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# After Treatment, Then What?

by Pat Samples



*Treatment for addiction is only the beginning of recovery. What happens when you go back home? If you even have one anymore. Here are four stories of recovering addicts in midlife and how they meet their daily challenges while staying sober after treatment.*

Chris Arrowsmith Bagdon smoked off-the-street cannabis for two years to relieve ongoing pain from a brain concussion and to offset war combat flashbacks. One night he hit a batch that he suspects was laced with the drug PCP. "I started freaking out," says Chris. It took four cops and a taser to intercept his violently out-of-control behavior. When he returned home after hospital and jail time, his wife had hidden their children and threatened to leave him.

A Veterans Court referred Chris to a year-long treatment program offered through the Minneapolis VA Health Care System. There he found a path to Twelve Step addiction recovery. "I remember the first time I heard the Twelve Promises of A.A., I realized that's what I want," Chris says. The VA program also taught him understand and deal from combat-related post-traumatic stress disorder. "They talked about how to work through trig-

gers, especially when you're in a combat moment," he says. He now knows that putting an ice pack on his eyes is one way to take him out of a PTSD moment. During treatment, he also found support for dealing with early childhood traumas, adoption abandonment, and other troubling issues.

Six months after completing treatment, Chris continues to call on his A.A. sponsor regularly. An occasional craving still arises. "It hits really hard," he says. "I always call my sponsor, no matter what time it is. I take a breath. I know this too will pass. I ask myself why I am having this craving. Then I can make a choice."

When addicts like me use, says Chris, "There is usually some pain we're trying to cover up -- physical, spiritual, mental, or emotional. Those pains are there to let us know what needs to be worked on. What's really amazing is that, if we work

on those things, pleasure is so much more pleasurable. Taste comes back. Dreams become more vivid. I feel the sensations of clothing against your skin. I went through a wardrobe change because I thought some of the fabrics were just too scratchy. I went to a local thrift store and found clothes that felt really good against my skin."

## LIVING BEYOND PAINFUL MEMORIES

Family life has changed for Chris too. "I came to the hard conclusion that I was really a crappy father." After his military service in Bosnia and seeing 16 children and their teachers who had been slaughtered during ethnic cleansing there, he found that he "kept pushing my kids away at arm's distance because I couldn't bear remembering those children. I didn't even know that was a program inside me that was running, but once that was brought to light, a lot of things shifted. I could operate out of choice, instead of out of reptilian survival brain."

AFTER TREATMENT to pg 6

## Social Phobia: When You're Too Scared to Show Your Inner Life to Others

by John H. Driggs, LICSW



I hate being in a group of people I don't know. If I can find a way to get out of such gatherings I will. My mind gets nuts with anxiety. I fear that I will be seen as abnormal—that people can see my flaws. My voice usually cracks, sweat pours off my forehead, and I have a hard time thinking of what I want to say. I wish I could be cool like my brother—the golden boy—who can walk into a room and have everybody eating out of his hand. It's so easy for him; so dreadfully hard for me. So I keep a lot to myself and only see people who've known me for a long time. I'm embarrassed to say I don't really have many friends, not like in college when guys in my dorm were always available. Having a girlfriend, well that's next to impossible. Who wants to be around someone who has nothing to say?! Meetings at work are a real pain. Even with a prepared speech I try to disap-

pear as much as possible. Or I have a panic attack. So I am not seen as much as a leader, even though I have some good ideas. I'm sure I've lost many promotions due to my jitters with people. My life feels very stuck and sometimes I get a bad case of the blues. People see me as a guy on top of the world. I'm reasonably good-looking, young and know how to dress. If they only knew what a fraud I am. I feel like such a failure as a person even when I haven't done anything bad. Sometimes I get so angry and wish I could do something really bad! Then I'd have a real reason to hate myself.

I wrote about this topic sixteen years ago. Social anxiety is the persistent disabling fear of exposing oneself in a social setting.

SOCIAL PHOBIA to pg 7



## CALENDAR

## UPCOMING

**Spirituality Breakfast 2019:** Friday, September 6, at 7:30 am, Hoversten Chapel, Foss Center, Augsburg University, Minneapolis. Keynote speaker is Carl Eller. Purchase tickets at [engage.minnesotarecovery.org/breakfast](http://engage.minnesotarecovery.org/breakfast).

**29th Annual Heartland Round-up:** September 6-8, Park Rapids, MN. AA and Alanon speakers. Call 701-642-1861 to register.

**Walk for Recovery:** Saturday, September 14, from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm, at the Minnesota State Capitol grounds in St. Paul. Walk begins at 1:00 pm and is approximately one mile around the Capitol. Live music, exhibitors, activities for all ages, food truck, photo booth, D.J., more. Register or donate online at [minnesotarecovery.org/2019-walk-for-recovery/](http://minnesotarecovery.org/2019-walk-for-recovery/). Free to register.

**NUWAY Annual Picnic:** Saturday, September 7, 1:00 to 4:00 pm, 2118 Blaisdell Avenue S., Minneapolis. Live DJ, food from local restaurants. More information visit [nuway.org](http://nuway.org).

**Calming the Mind: Joy of Living 1:** September 14 & 15 from 9:00 am – 5:00 pm, at the Tergar Meditation Center, 1621 E Hennepin Ave, Ste. 210. Learn to transform experience by exploring sensations, thoughts, emotions, and even awareness as supports for meditation. Pay what you can. Register at [www.tergar.org/msp](http://www.tergar.org/msp).

**The Recovery Church Presents: Billy McLaughlin in Concert:** Sunday, September 15 at 7:00 pm, Central Park United Methodist Church. A Minnesota native, Billy McLaughlin has been changing the world's idea of what an acoustic guitar can sound like since the 1980's. In 2001, Billy's career ended when diagnosed with Focal Dystonia rendering him unable to perform. Yet, Billy did the unthinkable by relearning his songs left-handed. Tickets for general seating can be purchased for \$25 and can be obtained at [www.therecoverychurch.org](http://www.therecoverychurch.org) or by calling the church office at 651-291-1371.

**The Hamline Center for Justice and Law Presents: We Are All Criminals:** Friday, September 20 from 1:00 to 4:30 pm at KC KLAS Center, 1537 W Taylor Ave, St Paul. Keynote Speaker Emily Baxter. Hear the stories of those who committed crimes, those who got away with them, and those who have been directly affected by the criminal justice

system. Art by women who are incarcerated in Minnesota will be on display. Continuing education credit is available for select boards. Questions or to register, email [cjl@hamline.edu](mailto:cjl@hamline.edu).

**Addiction & Faith Conference:** September 20-22, DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Bloomington, 7800 Normandale Boulevard, Bloomington. Cost is \$350. Scholarships are available. To register, visit [www.addictionandfaithconference.com](http://www.addictionandfaithconference.com).

**Reclaiming Basketry: Working Through Stigma to Reach Creative Potential:** Saturday, September 21, there is a Presentation and Q&A at 1:00 pm at Otter Tail County Historical Society and an Artist Reception from 3:30 to 5:30 pm at Kaddatz Galleries, with an artist talk at 4:00 pm. All events are free and open to the public.

**Annual St. Cloud A.A. Convention:** Friday, September 21, from 12:30 to 9:00 pm at St. Cloud Alano Club, 127 7th Ave NE, St. Cloud. Workshops, speakers, meetings, live music. Contact [stcloudintergroup@gmail.com](mailto:stcloudintergroup@gmail.com) for more information.

**International Aromatherapy Conference and Wellness Expo:** September 27-29, at DoubleTree - Park Place (Hilton Minneapolis), 1500 Park Place Blvd. St. Louis Park. The Wellness Expo is free and open to the public during the International Aromatherapy Conference. More info at <https://www.alliance-aromatherapists.org/2019>.

**Annual Recovery Fest:** Saturday, September 28 from 4:00 to 8:00 pm at The Recovery Church, 253 State Street, St. Paul. Activities will include fellowship, live music, street dancing, guest speaker, food, face painting, inflatable bounce house and other fun activities for kids. Held rain or shine. Featured music will include "Ramshackle Charmers" and the "Gawd Awful Boys". Free event. [www.therecoverychurch.org](http://www.therecoverychurch.org).

**37th Annual St. Cloud Roundup:** October 25 & 26, at River's Edge Convention Center, 10 4th Ave S, St. Cloud. A.A. and Alanon speakers. Pre-registration is \$15 at [www.stcloudroundup.org](http://www.stcloudroundup.org).

**A Different Kind of Grief (6-week session):** Support Groups for loved ones who have suffered from an overdose or substance use-related death. Meeting dates

include September 18, 25 and October 2, 9, 16, 23 from 7:00 to 9:00 pm at Brighter Days Grief Center, 8925 Aztec Drive Suite #1, Eden Prairie. Registration deadline is September 16. Space is limited. Contact Gloria at 612-866-1056/[gloria@recoveringu.com](mailto:gloria@recoveringu.com) to register.

## ONGOING

**All Recovery Meetings:** Minnesota Recovery Connection is hosting All Recovery meetings throughout the Twin Cities. These meetings honor all pathways to recovery, acknowledging that each person's path is unique. Call 612-584-4158 for more info or go to [www.minnesotarecovery.org](http://www.minnesotarecovery.org).

**Hazelden's Second Sunday Retreats:** The second Sunday of each month everyone in recovery is invited to Hazelden in Center City, MN (Cork Center) for an inspirational day of workshops, fellowship, sharing and fun. Open to anyone 18 or older involved in a 12-Step program. \$15 if you register online, \$20 (in-person) includes a buffet lunch and information packet. 9 am to 2:30 pm.

9 am - Register at the Cork Center  
9 am - Introductions and orientation  
10-11 am - Lecture  
10:30 -12:45 - Small group discussions  
12:45 - 1:30 pm - Sunday buffet  
1:45 pm - Small group discussions or Meditation group  
2:30 pm - Relaxation group

## September 8

*Adult Children of Addicts: Who We Are, How We Operate, How to Heal*

## October 13

*Happy, Joyous and Free*

## CELEBRATING

# Recovery Month

SEPTEMBER

**The Recovery Church:** 253 State St., St. Paul, 55107, offers worship services on Sunday at 9:30 am with fellowship, coffee and snacks following service. The mission is to provide a spiritual community for people in search of growth, healing, and recovery. For a list of recovery meetings, visit [www.therecoverychurch.org](http://www.therecoverychurch.org) or like [therecoverychurchstpaul](https://www.facebook.com/therecoverychurchstpaul) on Facebook.

To place a listing, email us at [phoenix@thephoenixspirit.com](mailto:phoenix@thephoenixspirit.com). Or David Goldstein at [david@thephoenixspirit.com](mailto:david@thephoenixspirit.com) to explore advertising or promotional offers.



