

Staying with Sobriety



LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY BEHAVIORAL MEDICINE CENTER

Winter 2005

Avoiding Relapse During Recovery



The word “relapse” often creates a variety of emotions for the recovering individual and their loved ones. Fear, anger, motivation, sadness, disappointment, and determination are common feelings associated with relapse. There are many outside influences and factors, which can push one towards a relapse. When relapse does occur, it does not occur suddenly. It is a process over time.

A tremendous amount of research has been conducted to determine the reasons behind relapse. The answers are not simple. It depends on a number of factors: factors that can be as complex as the individual themselves. Fortunately, this

risk of relapse diminishes if an individual can identify and understand their own major risk factors and develop healthy coping skills. Below is a list of some of the more common reasons many individuals have reported as their main reasons for relapsing:

Stress – Researchers have found that individuals who relapse reported twice as much stress as those who remained abstinent. Those most vulnerable to stress related relapse scored low on measures of coping skills, self-efficiency and social support. Stress may be the greatest influence of relapse among those individuals with a long period of abstinence.

To combat this relapse trigger, recovering individuals need to handle day-to-day stress and problems as they occur. Don't let conflicts get larger than needed by avoiding situations. Learn to manage your stress by working closely with a sponsor and attending 12 step meetings, organizing yourself, asking for help, and finding humor in difficult situations. Allow yourself time to relax, journal, and exercise.

Not Staying Connected

– Often individuals become too confident in their sobriety and break away from the recovering community. They may become irritated with relationships, and life in general. They frequently slip back into old patterns of isolation. Those who relapse almost invariably report that they quit going to 12 step meetings.

Regardless if a person is two days or twenty years clean, research has proven the enormous positive impact of staying connected to a recovering support system. Surround yourself with recovering, supportive friends. Celebrate your milestones and work through the 12 steps with a sponsor. Enjoy your new sober life by having some fun in sobriety.

Codependency – To preserve marriages, spouses of addicts/alcoholics often develop unhealthy behaviors as their own means of surviving. When the addict/alcoholic quits drinking/using, the spouse may find it very difficult to change his or her own negative behavior. Children and friends may not easily trust and/or accept the changes in the addict/alcoholic.

The best recourse is to encourage loved ones to attend Al-Anon, Al-Ateen, etc. and be patient with the transition of one's relationships. Be careful to keep expectations out of relationships. You can only work on yourself – not on anyone else.

Pushed Into Treatment

– Addiction treatment centers are filled with men, women, and adolescents detoxing at the demand of a loved one, employer and even the court. If the motivation for recovery continues to be centered on others, it becomes difficult to stay sober.

To combat this relapse trigger, it is important to recognize one's own internal motivation for continued recovery. While most people in recovery were pushed into it in one way or another, most can begin to recognize why it is important to stay
Continued on page 3.

For more information call 909-558-9224.

The Source

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

Publication:

Title: "There's More to Quitting Drinking Than Quitting Drinking"

Written by: Paul O. and Jack N.

The same Dr. Paul from the A.A. Big Book continues his astute insight and gentle humor in this book with discussions of the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of sobriety. The chapters devoted to emotional sobriety and interpersonal communication are very helpful. This book is also very helpful for couples in recovery. Dr. Paul shares how he and his wife of 55 years incorporated the principles and traditions of the A.A. way of life into their relationship.

Web Sites:

LLUBMC
www.llubmc.com

Recovering
Alumni Association
www.bmcras.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

Addiction in the Workplace

No profession is exempt from employees using or drinking, but there are a few professions that have drugs and alcohol prevalent around the work site. Truck drivers, construction workers, and long shore men have a daily temptation to use while at work. We sat down with two construction workers to discuss their battle with addiction, how their careers played a role, and where they currently are in their journey of recovery.

Joe and Jerry have spent their entire careers in the construction industry and using drugs every day, all day. Jerry, a tile setter, began using marijuana at the young age of 14 and soon began experimenting with a variety of other drugs. Joe, a project manager, began using and drinking at 12 years of age. Both men first sought help for their addiction years ago; Joe, at one time, even earned a seven-year chip.

Both men recall a time when they and all their co-workers used very openly in the company. While the behavior is no longer as obvious

on the worksite, Joe and Jerry do not feel the abuse has subsided over the years. Fortunately, the two men decided they needed to get help. Like everyone who enters the doors for addiction treatment, it was not easy. Jerry had to admit to his wife that he had been using for over four years and Joe had to admit to himself that he had a problem. At the time of interview, Jerry had been clean for 50 days and it had been 32 days for Joe.

Federal law does mandate random drug testing, but according to our interviewees, very few construction companies enforce it unless there is an injury. Sadly, many workplace injuries go unreported for that very reason. This is a serious problem and employers need to take aggressive action. Enforcing random drug testing, educating employees of the harm and dangers, and offering health insurance that covers addiction treatment are a just a few vital steps that should be taken.

We wish Joe, Jerry, and their families all the support and encouragement in their recovery.

A Season for Giving

"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."

