoing and coping with her frustrations with the Seven C's, while the other daughter recites the Serenity Prayer and inquires how various situations make family members feel. "It is a miracle," continues Cory.

Our fathers struggle daily to live up to the expectation of a provider and protector. There are times they need to remember they are not alone and should look to our Heavenly Father to soothe pain, mend hearts, and provide guidance. We applaud the efforts of these men and their families for seeking treatment and staying with sobriety.

Letter from the Administrator

The first thing that I noticed several years ago when I was introduced to the Chemical Dependency Program staff is that they are truly a team. They have an exuberant passion about what they do and a commitment to match. Their leader, Art Earll, fosters this team approach and speaks like a proud father when talking about his staff and their abilities.

Art has worked on the Chemical Dependency unit for 14 years, but in 1999 became



the Director and has been a wonderful and committed leader. Art will be expanding his role in the BMC to Administrative Director of Adult Psychiatry and Chemical Dependency. Not to worry...

he's not leaving Chemical Dependency, just empowering the leadership team to take over a little more of the day-to-day operations.

Thank you to Art and the team for all your hard work and dedication to make a difference in so many lives. The successes of the program are due to this dedication and drive to fight alcoholism and addiction. ■

*Jill Pollock, RN, MS
Administrator*

For more information call 909-558-9224.

FAQ

The Role of Spirituality in Recovery

Q What types of things in recovery hinder spirituality?

A There are a number of factors individuals have been faced with that have hindered their spirituality. We have found that the following are the most common situations that hinder spirituality while in recovery:

- Relapse
- Resentment
- Anger
- Lack of connection with others

Q What are the things a person can do in recovery that help build spirituality?

A A recovering individual can do a variety of things to help build their spirituality primarily through various activities. Many have found connecting with others in a recovery group such as AA or NA to be helpful. These meetings offer discussions and friendship with companions who are also working to build their spirituality. Another way to build spirituality is to help another without expecting something

in return. It can be extremely gratifying to assist another individual anonymously.

Q What is the role of a chaplain in recovery?

A The chaplain has a vital role in the recovery of an individual from addiction. S/he becomes a partner that provides and fosters support, encourages spiritual connections, listens, and can assist with lingering spiritual questions.

Provided by:
Chaplain Leigh Aveling



At a Glance

July

Southern California Alateen Conference

Friday – Sunday, July 15 – 17, 2005

University of Redlands

Meetings, workshops, talent show, slide show, and a dance dedicated to adolescents. For more information, call Meagan S. at 714-402-9195 or Jonathan at 714-345-5235.

RAA Camping Trip

Friday – Sunday, July 22 – 24, 2005

Lake Perris

When was the last time you sat around the campfire telling stories? Plan on joining us for a fun weekend packed with boating, swimming, fishing, and more! For more information, call Darlene at 909-792-9005.

August

2005 “Maad Dog Daze” – AA Convention

Friday – Sunday, August 5 – 7, 2005

Doral Desert Princess Resort, Cathedral City, CA

A weekend filled with more activities than we can name! Take your pick from a golf tournament, Friday night young people’s meeting, a dance, and a banquet. Cost is \$15.00 for those who pre-registration (\$20.00 at the door), some events cost extra.

For more information, call Chris M. (760) 200-1114 or email aa_dog411@ainthedesert.org

Southern California AA Convention

Friday – Sunday, September 30 – October 2, 2005

Riverside Convention Center, Riverside, CA

A long, relaxing weekend packed with a golf tournament, marathon meetings, a dance, banquet, bowling tournament, 5K/10K fun run/walk. For more information, call the SCAAC Hotline (949) 929-7007 or visit their website at www.aasocal.com

September

Women’s AA Banquet

Saturday, September 10, 2005

National Orange Show, San Bernardino

Ladies, this is a perfect opportunity for you to spend the evening with friends. Doors open at 6:00 p.m., dinner starts at 7:00 p.m., tickets are \$30.00. For more information, e-mail Sherry at McKittyKins@aol.com or call Brenda G. at 909-794-5430.

Annual RAA Golf Tournament

Saturday, September 10, 2005

El Rancho Verde Country Club

Grab your clubs and lets hit the green! Festivities will include a putting challenge, longest drive, closest to pin contest, hole-in-one contest, and raffle. For more information, call James D. at 909-215-4779.

RAA Recovery Alumni Association

Spring blossomed with a lot of great activities for our Alumni members. We started on March 12th with a square dance and St. Patrick's Day party at the BMC gym. Alumni hired a professional square dance caller who taught the brave members a few simple moves. Most jumped right in to learn, but some were only interested in watching. By the end of the evening everyone was having so much fun, even the ones with cold feet were joining in to test their talents.

On March 20th we gathered at Fiesta Village Amusement Park in Colton. We had unlimited use of the rides, miniature golf course, and racecars. The golf scores were high and the car speeds were low, but it turned out to be another fun sober event with friends and family.

During our Alumni meeting later that week we colored eggs for Easter. Alumni provided the eggs and die, while members provided the creativity. It was great fun watching the adults color the eggs and having as much fun as the kids.

On April 17th we all braved the roller skating rink. There were a little over thirty members and families in attendance. The skating skills ranged from those who easily glided around the rink to a few who could barely tie their skates.

May 5th and 12th were nominations for next year's Alumni Board of Directors. Voting will be held on Thursday, June 2nd with the newly elected board members taking office in July.

On May 13th – 15th the men met in Wrightwood for their annual retreat. Approximately 60 men had a wonderful, clean, and sober weekend in the mountains!

If you are looking for fun in recovery, come join us on Thursday nights at 6:00 p.m. in the BMC cafeteria and find what we have to offer. Don't forget to bring your family!



Food for Thought

- Man's way leads to a hopeless end – God's way leads to an endless hope.
- A lot of kneeling will keep you in good standing.
- Are you wrinkled with burden? Come to the church for a face-lift.
- Don't wait for six strong men to take you to church.
- The church is prayer-conditioned.
- When God ordains, He sustains.
- WARNING: Exposure to the Son may prevent burning.
- Plan ahead – it wasn't raining when Noah built the ark.
- Suffering from truth decay? Brush up on your Bible.
- Exercise daily – walk with the Lord.
- Nothing else ruins the truth like stretching it.
- He who angers you controls you.
- Worry is the darkroom in which negatives can develop.
- Give Satan an inch and he'll be a ruler.
- God doesn't call the qualified, He qualifies the called.

Collection provided by Chaplain Vaughan Grant



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Chemical Dependency Services
1710 Barton Road
Redlands, California 92373



**LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY
BEHAVIORAL MEDICINE CENTER**

Please write to the address below if you wish to have your name removed from the list to receive announcements or notices introducing new services, health educational programs and events, or products of Loma Linda University Behavioral Medicine Center. All reasonable efforts will be taken to ensure that your request is honored.

Promotional Services
c/o Access Center
245 East Redlands Blvd. Suite A
San Bernardino, CA 92408

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For more information call 909-558-9224.