## WRITERS / ARTISTS

The Phoenix Spirit is interested in writers and artists with experience writing about recovery & addiction. Or are in recovery themselves.

[PHOENIX@THEPHOENIXSPIRIT.COM](mailto:PHOENIX@THEPHOENIXSPIRIT.COM)



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MINNESOTA RECOVERY CONNECTION'S

# WALK FOR

## Saturday, September 14

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Learn more, register or donate today!

[engage.minnesotarecovery.org/walk](http://engage.minnesotarecovery.org/walk)

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

# A Good-bye and Thank You

by Julia Edelman

*"You've got to know when to hold them. Know when to fold them. Know when to walk away, and know when to run." — LYRICS BY DON SCHLITZ, 1976*

Used to be, I enjoyed risks. The higher the stakes, the bigger and better the adrenaline rush. The bigger and better the adrenaline rush, the higher the enjoyment. It was the perfect cocktail: risk plus adrenaline = fun.

And thus, the pleasure center in my brain got used to a healthy dose of thrill-seeking adventures.

In my youth, I enjoyed the dopamine surges provided by outdoor water sports. A perfect day would be one sailing a sunfish or butterfly with eight-mile-an-hour gusts, screaming in close to shore then jibing at the last minute. They were the days of whitewater kayak trips and scouting the waterfalls for the perfect tongue of water that would deliver me to an upright position at the bottom of the drop.

The internal tension I experienced through such sport was well and good for a healthy number of adolescent years, as the pleasures I sought were fundamentally wholesome. If I sought bigger rivers with bigger drops as a way to satisfy my desires, the only consequences I felt in carrying out these experiences was perhaps in the time and effort I invested to access them.

Then I found alcohol and other mind-altering substances. Same reward center of the brain, different key to unlock it. No longer did risk-taking and thrills smack of wilderness adventures and venturing with friends to bucolic spots on the globe. Instead, my brain's reward system became accustomed to substance-induced activation. I replaced sailing with Stolichnaya, and kayaking with cocaine. While I was no longer susceptible to getting caught in a sweeper in the middle of a river, or being captured by the grips of a roller at the bottom of a waterfall, I was caught in a much more dangerous sport. A sport with significantly higher stakes, and a one-way trajectory.

In time, the risks of my substance abuse outweighed the benefits – health, employment, friendships and family all became bruised and battered by daily imbibing. And there was no "high" that could recapture the feelings and euphoria experienced during the days of relative innocence.

Twenty-seven years into recovery, my thrills are much more subdued. I try to indulge daily in a bath of mindfulness, wob-

ble with the challenge offered in eagle pose, and thrill at the prospect of our adult children coming home to visit. I can get a rise out of watching a blue heron fish, thrill at the sight of a pileated woodpecker, and become giddy with excitement at the prospect of a good jazz concert.

I know the allure of addiction and the many masks it can wear — alcoholism, video-gaming, eating, smoking, gambling — these are but a few. This month's issue of *The Phoenix Spirit* focuses on treatment centers and Recovery Month. Please read through the articles in this issue and share them with people you know.

The thrill starts out the same with all addictions — the pleasure center lights up and dances with joy. The problem is, over time, our brain stops telling us that the music has stopped and it's time to go home.

Addiction – any addiction – is a high stakes game. The quality of our lives and those we love is what's on the table.

Back in the late 90s my fiancé and I took a gamble that turned out. We moved here from Madison, WI, myself in early recovery, my husband fresh out of grad school. Personally, I was drawn to the Twin Cities as I knew it was a mecca for recovery, and while house hunting here I ran across a copy of *The Phoenix*.

Within months of moving here I started freelance writing for the paper, then years later became editor and publisher. Over these 20 years I've been involved in *The Phoenix* I've been graced and humbled by the many people I've worked with and encountered. Each one a different gem that's added color and depth to my life's journey. I feel so honored to have been part of *The Phoenix*, and I thank the readers, advertisers, writers, and advertising guru David Goldstein, and new (year-old really!) owners of the paper Aaron and Jen Shepherd, for carrying on the mission of this paper – to offer hope and inspiration. I am taking a gamble of my own as I let go of editing *The Phoenix* after all these years. But I let go with love as I throw myself wholeheartedly into another adventure in life. The risk is that I will miss this mission in my life immensely. But I let go with now with honor and pride in knowing the paper and its readers are in great hands.



## the Phoenix Spirit

RECOVERY • RENEWAL • GROWTH

*Every trial, and every issue we  
find and face holds within it  
the seeds of  
healing, health, wisdom,  
growth and prosperity.  
We hope you find a  
seed in every issue.*

**THE PHOENIX NEWSPAPER** is a bi-monthly publication for people actively working on their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being. We are committed to providing articles, advertising, and information about recovery, renewal, and personal growth to help people experience life in a balanced, meaningful way.

**The opinions and facts** presented in this publication are intended to be diverse and represent those of the writers and/or contributors, and are not necessarily those of THE PHOENIX SPIRIT. We seek writers and interview subjects who are willing to gift you with their honestly held convictions and insights. We seek to attract advertisers who offer products and services of integrity. But we urge our readers to research, and trust their instincts.

**PUBLISHERS**

Aaron and Jen Shepherd  
4190 Vinewood Ln. N  
Suite 111 PMB 403  
Plymouth, MN 55442  
612-615-9740

**EDITOR**

Julia Jergensen Edelman  
phoenix@thephoenixspirit.com

**SALES DIRECTOR**

David Goldstein  
612-298-5405  
david@thephoenixspirit.com

**COMMUNITY RELATIONS DIRECTOR**

Jen Shepherd  
jen@thephoenixspirit.com

**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS**

John Driggs, Melissa Evers,  
Mary Lou Logsdon, Ellie Peterson,  
Pat Samples

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Mental Health Diagnostic Assessments

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SUPPORT GROUPS

MONDAYS

**1900 Mens Alanon**, Monday 5:45-7:15pm, 12-Step meeting, step presentation and small groups, fellowship. 1900 Nicollet Ave., Plymouth Congregational Church. Tom W, 612-281-5230. Enter at parking lot.

**Overeaters Anonymous:** Monday mornings, 10-11am. 3rd floor, handicapped accessible. Minnehaha United Methodist Church, 3701 50th St Mpls 55407. For more info call Ana 651-592-7510

**Understanding Eating Disorders, Treatment, and Recovery:** First Thursday, every other month, 6-7:30pm. The Emily Program staff provides answers to common questions and concerns of families and friends “new” to eating disorders, treatment and recovery. 2265 Como Ave, St. Paul, 55108. Free, drop in. Visit [www.emilyprogram.com](http://www.emilyprogram.com) or call 651-645-5323.

**Friends and Families of Suicide:** a place of support and comfort where those that have lost a loved one to suicide will be comfortable talking about their own loss as well as hearing about the losses of others. Meets the 3rd Monday of every month 7-9pm, Twin Cities Friends Meeting, 1725 Grand Ave., St Paul, 55105. For info email [ffosmn@yahoo.com](mailto:ffosmn@yahoo.com) or call Tracy at 651-587-8006.

**Debtors Anonymous:** a group of men and women who use the 12-Step program to solve problems with debt and other money issues.; [www.daminnnesota.org](http://www.daminnnesota.org) 952-953-8438. Check website for locations and different dates and times.

**Richfield Codependents Anonymous:** 7pm, men & women Richfield Lutheran Church, 60th and Nicollet or call 952-649-9514.

TUESDAYS

**Recovering Couples Anonymous**, 7pm. We are a 12 Step Group for couples wanting to find new ways to communicate. We provide strong couple support and model healthy couple-ship. Unity Church, 733 Portland Ave, St Paul, 55104. Enter the building through the parking lot door and take the elevator to the basement. Please check us out! Contact Dave at 651-214-5747 or Connie at 651-307-7964 for more information.

**Families Anonymous (FA):** First and third Tuesday evening of each month, 7pm. Support group for families and friends of those dealing with drug, alcohol or other behavioral issues. Is someone you love destroying family harmony by using drugs or alcohol? Free help exists! Join us at St. Timothy Lutheran Church: 1465 N. Victoria Street, St. Paul, MN 55117, or contact Dave E: 612-701-5575.

**Debtors Anonymous:** a group of men and women who use the 12-Step program to solve problems with debt and other money issues.; [www.daminnnesota.org](http://www.daminnnesota.org) 952-953-8438. Tues, 7-8 pm, Dayton Ave. Presbyterian Church, 217 Mackubin St., St. Paul, 55102. (1 block n. of Selby and 2 blocks e. of Dale. Meets in the parlor.

**Recovery International Meeting** at Mary Mother of the Church, 3333 Cliff Road, Burnsville, rm 9 at 3pm. It is a proven self help method to deal with mental illness including depression, anxiety, anger, mood disorders and fears using cognitive behavior therapy. Contact Rita at 952-890-7623.

**Emotions Anonymous:** For those dealing with emotional stress, depression, etc. 7:30pm at Christ the King Lutheran Church, Room 106, 8600 Fremont Ave., Bloomington. Take Penn Ave. south to 86th. Turn left and go to Fremont, just east of 35W. Brian at 952-888-6029.

**Nicotine Anonymous:** 7-8pm at St. Columbia Church/School, 1330 Blair Ave., St. Paul, 55104. For more info call 952-404-1488. More locations.

**Overeaters Anonymous Roseville:** Meetings are held from 10-11am (and Saturday's from 8-9) at St. Christopher's Episcopal Church, 2300 N. Hamline Ave., Roseville, Room 218 Call Janie 651-639-4246 for more info.

**A.C.A.,** 5:30-7 pm, Dakota Alano House, 3920 Rahn Rd, Eagan (Hwy 13 & Cedarvale Shop Ctr). 651-452-2921.[www.dasinc.org/](http://www.dasinc.org/)

**A.C.A.** 7pm, Saint Michael's Lutheran Church 1660 W City Rd B (at Fry). Roseville. Open to all. Step and Traditions meeting.

**Get a Fresh Start!** 12-Step AA group, open meeting Tues., 7pm, at Kingswill Church, 1264 109th Ave NE, Blaine. Denny, 763-757-6512.

WEDNESDAYS

**AA Meeting**, 6:30 – 8:30pm St. Christopher's Episcopal Church, 2300 N. Hamline Ave., Roseville. Call 651-639-4246 for more info.