John 15:5

God has created such a mysterious and wonderful universe for us to live in! One aspect of my own biology that has always fascinated me was how when one helps out another person, it feels good deep down in your guts... how do you explain that? God intends for us to live in community. We are to help one another, and learn from one another. My role in this

community is to encourage persons to develop or deepen their own personal relationship with a higher power. On this two-way street, I have not only given but also received. And what a gift! In helping many of you with deep spiritual struggles, my own spiritual life has strengthened! All of you who have walked through our doors have shown me how to hunger and thirst for God, because your very lives depend upon your spiritual health. And I ask, "Am I any different?" I have learned from all of you my need to be in daily relationship with God – for apart from

Him I can do nothing. We remember together that maintaining our spiritual fitness is what will carry us throughout the marathon of life. My thanks and prayers are with you all as you continue your spiritual journey of recovery toward a life of meaning, purpose, and hope.



Sean Hibbs
Chaplain
LLUBMC



Partnering Together

Loma Linda University Behavioral Medicine Center transforms lives through serving your community with a variety of programs and services. There are many opportunities to partner with the BMC so that you, too, can help make a difference. If you would like to learn more about supporting these programs or how to become more involved, please contact Pauline Deeb at 909-558-3555 or pdeeb@ahs.llumc.edu

Office of Philanthropy
P.O. Box 2000, MVP
Loma Linda, CA 92354

At a Glance

January

Palm Springs Aerial Tramway
Saturday, January 28
Palm Springs

A view from above it all. Join us as we take a venture on their new rotating tramcars. A perfect outing for the entire family. For more information call Darlene at 909-792-9005.

February

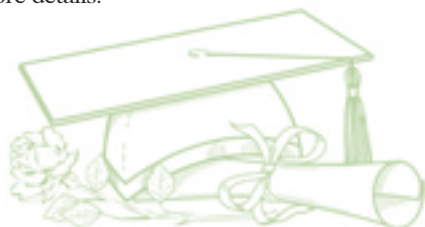
34th all California Young People in AA Round-up
Thurs – Sun, February 23-26
Santa Clara Marriott
Registration \$20 at the door

Great weekend filled with marathon meetings, speakers, comedy show, and banquet. For more information, please call Ken T. at 650-954-5174 or visit www.aceypaaxxiv.org

March

LLUBMC Graduation
Sunday, March 12
LLUBMC Gymnasium

An event we look forward to all year! A special graduation ceremony will be held for all those who completed treatment in the year 2005. Graduates, please look for your invitation for more details.



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Continued from page 1.

sober. Look for the positives about your recovery including physical, emotional, spiritual and social. Understand your life's mission and strive to live accordingly.

Some additional tips for preventing relapse:

- Develop a plan of action for difficult situations such as attending a wedding where there will be drinking.
- Work to improve your coping skills in your areas of need such as anger management, parenting skills, etc.
- Work with secondary problems that you are facing such as depression, anxiety, post traumatic stress, etc.
- Develop good diet and sleeping habits.
- Keep yourself spiritually connected and remember the power of the Serenity Prayer



For more information call 909-558-9224.

RAA Recovery Alumni Association

This past Fall was extremely busy for the RAA! We have enjoyed the company of many of our members and their family and hope to see more of you! We thank all the participants and organizers who made the events possible. Below is a highlight of our activities. Please mark your calendar and attend our upcoming events.

In September we headed for the green for a friendly golf tournament. Over fifty golfers tried their luck at winning a new Ford Mustang in the hole in one contest, but there were no takers. Regardless, we had a wonderful day enjoying a luncheon, distributing door prizes, and catching up with one another. A few weeks later we strolled the streets of downtown Redlands during market night for our Alumni meeting.

One of our biggest and most anticipated events, the Men's Retreat, was November 11-13 in Wrightwood. As in years past, this weekend was a hit! More than fifty men joined us for great food and fellowship. We also had our Gratitude Dinner at the BMC on November 20. This brought over 120 alumni, family, and friends together to celebrate each other's blessings.

Bringing the year to a close, we read a Christmas Carol on December 15 during our Alumni meeting, went caroling at a local senior citizen home on December 22, and had a "Night of Enchantment" New Years Eve party on December 31.



Staying with Sobriety

Chemical Dependency Services
1710 Barton Road
Redlands, California 92373



**LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY
BEHAVIORAL MEDICINE CENTER**

Inspiration

Just for Today

Just for today my thoughts will be on my recovery, living & enjoying life without the use of drugs.

Just for today I will have faith in someone in NA who believes in me & wants to help me in my recovery.

Just for today I will have a program. I will try to follow it to the best of my ability.

Just for today, through NA, I will try to get a better perspective on my life.

Just for today I will be unafraid, my thoughts will be on my new associations, people who are not using & who have found a new way of life. So long as I follow that way, I have nothing to fear.

-Anonymous

Don't Quit

*When things go wrong as they sometimes will,
When the road you're trudging seems all up hill,
When the funds are low & the debts are high
And you want to smile, but you have to sigh,
When care is pressing you down a bit,
Rest if you must, but don't you quit.*

*Life is queer with its twists & turns,
As everyone of us sometimes learns,
And many a failure turns about
When he might have won had he stuck it out;*

*Don't give up though the pace seems slow --
You may succeed with another blow.
Success is failure turned inside out --
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt,
And you never can tell how close you are
It may be near when it seems so far;
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit --
It's when things seem worst that you must not quit.
by Betty (Naimo) Rich*

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

For more information call 909-558-9224.