**Women's 12-Step Program:** 7pm, Peace Presbyterian Church, 7624 Cedar Lake Road, St Louis Park. For women of all ages who find any part of life chaotic or out of control. Through reading *A Woman's Way through the Twelve Steps* by Stephanie S. Covington, members explore how the Steps help us overcome addictions and work to heal ourselves. Peace Presbyterian Church has a community dinner at 6pm on Wednesdays and provides free supervised childcare for 12-Step participants. Reclamation-Ministries.org, 952-545-2586.

**Overeaters Anonymous:** St. Paul Midway: Wednesdays 7-8 PM, Hamline United Methodist Church. Two blocks east of Snelling & Minnehaha. Park in south parking lot, use south entrance to education building. Press buzzer. For more info contact Susan at 651-295-7854.

**Adult Children of Alcoholics:** Wednesdays @ 7-8:30pm. St. Mary's Episcopal Church, 1895 Laurel Ave, St. Paul. Meets downstairs, sign in the lobby. For more information call Mary at 612-747-0709.

**Transitions:** 7:30.9:30pm Support to men and women who are transitioning from incarceration to living in the community. Trained facilitators and peers provide emotional support in a safe, openly honest environment to discuss discouragements, frustrations, temptations. One of the trained facilitators is a woman. The Men's Center, 3249 Hennepin Ave. S. Minneapolis, 612-822-5892. TCM.org

**Women's CoDA Group:** Women's Only Codependents Anonymous Group. Meets every Wednesday at noon at Colonial Church of Edina, 6200 Colonial Way (Fireside room, S. end of bldg). For more information, call Valerie at 612.741.5281

**Workaholics Anonymous:** A 12-Step program of recovery for people addicted to non-stop work or continuous activity. Meetings every Wednesday, 12:30 p.m., Brooklyn United Methodist Church, Brooklyn Center. Call Pat with questions: 763-560-5199, or visit [www.workaholics-anonymous.org](http://www.workaholics-anonymous.org).

**Marijuana Anonymous**, Bloomington, 6-7pm, Minnesota Valley Unitarian Universalist Church 10715 Zenith Ave S. (2 Blocks south of Old Shakopee Rd, on the East side of Zenith) Contact: [bloomingtonma@hotmail.com](mailto:bloomingtonma@hotmail.com)

**Atheist/Agnostic Alcoholics Anonymous**, 3249 Hennepin Ave S., #55 (Men's Center, in the basement) Mpls, 7-8 pm., Open to Men and Women. For more info write [tcAgnostic@gmail.com](mailto:tcAgnostic@gmail.com)

THURSDAYS

**Workaholics Anonymous:** 12 step group for finding balance between work, activity and fun. Meets every Thurs. 6-7:15 p.m. Christ Presbyterian Church, 6901 Normandale Rd. Room 210 North entrance, enter door on left. Call before attending for any schedule or location updates. Liz 612-229-8930, Gretchen 615-423-9444 email: [wafindingbalance@gmail.com](mailto:wafindingbalance@gmail.com)

**New CoDa East Metro Group:** Rasmussen College, 8565 Eagle Point Circle N, Lake Elmo (exit north to Radio Dr. on I-94 E). 6:30-7:30pm. Joseph H. at 715-497-6227 or La'Tosia 651-319-2554.

**Red Book ACA/ACOA:** Recovery Church, 253 State, St. Paul, 7-8:30pm. For more info call Jacob at 612.819.9370 or Bruce at 651-407-6336.

**Recovery International Meeting**, St Phillip Lutheran Church, 6180 Highway 65 N, Fridley at 7pm. It is a proven self help method to deal with mental illness including depression, anxiety, anger, mood disorders and fears using cognitive behavior therapy. Ken, 763-571-5199.

**Adults with ADHD Support Groups:** (first time free) Every Thursday morning 10am-noon and every Thursday evening (except last Thurs of the month) 7pm 8:30pm. LDA Minnesota, 6100 Golden Valley Road, Golden Valley, MN 55422. Tel. 952-582-6000 or [www.ldaminnnesota.org](http://www.ldaminnnesota.org).

FRIDAYS

**Food Addicts Anonymous:** a 12-step program dedicated to food addiction. Fridays 8-9pm, Living Table United Church of Christ, 3805 E 40th St., Mpls, 55406. LGBT friendly. For more info call Shea at 612-722-5064 or [sheahnsn@gmail.com](mailto:sheahnsn@gmail.com) or [www.foodaddictsanonymous.org](http://www.foodaddictsanonymous.org).

**Recovering Couples Anonymous:** Friday Night @ Minnehaha United Methodist Church, 3701 E 50th St, Mpls, 55417, 6:30 - 8pm. 12-Step couples group meets as couples in recovery from any addiction. The only requirement is the desire to remain committed to each other, and find better ways to communicate and develop intimacy. Call Kathy 612-545-6200 or Allan 612-309-5632.

**Recovery International Meeting** at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 4100 Lyndale Ave S., Mpls at 7pm. It is a proven self help method to deal with mental illness including depression, anxiety, anger, mood disorders and fears using cognitive behavior therapy. Ruth 612-825-4779.

SATURDAYS

**Overeaters Anonymous Meeting:** 9am at Macalester-Plymouth United Church, St. Paul. For those still suffering from compulsive overeating, bulimia and anorexia.

**Nicotine Anonymous:** Sat. 10am at Linden Hills Congregational Church, 4200 Upton Ave South, Mpls. Enter at the back door. 952-404-1488. Call for locations.

**Spenders Anonymous:** Our purpose is to stop spending compulsively and work toward serenity in our relationship with money. 1-2 pm at Bethany Lutheran Church, 2511 East Franklin Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55406; street parking or in the church lot; enter through the gate on Franklin and ring the bell; [www.spenders.org](http://www.spenders.org)  
**Northeast Minneapolis CoDependents Anonymous (CoDA) Group:** East Side Neighborhood Services, 1700 2nd Street NE, Mpls, 55413 (corner of 2nd Street NE & 17th Ave NE). Park in lot behind building, use rear entry door. Saturdays: 1-2pm. Contact Ralph W. at [rwink@aol.com](mailto:rwink@aol.com) or 612-382-0674.

**CoDA Group:** Shoreview, Shepherd of the Hills, 3920 North Victoria Street, 1 blk north of 694. Please enter from the back/north side of building off of Gramsie. Door “G”. Follow signs to room #265. 9-10am. Dana, [Shoreviewcoda@gmail.com](mailto:Shoreviewcoda@gmail.com)

**Overeaters Anonymous Newcomer Meeting:** Third Saturday of the month, 1pm.2pm. Sumner Library, 611 Van White Memorial Blvd., Mpls, 55411. For more info contact Allison @ 612-499-0280, Gene @ 952-835-0789 or visit [www.overeaters.org](http://www.overeaters.org).

**Overeaters Anonymous Courage to Change Meeting:** Saturday mornings 8-9am at St Christopher's Episcopal Church, 2300 Hamline Ave N. Roseville. Contact Donna with questions at 651-633-3144.

**Clutterers Anonymous:** St. Christopher's Episcopal Church, 2300 N. Hamline Ave., (Hwy 36) room 220, Roseville. 12 step support group meets the first, third and fifth Sat. of the month, 10-11:15am. [www.clutterersanonymous.org](http://www.clutterersanonymous.org)

**Debtors Anonymous:** men and women using the 12-Steps to solve problems with debt and other money issues.; [www.daminnnesota.org](http://www.daminnnesota.org) 952-953-8438. 9-10am, Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church, 4120 17th Ave. S., Mpls, 55407 (rooms 7 & 8, enter sliding glass door facing parking lot.)

**Overeaters Anonymous:** 8-9 am, Falcon Heights Community Church, 1795 Holton Street, Falcon Heights. Lisa 651-428-3484.

**Obsessive Compulsive Disorder Support Group:** 1st and 3rd Sat. of the month, 11am -1pm at Faith Mennonite Church, 2720 E. 22nd St, Minneapolis. Website: [tinyurl.com/tccodsg](http://tinyurl.com/tccodsg). Call before coming for direction. Burt at 612-547-6388.

**Adult Children of Alcoholics & Dysfunctional Families:** Saturday, 10am, ACA Club Fridley, Moon Plaza, Boardroom in the lower level of Unity Hospital, 550 Osborne Road, Fridley. Please see [www.acafridley.com](http://www.acafridley.com) for info.

**Men's & Women's Support Group:** Meetings every Saturday (including holidays) at 9am. Prince of Peace Church, 7217 W. Broadway, Brooklyn Park. (north entrance.) Informal, safe place to share experiences of joy and concerns. We promote growth & positive change to meet the challenges of our lives. Call 763-443-4290.

**South Side Men's Group:** Saturdays, 8:20 to 10am Support for men working toward positive personal change. Creekside Community Center, 9801 Penn Ave. S. Bloomington. Visit [www.southsidemensgroup.org](http://www.southsidemensgroup.org).

SUNDAYS

**Big Red Book ACA**, 11:15am at the Cavalier Club, 6123 Wooddale Ave., Edina, MN 55424. Call Therese S. at 952-927-6761 for more info.

**Calix Society:** A group of Catholic Recovering Alcoholics and their family/significant others who desire to strengthen their spiritual growth, meets the 3rd Sun. of the month at Cathedral of St. Paul. Mass at 8am., breakfast/speaker meeting at 9am. 651-773-3117.

ABOUT THE LISTINGS

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the support groups on this page. However, we recommend that you contact the group before attending. If you have a listing and need to make a change OR you would like your group included (and on our website), please reach out to us at [phoenix@thephoenix-spirit.com](mailto:phoenix@thephoenix-spirit.com). Thank you.

“Hardships  
often  
prepare  
ordinary  
people  
for an  
extraordinary  
destiny.”

C.S. LEWIS





# Three Stories of Hope

The following testimonials are from Minnesota Adult & Teen Challenge in Minneapolis. Some edits have been made for length.

TIFFANY'S STORY

I struggled with a 15-year addiction to meth, opiates and alcohol prior to coming into Minnesota Adult & Teen Challenge (MnTC). My physical health was in shambles and my mental health was unstable. I overdosed and was hospitalized. I had been in over 15 treatment programs. I was disconnected and homeless.

I lost my career as a drug and alcohol counselor. I destroyed my relationships with my family members to the point where no one had contact with me. My father was beginning to plan my funeral. I tried everything and felt like death was the only option. I was truly hopeless.

Aside from surrendering my life to Christ, deciding to come to MnTC was the best choice I ever made. Since I walked in the doors every area of my life that was destroyed by addiction has been, and is being, restored. After graduating MnTC I regained my license as a counselor and have begun working on my ministry license with the Assemblies of God Church.

My friendships are healthy. My family is reconciled. In fact, nine family members have come to know Jesus since my time here! The cycle of addiction truly ends with me. I am stable, happy and hopeful.

I spent more than a year in our Minneapolis women program. The biggest aspect of my recovery, growth and transformation has been my walk with Christ.

APRIL'S STORY

When I was nine, my mother found out that my uncle was being inappropriate with me. She took me home and got me high for the first time; the next day she sent me back to my uncle to babysit me. This set the stage for me thinking that getting high when bad things happen was an okay coping tool.

I let my addiction take everything from me. I went from abusive relationship to abusive relationship. Eventually I lost my children because of my addiction, and on more than one occasion my father had to hire a private investigator just to find out if I was alive. I saw no way out. I had become hopeless and complacent about being a drug addict. I thought that was all my life was going to be.

And then I met God, and everything changed! I firmly believe that MnTC is the vessel that God not only put in my life, but in my husband's life too. We were both born addicted to drugs, we both used at very early ages with our mothers, but we made the decision together that it stops with us.

Now I see miracles every day. I see drug addicts and alcoholics pick up Bibles instead of bottles or their drug of choice. I see mothers that have lost their children get to see them again. And I get to see my husband go through the program and open his heart to Jesus.

TREVOR'S STORY

In 2010, in the midst of a 10 year long drug addiction, I became the father to a healthy boy named Keenan. At the time, I believed that the sense of responsibility I had for this child would change me, but six months later I was in prison. For the next two years Keenan only knew me by



my voice; my only contact with him were phone calls from prison.

When I was released from prison I went straight home, and saw Keenan playing outside; he didn't recognize me. As soon as I spoke to him he recognized my voice, reached out his arms and smiled. I was so happy to be reunited with him, but I hadn't changed. My heart and mind remained the same. Decades of drug addiction and a criminal lifestyle led me back to prison. I was in a car accident while high on drugs, violated my parole, and ended up behind bars once again. I

**You will  
not change until  
you are about to  
lose something  
you cannot live  
without**

remember speaking to my mom, telling her I couldn't remember the last time I talked to Keenan. I was finally tired of hurting my family and ready to change.

In July of 2016 the prison transport dropped me at the door of MnTC. I was greeted with smiles and encouragement from the staff. I knew at that moment that this was going to be the first day of my new life. That day I started building my relationship with God. Jesus became real to me through the staff at MnTC. I felt like I had known them my entire life and that they understood my struggles. In Jesus I found healing from the past and hope for the future. When Keenan came to visit me, he stretched out his arms and said with a smile, "Daddy." As we embraced, I was given the confidence that I was finally doing the right thing.

Over my years of addiction and incarceration, the only stability Keenan had in his life was with my parents and my sister and brother-in-law, who cared for him when I couldn't. I had to make the difficult decision to allow my sister and her family to officially adopt Keenan. I trusted God in this decision and have had no regrets. The beauty of that choice was that it helped to restore the relationships with my family, including Keenan.

I have now graduated the long-term recovery program at MnTC. The best part of my week is Friday, when I get to spend the entire weekend with Keenan. We play sports together and go out to eat. Every Saturday and Sunday morning Keenan sits on my lap and we read a daily devotional and the Bible together. One morning Keenan turned to me and said, "Dad, I am mad at you because you keep going away, but I know that won't happen anymore so I am not mad at you." He knew that things had changed.

I now have the strength to be a good dad. I read a book while at MnTC that said, "You will not change until you are about to lose something you cannot live without." My something was Keenan.

Please send your 1st Person story to phoenix@thephoenixspirit.com. We'll connect with you if we choose to publish your piece in a future issue. Thank you.

# Resource Directory

Counseling

Lehmann Counseling

Help for individuals and families dealing with addiction. Kate Lehmann is an experienced professional offering client-centered substance use counseling. Discrete, flexible, private pay. www.katelehmann.com for more information.

Eating Disorders

Melrose Center

Melrose heals eating disorders for all genders and ages. Our experienced team offers specialty programming for those struggling with an eating disorder and substance use disorder – whether they are in recovery or treatment. Melrose Center has 5 metro area locations. Visit melroseheals.com or call 952-993-6200.

Living Proof MN

A mentoring program for those who've been impacted by eating disorders. We know healing comes from within; we are here to guide you, from the heart, with real world experience and love, through the darkness to take back control and to live life as you deserve. Visit www.LivingProofMN.com, email shira@livingproofmn.com or call 612-207-8720

Drugs and Alcohol Treatment

Minnesota Teen Challenge

If you or a loved one is struggling with drugs or alcohol, we're here to help. In addition to our effective and affordable residential Licensed Treatment, faith-based Long-Term Recovery and convenient Outpatient program, we have extensive prevention and transitional/aftercare services. Freedom from addiction starts here. 612-FREEDOM or mntc.org

Narcotics Anonymous Helpline

Drug Problem? We Can Help! Call Now 24-hour 877-767-7676. Also, check out www.namimnnesota.org For a complete listing of meetings, upcoming events, camp-outs, and service opportunities.

Workaholics Anonymous Meeting

Burning out? Workaholics Anonymous provides steps and tools to break free from non-stop work and activity — or work avoidance. Meetings are every Wednesday, 12:30 p.m., Brooklyn United Methodist Church, Brooklyn Center. Newcomers welcome. Learn more: 763-560-5199 or www.workaholics-anonymous.org.

To place a Resource Directory listing call David at 612-298-5405 or email at david@thephoenixspirit.com



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## After Treatment, Then What? from page 1

Chris spends a lot more time with his kids now. “It used to be that when I was woodworking, I’d be like, don’t disturb me,” he says. “Now I’m incorporating projects that we can do together safely. We also hug a lot.” Also, he says that instead of yelling at his kids when they misbehave, “We get into conversation. I’m guiding them instead of mandating things.”

Chris’s wife has a medical cannabis card to deal with her own PTSD. “We used to smoke together,” Chris says. “So, we had to have some very candid conversations about how we were going to work through these things. It’s been great. She makes choices about her life, and I get to make choices about mine.”

### WHITE KNUCKLING VERSUS GETTING SUPPORT

Katy Vernon is a busy pop/folk singer and songwriter. She rarely drank during her gigs, she says, “But when I got home, you know, you’re so wound up and it’s late at night and the rest of my family would be in bed. I would have two or three drinks just to bring that level down and feel like I could go to sleep.” Sometimes she had brownouts. One night a severe blackout convinced her she had to stop using alcohol.

After a few months of white knuckling and will power, Katy learned about Dissonance, a group of artists who put on sober fun events. She connected with them via Facebook and was eventually linked to A.A., which became her treatment program. “I didn’t have to do it all myself,” Katy says.

In A.A., she says, “There are just no more lies and excuses, and that’s what I had to learn about. You know, when you show up for a performance with a hangover, you pretend you have a little bit of a cold. When you make a choice to not meet up with friends, you say you have other plans. But actually it’s because you’ve already had a glass of wine and you don’t want to get in the car. I realized I don’t want to do things like that anymore. I want to be completely honest and with everyone in my life.”

Katy’s treatment program is ongoing. She’d like to see a therapist, but her musician income makes that impractical, she says. So, she creates her own forms of therapy as well

as practical strategies to help her stay sober. She started a disco band because, she says, “Making music makes me happy.” She also hangs out with members of Dissonance and serves on its board of directors. “I try to surround myself and carve out time to be with other sober people and do things we enjoy,” she says. “When I do go out with someone who is drinking, I might get a yummy mocktail to feel like I have a treat.”

### HUMOR AND MEDS EASE THE WAY

Katy’s latest album features songs springing largely from her recovery. To help her feel more at ease while performing in liquor establishments, she jokes with the crowd: “If you’re good at drinking, great, good for you. I’m really bad at it.” She turns down or gives away free drink tickets she’s offered, or she uses them to get Cokes.

Katy also relies on medications to help manage anxiety and depression. “Ups and downs have kind of evened out. I always thought that was part of my artistic temperament. When I couldn’t handle the highs and lows of emotion, I would reach for something I knew would dull it.” Now I’m functioning in a healthy way, in our past and in each other.

### COMMUNITY MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

After a long history of meth use, Jason Bellamy took part in a 19-month prison-based treatment program and gave his life to Christ. But when he left prison, he had no support in the community. He did stop his criminal activity. And he stayed sober as he built a business in commercial truck construction.

“After 8 years sober, I got into a toxic relationship,” says Jason. “I didn’t know how to navigate my emotions. What I’d do is engage in thought and my chest would feel tight, and I’d go use drugs. I had a cousin who was using, so I knew where to get it.” His using didn’t interfere with his work though. In fact, his work supported his habit. But another arrest put him back in prison and he lost his business. “It was devastating,” he says.

After Jason got out, he was arrested again after three years sober. “I talked myself into using again,” he admits. This time,

Jason found his way to a year-long program at Teen Challenge. A series of prison stays and 10 short-term treatment programs hadn’t kept him sober, but nine months after finishing his Teen Challenge stint, he is setting a new course.

### NEW IDENTITY TAKES SHAPE

“At Teen Challenge, I had contracts to complete on specific issues. I had to identify the root of my problems and uproot them,” says Jason. “I found acceptance, a mentor, and help along the way. I found my true identity as a child of God and how God looks at me. I experienced real forgiveness and inner peace.”

He attends three to four Christian-based recovery meetings each week and regularly shares his story with church and community groups. Having a supportive community has made all the difference, he says.

### HELPING OTHERS START OVER

Jason’s mission now is to help other addicts through a program he and others have started, called Servant Christ Ministries. “They get behind on child support, their driver’s license gets yanked, they keep acquiring a bunch of driving ticket fines, and they land back in jail,” Jason says. “Once they spend time in jail, they can’t get employment and housing, can’t get their license back. Car insurance is through the roof. Credit cards are in default.” Jason said he himself needed the help of a diversion program to pay off the \$4800 he owed in traffic fines with small monthly payments.

Using his own revived construction business as a hub, Jason plans to hire addicts coming out of prison and will ask his customers to do the same. The ex-inmates will be able to attend recovery meetings and receive personal mentoring on and off the job site to help them learn life management skills and stabilize their life. Support will also extend to provide a sober house and assist with transportation and other needs – financed through his business profits and support from community partners.

Says Jason, “All the pain and grief I caused, I want to show it wasn’t in vain.”

### HOW LONG IT CAN TAKE

After seven rounds of treatment and never more than 127 days sober in a row, Mercedes Mejia feels fresh hope. This time she also got treatment for childhood trauma, something she says she’s needed all along. She also says her denial is over. “I know that I’m an alcoholic. I have pancreatic problems and a mass growing there. I go to a meeting every day to get help. I can’t do it alone,” she says.

Mercedes is also taking to heart her psychiatrist’s insistence that she can never stop taking her bipolar meds. “I’m sad about that, but I also feel relief,” she says, “because I know I don’t have to ever again feel like I felt when I went off my meds. I’d go into mania and be like a tornado.”

Mercedes is making plans to see a counselor to further unravel her trauma experiences and to get to know the “real” Mercedes. In treatment, she realized she had been a “chameleon,” trying to look perfect to those around her. She hopes her mother with join her in family counseling. If not, “I will have to keep my distance from her,” Mercedes says.

Going back to work as a restaurant server will be a challenge for Mercedes. The booze is readily available, and co-workers often imbibe, she says. Her plans are to order a Diet Coke. As a backup, she is relying on an anti-craving drug to subdue her desire to drink alcohol.

Mercedes’ new social life is built around her friends from her recovery meeting. “They do so many fun things,” she says, “camping on weekends, barbecues, women’s retreats, going to games.” Since dating was often her downfall – “I always wanted a glass of wine” – she now intends to be honest about her addiction with men from the start.

*Pat Samples is a writer and a facilitator for creative aging, body awareness, and creative writing. [www.patsamples.com](http://www.patsamples.com).*

St. Paul native, Nick Diffatte, has won multiple national awards for both magic and comedy. At only 23, he's already headlined on the Las Vegas strip, at the famous Magic Castle in LA, and on the Late Late Show with James Corden

Nick views the world through his Spectacle Shoppe glasses. ...Even as he makes some of it disappear.



See Different

Uptown, New Brighton, and Grand Avenue





# Social Phobia from page 1

It is more than being shy; it is about being estranged from and scared of ourselves. I wish I could say that people today are more willing to express themselves to others. Actually research tells us that just the opposite is true. Social isolation and social anxiety are rampant in today's society, ironically in an age when most of us are more electronically connected to one another than ever. About 20% of adults have social phobias. The true rate is likely much higher. We superficially connect but also hide our true selves from others and ourselves. Young adults are especially prone to social anxiety at a much higher rate. I am seriously concerned that too many of us are limiting our emotional lives and self-confidence by being scared of people and not personally getting close to others, putting us at risk for suicide. This development can threaten our civilization and our personal well-being if it goes unacknowledged. It leaves too many of us emotionally distant from each other and breaks the most important rule of evolution: We are primarily social creatures who need each other.

Most of us don't grasp that what especially frightens us are not external dangers, which are rare, but internal ones, which are pervasive. Sure being in public these days can make any of us nervous, given the mass shootings, frequent gun violence and frightening portrayals of public dangers on TV and social media. We are constantly surrounded by security checks, hidden safety cams and identity checks. Parents are reluctant to let their kids out of the house alone. All such worries are very understandable. What is less understandable is why perfectly normal people would be nervous and panic-stricken just by being emotionally vulnerable to others. Such worries cause many people with social anxiety to be scared of themselves and their own emotional vulnerability. People

with social fears are just scared of their own shadow. They see danger where there is none. Over and over they practice avoidance, only making things worse. Left untreated this pattern gets worse over time and results in depression and social breakdown.

## SYMPTOMS OF SOCIAL ANXIETY

People with this syndrome know they have serious social jitters but they don't know how to lessen their predicament or why they are the way they are. Interestingly enough, social anxiety is not a mental illness and is a very treatable emotional difficulty. Almost all of us have some version of it. No one needs to be stuck with it. The first step is knowing how to recognize it in ourselves. Common patterns are:

- persistent avoidance of public gatherings, self-assertion, and initiating with others
- physiological arousal of fear in social situations-blushing, rapid breathing, sweaty palms, inability to speak, feelings of entrapment and dread, lightheadedness
- wallflower behaviors in social settings-spectating, being on the outside looking in
- career or love relationship underachievement due to social fears
- harsh self-criticalness or self-consciousness in public gatherings
- continuing view that others in crowds are disapproving of you
- seeing your own social mannerisms as stupid, pathetic, or uniquely inept
- often feeling lonely in a crowd
- difficulty with making decisions and know what you want
- inability and unwillingness to express appropriate anger
- appearance to others as a friendly stranger or someone who lacks an identity



*People ask why I am not married.*

*Although I am 35 years old I'm considered quite attractive. Every time I meet a man I like I go crazy over him at first. I like strong, intelligent confident men who can take charge. All the qualities I lack. Inevitably, over time, I discover that he is only in it for himself. I tend not to complain, do what he wants and eat up his adoration. I even believe his lies. Well you can guess what happens next. As soon as I ask more from him he starts distancing from me and criticizes how I look. I keep trying to please him and give up on asking for what I want. I lose weight, become a gourmet cook, and get hotter in bed. But nothing seems like the way it was. So I get more desperate. I go back to flattering him, which only works for a while. Until I find out he is with another woman. Finally it dawns on me that I've never been close to anyone in my life. Where am I in all this?*

## ROOT CAUSES OF SOCIAL ANXIETY

This difficulty has several contributing factors: genetics, faulty childhood attachment patterns, cultural isolation and shaming, and overuse of electronic technology. Some genetic factors contribute to this problem. People who are born more sensitive to others are prone to misinterpret and blame themselves for other people's perceived reactions. They put more energy into getting people to like them than accepting themselves or they withdraw from people altogether. Over use of social media severely make social anxiety worse. During teen years most of us are quite self-conscious. Then we hopefully develop real friendships with peers and learn how to fit in, quirks and all, allowing us to be reasonably confident in ourselves. If we continually live our lives vicariously and exclusively through social media and repeat this pattern into adulthood we never learn that we are acceptable to others as we really are. Most of us are well aware of the hazards of emotional bullying on-line and how vulnerable any of us is to social defamation and vilification. Hence we are forced to be inauthentic. In fact any of us can be pretend on-line to be somebody we are not. However, to be truly confident in ourselves we need to expose who we are to others, warts and all. Such efforts require face-to-face, eye-to-eye contact with others. Our eyes are the windows to our soul. We can get information on-line but we cannot find our souls that way. Confidence-build-

ing requires personal social eye-to-eye connection and cannot be done on a screen. It is the way our brains are wired.

Actually the most significant contributor to social anxiety are faulty family relationship patterns in childhood, the very age when brains are most malleable and vulnerable to trauma. If we learn as children from our parents that we are fundamentally not acceptable, it will leave us with greater lasting vulnerability to emotional injuries in our adulthoods and be terrified of rejection throughout our lives. Such vulnerability is like being a turtle without a shell. Most people with social anxiety have histories with parents who were overly critical or excessively protective of them. Generally we were harmed by people who were emotionally rejecting or overzealously hovering over us, micro-managing our lives. Often this was done by people with no intention to harm us and those who were unaware of the messages they were giving us. Our fear of people today is more about the persistent memory of past traumatic harm we grew up with as kids. Often the only safety we can find today is emotionally withdrawing from people, even to the extent that we hide from ourselves. A turtle without a shell is just not safe.

## RECOVERY FROM SOCIAL ANXIETY

I wish I could say that overcoming social phobia is a piece of cake. It isn't. It's best if you can be assessed by a trusted professional who treats this disorder in a psychodynamic way using cognitive-behavioral therapy (and possibly psychoanalytic psychotherapy). This means he or she will discern the degree of social impairment of your difficulty, have a personal and emotionally alive relationship with you that both supports and challenges you and designs a treatment plan with you as a partner in having you take reasonable risks in your relationships. Often this will require you learning more about yourself, witnessing your avoidance patterns, paying attention to your arousal responses, leaning self-forgiveness and reclaiming your body as a source of wisdom.

It is only normal that as you work with a professional in a personal way that you will return to the scene of the crime in your current connection with your helper. You and your helper will recreate what occurred in your childhood that disabled you. This is good news. Indeed old wrongs can be corrected with your helper as you take an active role in the process. The real healing occurs in a loving relationship with a helper that also includes developing courage in outside-the-room relationships. As you develop confidence in yourself you will also likely shed tears of grief for the many years you have lost by being a turtle without a shell. It is through these tears of grief that you will grow a brand new flexible shell and live a long, safe and connected life. Possible helpful reading on this topic is *Dying of Embarrassment* by Barbara G. Markway, Ph.D. et alia (New Harbinger Publications, 1997)

**John H. Driggs, LICSW, is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in private practice in St. Paul and co-author of *Intimacy Between Men* (Penguin Books, 1990). He can be reached at 651-699-4573.**

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# Where to Get Treatment

The following is just a partial list of the many treatment facilities throughout the Greater Minneapolis / St. Paul area. We recommend doing your own research to find the treatment that fits your needs.

**AVIVO**

1900 Chicago Avenue  
Minneapolis, MN 55404  
612-752-8074

avivomn.org

Avivo provides chemical health assessments, substance abuse and co-occurring treatment programs, and an aftercare recovery program. All are paired with mental health support as needed. Outpatient treatment for individuals (housing is available), both relapse prevention treatment and integrated dual diagnosis treatment. And family outpatient and residential treatment (only for pregnant women / mothers with children).

**FAIRVIEW RECOVERY SERVICES**

2450 Riverside Ave.  
Minneapolis, MN 55454  
1-855-324-7843

www.fairview.org

Inpatient and outpatient chemical dependency programs for adults. Screening assessments, medically supervised detoxification, inpatient and outpatient evaluation and referral, combined inpatient to outpatient treatment sequences, family counseling and aftercare. Individualized programs are designed to meet client's physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual needs. Fairview also offers programs for older adults and people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing.

**HAVEN CHEMICAL HEALTH SYSTEMS LLC**

2042 Wooddale Drive  
Suite 220  
Woodbury, MN 55125  
651-734-9633

havenchemicalhealth.com

Providing Inpatient and Outpatient Chemical Health Services in the 7 county metro area. Licensed residential and outpatient primary chemical dependency treatment. Our goal is to initiate a process of recovery by making the necessary lifestyle changes that promote long-term abstinence and recovery. With three residential facilities, Haven Chemical Health Systems has multiple ways to suit clients' needs.

**HAZELDEN ADOLESCENT AND YOUNG ADULT TREATMENT CENTER**

11505 36th Avenue N.  
Plymouth, MN. 55441  
763-509-3800

hazeldenbettyford.org/treatment

Helping adolescents, young adults and families impacted by the disease of addiction for more than 30 years. Young people between the ages of 12 to 25 welcome to find freedom from drugs, alcohol and mental health issues - and to restore hope.

**HAZELDEN BETTY FORD CENTER**

15251 Pleasant Valley Rd  
Center City, MN 55012  
651-213-4000

hazeldenbettyford.org/treatment

State-of-the-art addiction treatment centers include multidisciplinary clinical evaluations to determine a person's treatment needs during addiction rehabilitation. Hazelden Betty Ford helps individuals, families, and communities struggling with alcohol abuse, substance abuse, and drug addiction, supporting them with a 12-Step based model.

**MELROSE CENTER**

952-993-6200

melroseheals.com

Melrose heals eating disorders for both males and females of all ages. Our experienced team offers specialty programming for those struggling with an eating disorder and substance abuse - whether they are in recovery, treatment or still struggling with substance abuse. Locations in St. Louis Park, St. Paul and Maple Grove.

**MERIDIAN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH**

550 Main Street  
New Brighton, MN 55112  
612-454-2014

meridianprograms.com

Meridian comprises an entire family of programs addressing chemical and mental health. The company operates 10 outpatient clinics and seven inpatient addiction treatment facilities, including one it acquired in East Grand Forks, MN. With a large network, resources and multiple locations, Meridian is able to help a diverse range of individuals, with specialized programs for men, women and LGBT.

**MINNESOTA ADULT & TEEN CHALLENGE**

740 E. 24th Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55404  
612-500-4211

www.mntc.org

Offers effective and affordable programs throughout Minnesota with campuses in Minneapolis, Brainerd, Duluth, Rochester and Buffalo. Minnesota Adult & Teen Challenge conduct both a long-term, faith-based recovery program and short-term licensed treatment program, which allows effective treatment of individuals with a broad spectrum of addiction issues.

**NUWAY HOUSE**

2118 Blaisdell Ave  
Minneapolis, MN 55404  
612-767-0309

nuway.org

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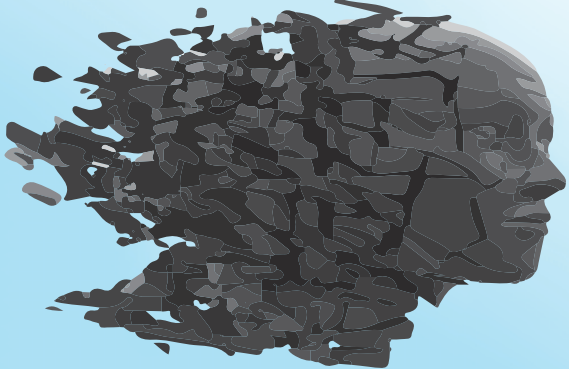
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**1:2**

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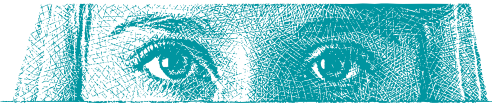
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#### PROJECT TURNABOUT

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[www.riverridgemn.com](http://www.riverridgemn.com)

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Rogers new St. Paul clinic is their second location in the Twin Cities and provides specialized, evidence-based outpatient treatment to those struggling with OCD and anxiety, depression, mental health and co-occurring addiction, and general mental health.

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IN THE HEART  
OF THE RECOVERY  
COMMUNITY



# A Look at Peer Recovery

by **Melissa Evers, CPRSR**

Esteemed recovery historian, scholar and advocate William White notes that the concept and principles of peer recovery support has deep roots extending back to the original mutual self-help group Alcoholics Anonymous and spanning forward from that time to be a fundamental aspect of the substance use recovery movement.

In 2019 Peer Recovery Support Services (PRSS) have become a recognized and integrated part of addiction treatment in many areas of the country. However, despite the extensive education and advocacy efforts of Recovery Community Organizations (RCO) such as the Minnesota Recovery Connection, Peer Support Services have only become formally recognized in the past year as a validated reimbursable treatment service by the state of Minnesota.

This article provides a unique overview from dual perspectives through the eyes of both a clinical professional and a newly trained peer on their experience working together to integrate PRSS into a community-based co-occurring treatment program.

Ken Roberts is the Chief Clinical Officer for NUWAY, a non-profit substance use disorder treatment provider with deep community roots and over fifty years' experience providing community-based care. Melissa Evers is a person in long term recovery and a trained Peer Recovery Support Specialist (PRSS). A NUWAY alumni, Melissa was hired as the first full time PRSS at NUWAY.

Melissa begins by describing peer support and defining the scope and benefits of these services:

*"Peer recovery support services are community-based services that encompass the domains of advocacy, mentorship, education and system navigation. PRS supports multiple pathways to recovery and encourages the recoverees to take the wheel and explore what works for them. By using a strength-based approach, the recoveree defines and creates their new path to recovery with their peer coach/specialist/mentor. Peers also incorporate their personal lived experience, when relevant and helpful for the recoverees to understand or relate to. Peers are professionally trained in motivational interviewing, the stages of recovery, cultural competency, recovery capital, ethics and boundaries, and more. They then go on to become certified through the MCB to be a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist, with opportunity to advance with an upgraded credential as a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist Reciprocal."*

*Peers are not only great for the recoveree but also a great addition to any substance use organization. They provide support to recoverees, and clinical staff, by using their community resources and navigation skills to link people to appropriate community organizations and events. They can provide daily one-on-one support to those who may need a little more time. They can mobilize into the community as well, to support the recoveree on their personal navigation of their community. Peers, no matter the location can be invaluable to the person seeking recovery.*

*There are different avenues for Peers to obtain employment, some work in Recovery Community Organizations like*

*Minnesota Recovery Connection to provide Mobile Substance Use Disorder Support (SUDS Team). This team is very active in Emergency rooms, and Detox facilities. Peers work for organizations that support employees who are experiencing challenges with substance use disorder, such as Recovree, who provides tech enabled peer recovery services through various employee assistance programs. Currently outpatient treatment programs such as NUWAY are implementing Peer Recovery Services for the continued success of their clients.*

With that picture in mind, Ken shares his experience of agency integration for peer support at NUWAY:

*"The most critical step was realizing that being knowledgeable about providing treatment did not necessarily translate to being knowledgeable about providing peer support. In fact, we learned that this is one of the most common mistakes made when these disciplines first begin to overlap in a formal manner. Thankfully, we at least had the awareness to recognize this fact and bring in an expert in peer training, culture and implementation. We contracted with the Minnesota Recovery Connection for Kris Kelly to do an in-depth evaluation of our agency to create a defined plan for implementing PRSS. This process included meetings with executive leadership, focus groups with staff and clients, analysis of key service gaps and a comprehensive training for all staff members about how peers would and would not work in our treatment settings. These exercises revealed interesting information that I would not have predicted such as fears by our clinicians that peers might be a threat to their job. The learning we gained was invaluable in helping create a plan that addressed these types of concerns and supported Melissa to onboard and really integrate with our team. Kris Kelly was, and continues to be a mentor and support to Melissa in her professional development."*



*"I'm grateful that we were mindful and strategic in our process- the results have born that out. I'm also grateful for the reminders this experience provided about the value of peer support in my own recovery. I am also a person in long term recovery. Treatment was the first step in my journey, but it was the peer support in support groups and recovery housing that helped me most over the long run. I wanted to be a champion for that type of support in our agency. Through Melissa's work in our outpatient programs we have been more successful in consistently connecting clients with community-based resources and helping new clients maintain better treatment engagement and retention. We have expanded her role to work at a second site and are planning to add PRSS agency wide in 2020."*

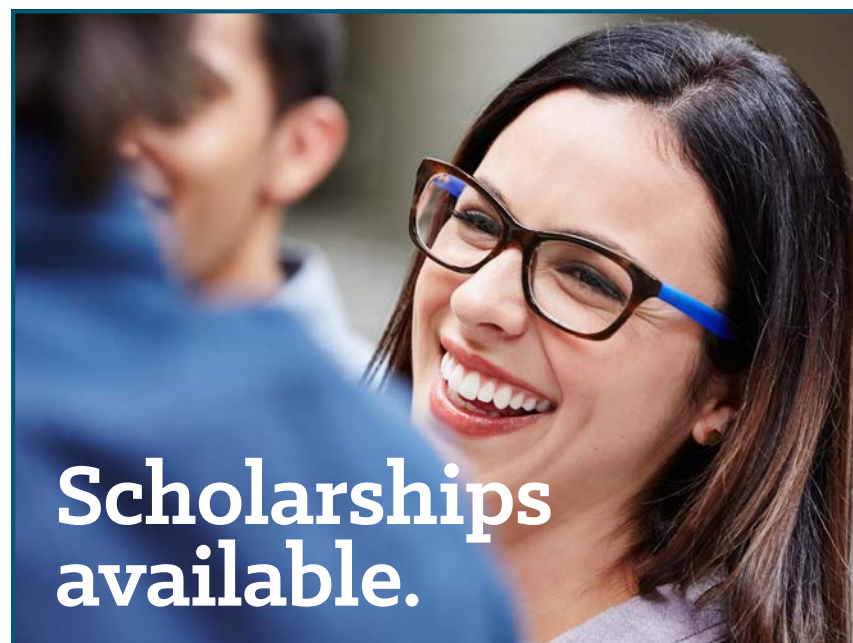
Melissa concludes this reflection with her vision of the hope and encouragement that peer support provides:

*"Peers are intentional in connecting the recoverees to resources within the community, they help recoverees learn to cope with everyday life. They are mentors, cheerleaders, navigators, truth-tellers, educators, and provide unwavering support to those they serve. Peers work with the 'help you, help you' philosophy in which they become a person to walk besides, and to grow with. Peers celebrate success, model a healthy lifestyle, and show empathy and compassion for all those they serve."*

*Peers help to reignite hope for those who report to have none, they work to empower the recoveree to make their own decisions and find their own path. Another key factor in peer recovery is empowering the recoveree to build their strengths. Working together within an outpatient treatment setting, the recoveree receives a wide gamut of supportive services, which provide choice and freedom to live the life they want to live! Recovery can be very challenging; peers are living proof that recovery does work. They live their work every day, which provides hope for those who are still struggling with substance use disorder. They help people to see that mountains, do turn into mole hills by taking manageable steps, together, hope is restored."*

**Melissa Evers, CPRSR**, is a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist Reciprocal at NUWAY Counseling Center in St. Paul.

**Kenneth Roberts**, is the Chief Clinical Officer at NUWAY.



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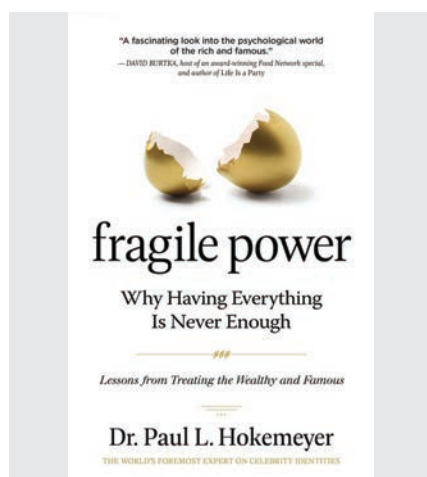
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# Books



## Fragile Power

Why Having Everything Is Never Enough

By Paul L. Hokemeyer, PhD  
HAZELDEN PUBLISHING

Having treated some of the world's most successful people, psychotherapist "Dr. Paul" sets out to answer why so many people who have everything end up feeling like their achievements are never enough—as well as what that pattern can reveal about ourselves and the society in which we live.

The exclusivity of living behind the velvet rope or the gilded gate doesn't guarantee happiness for the rich, famous, and powerful; there are downsides to attainment as well. We all—including people who seem protected by their privileged lives—can experience the self-destructive behaviors common to modern life, including chronic stress, addiction, anxiety, imposter syndrome, infidelity, negative body image, and narcissism.

Division marks our era. There's a growing separation between the haves and have nots, men and women, as well as the empowered and the disenfranchised. At the same time, our culture is defined by celebrities, and the powerful, affluent people we put on a pedestal to idolize and emulate. Too often, we think our lives would be better if we could have what they have or be more like them. It's time to realize that even the most admired people can go through life feeling unloved and unable to escape their problems.

OCTOBER, 2019 RELEASE DATE



## High Achiever

The Incredible True Story of One Addict's Double Life

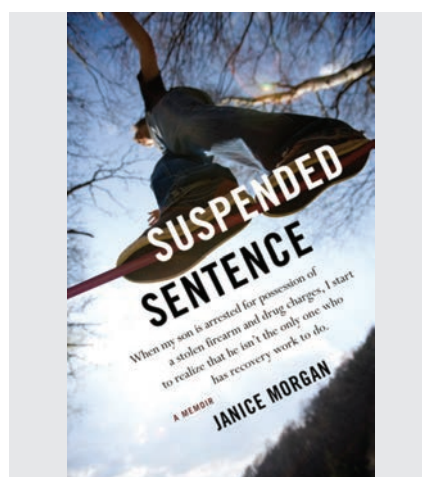
By Tiffany Jenkins  
HARMONY

Beloved for her complete authenticity, raw honesty, and lovable humor, Tiffany Jenkins is the human voice of the opioid epidemic. This is her gripping true story, from her life as an addict, 20 felony charges, and six months in a Florida prison to her eventual sobriety and new life as a mom, wife, and inspiration to millions.

A few years ago, Tiffany Jenkins was detoxing behind bars at a Florida prison, incarcerated on 20 felony charges. Now, she's clean and sober, a married mother of three. As she found her way in her new life, she started sharing on social media as an outlet for her depression and anxiety. She struck a chord, several of her videos went viral (one with 46 million views), and in the past year her following exploded from a few hundred thousand to more than 3 million.

Raw and juicy, compulsively readable and ultimately inspirational, the memoir opens in the Florida women's prison where Tiffany was incarcerated for 180 days. The memoir flashes back in time to the events that led to Tiffany's imprisonment (during the time of her active addiction, Tiffany was dating and living with a cop), and moves forward to her eventual sobriety.

The synopsis of these books were taken from the publisher's overviews. If you have a book you'd like featured or have an old favorite you'd like to share with others, please contact us at [phoenix@thephoenixspirit.com](mailto:phoenix@thephoenixspirit.com).



## Suspended Sentence

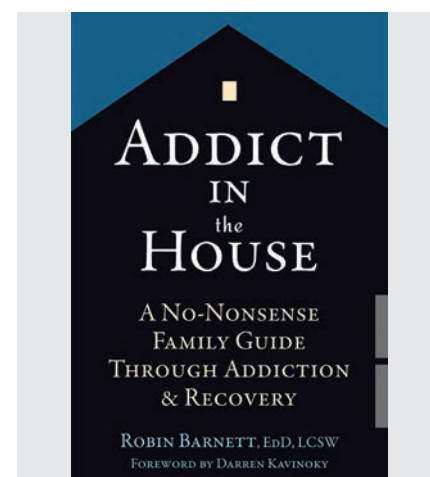
A Memoir

By Janice Morgan  
SHE WRITES PRESS

Janice Morgan faces her worst nightmare when her son is arrested for drug charges and wanton endangerment with a handgun. When she learns that he can have his sentence diverted if he completes the drug court program, she reflects on what it will take to avoid falling back into codependent patterns—and truly help her son.

When Janice Morgan, a divorced college professor living in a small town in Kentucky, learns that her son has been arrested for possession of a stolen firearm and drug charges, she feels like she's living a nightmare. Dylan's turbulent period as a college student in Cincinnati before this should have warned her, but it's only now that she realizes how far he has drifted into substance abuse and addiction. As Dylan passes through the judicial system and eventually receives a diversion to drug court, Morgan breathes a sigh of relief—only to find that she, too, has been sentenced right along with him. In the months to follow, she leads a double life: part of it on campus, the rest embarking upon what she calls "rescue missions" to help Dylan stay in the program. Clearly, Dylan isn't the only one who has recovery work to do.

OCTOBER, 2019 RELEASE DATE



## Addict In the House


A No-Nonsense Family Guide Through Addiction & Recovery

By Robin Barnett, EdD, LCSW  
NEW HARBINGER PUBLICATIONS

If you're the family member of an addict, you may feel confused, guilty, and scared of doing the wrong thing. And when you don't know how to help, you may find yourself in a codependent role, trying so hard to keep your addicted loved one alive, out of jail, or emotionally appeased that you may actually prevent them from realizing they need help.

Drawing on her own personal experience with her brother's addiction, Addict in the House offers a pragmatic, step-by-step guide to dealing with a loved one's addiction, from accepting the reality of the disease to surviving what may be repeated cycles of recovery and relapse. You'll learn how to encourage your addicted loved one to get help without forcing it, and finally find the strength to let go of co-dependence.

With this revealing and straightforward book, you'll have the support you need to take an honest look at how addiction has affected the family, cope with the emotional hurdles of having an addicted family member, create and maintain firm boundaries, and make informed decisions about how to best help your loved one.



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## Channeling Your Addictive Energies: Enabling Possibilities

by Ellie Peterson

When we are immersed in recovery, our healing journey is a moment by moment experience. Over forty years ago, I was introduced to the Twelve Step program because I wanted my husband to quit drinking. It was evident his behavior was destructive. The Al-Anon program revealed that mine was crazy too. Unaware that my fears were at the heart of my co-dependent behaviors, I was sure that if he changed, I would be happy.

When I started recovery, I wanted simple things like having enough money to support me and our three children. Often on Friday nights my husband would stop

at the bar and cash his paycheck. He would give the bartender a portion (so he could go back the next day and get it) and drink the rest. Sitting on the front stoop of our house feeling forlorn and beaten, I would hope that this night would be different. My prayers focused on him coming straight home from work. As I recall this memory, I feel compassion for all of us. That is not what I felt at the time. My actions were fueled by the hurt, fear, and self-pity that was stored in my mind and body.

Now I know that we were all acting out of our preconditioned ways of being. Since I am analytical, I would try to figure out if the alcoholic activities were caused from

*"Wherever you are in your recovery, know that you are exactly where you are supposed to be."*

me not being good enough, genetics, environment, or culture. Seeking someone or something to blame for the predicament I was in obstructed my progress. Accepting that my behaviors, thoughts, and feelings were enabling the addiction cycle was my new challenge. Changing them has been my ongoing mission.

Through Twelve Step meetings, counseling, retreats, and reading self-help books, I began to learn coping skills. To let go of my deep sense of embarrassment and shame, I slowly came to admit that I could not control anyone. It was freeing to know that I was responsible only for myself and I could be happy. The *Just for today* I will be unafraid and *Act as if* slogans were useful. Repeating these mantras got me through many trying days.

As part of my initial recovery, my smoking habit became a top priority. Many times, I had tried to quit yet was unsuccessful. The *You Can Heal Your Life* by Louise Hay book introduced me to the power of my words. When I incorporated affirmations like "I can" while walking and ultimately running, I started feeling sooooo good. My body and mind were being retrained in positive ways and toxic energies were being released. Joy was intensified as healthy results became my new reality. My heart was opening.

Recovery still means all those things and more. It is realizing that trauma is at the heart of addiction. Not only is it

stored in the mind and body, it can be passed down from one generation to the next. Addictions come in many forms, yet the one common denominator is they all destroy a person's sense of well-being and wholeness.

Embracing the nature of our being and channeling our energies brings victory into each experience. Indigenous healers believe that close to any poisonous plant, is its' antidote. That closeness is within each one of us. Wherever you are in your recovery, know that you are exactly where you are supposed to be. If you think about it, how could you not be?

Our minds can be perpetually in motion trying to relive the past and project into the future. Minds cannot handle this constant barrage of stress; we are meant to live in the present moment. As a kindness to yourself, it would be good to listen to your own self-talk. Meditation and other mindfulness practices are great ways to increase your awareness. As your true nature is revealed, you heal naturally.

In your recovery, may you feel connected to life so you can relax fully into its' mystery. One thing I know for sure is that my rational mind does not have the answers. It must surrender to a life force that is unseen yet felt in everywhen, everywhere, anyhow, every what and everything. Directing this energy while feeling the unlimited well of love can enable you to experience possibilities that seem outside your reach. In this Oneness, you can never be lost.

*Ellie Peterson, is the founder of Power of Positive Workouts. She can be reached at [info@powerpositiveworkouts.com](mailto:info@powerpositiveworkouts.com) or [www.ppworkouts.com](http://www.ppworkouts.com).*



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# More Help for Problem Gamblers

*From Staff at Vinland National Center's new Outpatient Problem Gambling Program*

You don't have a gambling problem. You don't even know anyone who has a gambling problem. So just ignore this and go to the next article. After this one question:

Did you know that of all addictions, problem gamblers have the highest suicide rate? Maybe you did. Yet, some people don't even think it's a "real addiction." I have to wonder if they ever met a "real problem gambler." One who is on their way down. After they started losing. And running out of ways to keep others from finding out. And couldn't stop. And kept gambling. And spent every cent they had. And/or started borrowing and/or stealing. And got caught. Or didn't. Yet kept on gambling. Then were hit in the face when others found out.

The cat was out of the bag. Have you ever tried to put the cat back in the bag?

You were forced to do...something. So, you begrudgingly started going to G.A. (Gamblers Anonymous). Well...once. Then you went back to gambling. Experienced more of the above. Went back to GA. Started to turn things around. For a while. And then, The-Great-Back-and-Forth-Up-and-Down-Round-and-Round. Relentless. Never-ending. Until...that night. Or that early morning. Driving home. No, just...driving. Squinting against the relentless sunrise. And your chest is exploding and caving in at the same time.

And this time, when you let go of the wheel...you don't grab it again.

What we, in the field of addiction and recovery services, have learned is that scare tactics don't work. Threats don't work. Education (alone) doesn't work (for long). What works? What would work for you? What hasn't worked at all in the past? What has worked for a while? Does the bottom have to hit you? Trust me when I say, it doesn't have to.

I know this, as I have been on both sides. I was problem gambler, and someone who loved a problem gambler, and, both at the same time, and had to (almost) lose it all. Somehow, I'm still here.

No, I don't have all the answers. Yours are for you to figure out. But I do get it. Enough to promise no guarantees. Enough to offer an opportunity. To take a closer look. For the first time. Or again.

Feel free to give me a call. Let's talk. Because one approach doesn't fit all, and this addiction is a deadly one. Once you do decide to get help, I am living proof that you can get help, and your life will get better.

**Martin Phillips, LADC, CBIS**, is an *Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor, a Certified Brain Injury Specialist and Vinland National Center's Outpatient Problem Gambling Program (VOPG) certified gambling counselor. He can be reached at 763-479-4559.*

Vinland was grateful for *The Phoenix Spirit's* coverage on Problem Gambling last month, and because we started offering help for problem gamblers at our Outpatient location in NE Minneapolis as of July 1, 2019, we want to share some of the knowledge we have gained from our colleagues in the field as well as from the process we went through to establish this program through the state of Minnesota.

We're sure the general public within the state of MN is not aware of the following information that one should know when looking into treatment for problem gambling:

Some insurance plans do pay for problem gambling assessments and therapy. But did you know that the MN Department of Human Services (DHS) will ensure that all will be allowed problem gambling treatment regardless of one's ability to pay? DHS will pay for inpatient and outpatient problem gambling services for residents who qualify for help, as well providing a 24 hour helpline, public awareness programs, counselor training, and problem gambling prevention programs. These services are funded through legislative action and the funding comes from various gambling functions such as lottery revenues, charitable gambling services, and contributions from the Indian gaming community.

As we all understand, those with problem gambling addictions have very tenuous financial situations, so the state of Minnesota believes the ability to pay for needed treatment should not be a barrier to realizing a better life free from problem gambling. If you answer yes to these two questions below, please use the resources provided in this article to seek additional help:

1. Have you ever had to lie to people important to you about how much you gambled? Yes or No.
2. Have you ever felt the need to bet more money? Yes or No.

## RESOURCES FOR PROBLEM GAMBLING

- Call or text 1-800-333-HOPE – a 24 hour Problem Gambling helpline that is answered 24 hrs a day, 7 days per week. You can also chat at [ncpgambling.org/chat](http://ncpgambling.org/chat).
- Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) [getgamblinghelp.com](http://getgamblinghelp.com)
- Northstar Problem Gambling Alliance. [Northstarproblemgambling.org](http://Northstarproblemgambling.org) or [info@northstarproblemgambling.org](mailto:info@northstarproblemgambling.org). An amazing, relentless group of advocates for those in need of help from problem gambling.
- Project Turnabout/Vanguard residential gambling addiction program - 320-564-4911, 660 18th Street Granite Falls, MN 56241 [www.projectturnabout.org](http://www.projectturnabout.org)
- Vinland National Center's Outpatient Problem Gambling Program -763.479.4881, 675 Stinson Blvd, Suite 200, Minneapolis, MN
- Gamblers Anonymous ([www.gambler-sanonymous.org](http://www.gambler-sanonymous.org))

It is our hope that this helps at least one person with a gambling problem find help locally. It's out there if you just reach for it.

**Don Raasch, MA, LADC**, *Certified Brain Injury Specialist Vinland National Center, Outpatient Services Manager, 675 Stinson Blvd., Minneapolis, MN. 763.479.4560*

## Wondering if you have a gambling problem?

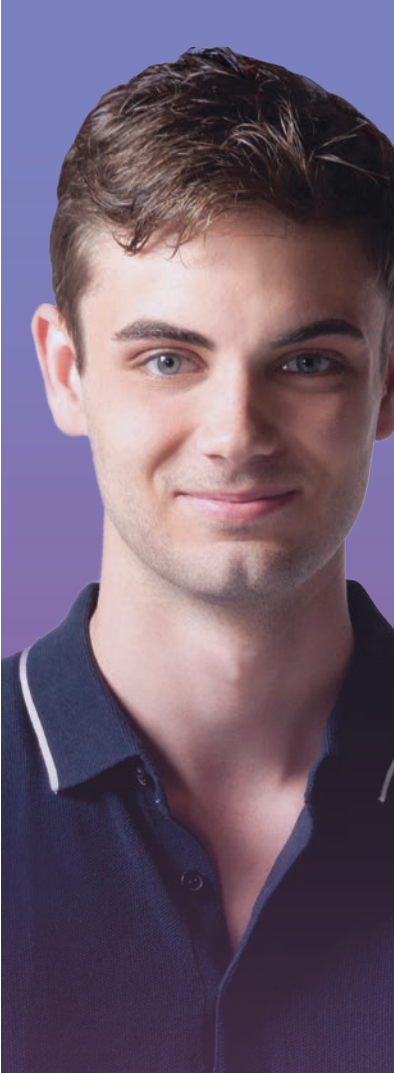
Seek more information if you answer yes to these questions

1. Have you lied about how much you gamble or how much you spent gambling?
2. Have you spent more time or money gambling than you intended?

## Resources for Problem Gambling

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## Good Grief

by Mary Lou Logsdon



I live forward and backward. In, then out of the present moment. Time unbound. The past is present and the present is lost. The future is behind a veil through which I cannot see.

My sister died. My youngest sister. Too soon and too fast. I am riding the messy, painful, very human roller coaster of grief.

I've been here before. My parents died. Close friends died. Sadness comes in waves, drags me into its riptide. Normalcy appears like a mirage of fresh water in the desert of now.

The Buddhists remind us that impermanence is a part of life. Everything we love we will lose. However, that doesn't mean we shouldn't love. The far greater sorrow is to not have loved. I am grateful for the fullness of years I had with my sister. How much I would have lost had she not been here at all.

Grief has many symptoms. Those first days overflow with confusion. How did I get here? What was it I was going to say? Where did I put my keys? Has anyone seen my mind—I seem to have lost it!

There is a numbness to grief. How do I feel? What do I want? I have no idea. Nothing tastes good. Sleep is interrupted or excessive. My energy is either drained or super-charged.

Grief is complicated. Feelings are messy. It is so tempting to move into the intellect, the comfort of the brain's organizational skills. Analyzing the situation seems like it is doing something! Here are the 5 or 7 or 15 stages of grief and I am in stage 3 or 4 or 8 so I must be half way there. Except where is there? And who's directing traffic?

"Grief is about a broken heart, not a broken brain. All efforts to heal the heart with the head fail because the head is the wrong tool for the job. It's like trying to paint with a hammer—it only makes a mess." So say John W. James and Russel Friedman in *The Grief Recovery Handbook*.

Grief is a gateway to our feelings. Grief, sorrow, loss must be felt. We can drive them underground but they won't stay there. Rather they seep into our lives like toxic chemicals from a military dump site. They flow into the streams of our consciousness and the dark streets of our nightmares. Feelings will insist upon being felt, no matter how hard I fight them.

I admit I fear feelings. What if they move in and never leave, like mice nesting in warm basement corners as autumn approaches? However, when I do feel my feelings they dissipate. They linger a while and then move on. I didn't believe it either—but it's true.

Let the feelings come. Cry. Rant. Yell. Be sad.

Where do I put this grief? I could store it in the root cellar of my memory where I put all the things I want to get out of the way of today. The problem is, the shelves are already full of stuff I have avoided for years. My avoidance strategy has not worked in the past, why would it be useful now?

I could stay busy and leave it perpetually simmering on the back burner. What happens to back burners that are never attended to? They burn, ruin the pot and stink up the house.

I could deny that I am in pain. How are you? Fine, just fine. But I am not. I am hurting. I am sad. I am angry. My heart is broken.

I know my immediate acute grief will lessen in time. Yet we all carry heavy loads of unresolved chronic grief. "Unresolved grief consumes tremendous amounts of energy...unresolved loss is cumulative and cumulatively negative." *The Grief Recovery Handbook*. My current grief touches all those old griefs.

A good place for grief is in the space between me and a good listener. We all need listeners in our life. They are the people who let us talk and talk—even when they've heard it before. They don't judge, interrupt or analyze. They listen. We also need to recognize the people who are not able to do this. There are tipoffs. For instance, when someone says "I know exactly how you feel" or "Did I tell you about when I lost my pet or a lover or ...." Say thank you and call someone else. Or they say "Here is what you need to do." Or "Aren't you over that yet? It's been a week, a month, a year." Say, "Nice to see you" and move on.

Good listeners listen. They listen with their hearts. They don't turn it back to their stories. They don't try to fix you or the situation. They listen.

We can train our listeners by asking for what we want. I want to talk with you about how I am feeling. I don't want to be interrupted, fixed or distracted. I want you to listen. Can you do that?

Grief is a response to loss. Some losses are readily apparent—a death, a divorce, a health crisis. We know what was, no longer is. Other losses are more ambiguous. I lose my dreams of what may have been. I lose the person I know, replaced by someone who no longer knows me. I lose the fantasy of a perfect family to the reality of what is.

Those ambiguous losses eat away at us. People don't ask about those. Friends are uncomfortable when we bring them up. We can get stuck on rewind. I should have.... If only.... Why didn't they.... These repetitive questions are clues that I am sinking into a cauldron of shame. Somehow the loss is my fault and if only.... "If onlys" are like a ball and chain used to keep prisoners controlled. They keep me tied up and not able to move on.

Sometimes we must be alone with our grief. I take mine to the woods, sharing it with the oaks and brambles. I sit on a fallen tree trunk, softly upholstered with moss, and let the natural world comfort me.

While solitude can sooth my soul, isolation is dangerous. Grief is communal. It connects us to one another. When I gather with family and friends at a funeral, I feel supported. We share the loss. We gather to remember and tell stories. We recognize the sacred ground of our interconnectedness.

Francis Weller in his book, *The Wild Edge of Sorrow*, says "The gift of grief is the affirmation of life and our intimacy with the world."

Life is full of loss. We cannot avoid that. Among the losses will be our own life in its time. But we can embrace the gift of life that remains. Losses have their sacred place in our life. May we feel them, integrate them, learn from them and then embrace fully the life and memories that remain.

*Mary Lou Logsdon, is a Spiritual Director and retreat leader in the Twin Cities. She can be contacted at [logsdon.marylou@gmail.com](mailto:logsdon.marylou@gmail.com)*