

# Together AZ

MARCH 2017

Inspiring Success on the Road to Recovery

By Maureen (Mo) Michael, LSAT

According to the Arizona Office of Problem Gambling, between two and three percent of Arizonans suffer from an addiction to gambling, many who are women. I’m one of them.

People with gambling problems may not physically appear to have a one. We don’t slur our words, or have bloodshot eyes. Our consequences result in financial, social and legal issues, resulting in bankruptcy, divorce, job loss, jail time and too often suicide, or attempts at it.

To the person without a problem, it’s a form of entertainment. Gaming is legal in many states, and can be indulged in online making it a universal enterprise.

Most states encourage it through state-supported lotteries and scratcher games of all types and denominations. It’s easy to satisfy an impulse to gamble, even at a weekly poker game at the neighbor’s house.

My first exposure to gaming was at the ripe young age of eight. My adopted parents loved to play, and many of our family vacations were to Las Vegas or Laughlin, Nevada. It seemed normal to me.

## Problem Gambling Warning Signs

- Have you ever felt the need to bet more and more money?
- Have you ever lied to people important to you about how much you gambled?
- Have you repeated unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back or stop gambling?
- Do you gamble as a way of escaping emotional or physical pain?
- Have you ever relied on others to provide money to relieve a desperate financial situation caused by gambling?
- Have you ever jeopardized or lost a significant relationship, job or career opportunity because of gambling?
- Have you gambled to get money with which to pay debts or to solve other financial problems?
- Have you borrowed money to finance your gambling?
- Has gambling ever made your home life unhappy?
- Do you gamble to try to get your money back?

## The Four Phases of Escape Gambling

- Problem gambling is thought to be a progressive disorder, traveling through four phases. Although this describes the four phases of what is commonly called the “Escape” gambler, anyone experiencing problems in life due to gambling will probably be able to identify with this progression.

Need information? Visit <https://problemgambling.az.gov/signs>. Call 602-542-8998



To make our trips more kid friendly we often stayed at *Circus Circus*. My siblings and I were given rolls of quarters to spend on the midway, while Mom and Dad played their games. I loved hearing the shuffle of cards, sounds of the slot machines and watching stacks of chips slide across the tables. On one trip we stopped at a state line casino and my mom let me drop a few silver dollars in a machine. It was a thrill pulling the handle, especially when a few coins came out.

From then on I expected we would stop there on the way home from every trip, but my dad usually drove right past. I remember feeling sad and disappointed. Did gambling have a hold of me then?

By age 18, I had learned how to play blackjack, and always tagged along on trips with my folks, until I figured out a way to get fake ID. I went to casinos with older friends or alone. I thought about gambling when I wasn’t playing, and my adrenalin skyrocketed when I knew I would.

## The Slow Spiral Down

At 20 years old, on a weekend trip to Laughlin, I met a black jack dealer. I extended the trip to stay with him and found no reason to call my job or family. I was living with a man who worked in casino, “Who could ask for anything more?”

That relationship wasn’t working out and a few months later I came home, *very broke and very pregnant*. Not being in any position, financially or emotionally to raise a child, I gave my son up for adoption at birth. After signing the papers giving up my rights to him, my gambling compulsion accelerated.

I began to lie to friends and family on reasons why I needed to borrow cash. I needed to pay bills I pleaded, but of course it was used to feed my growing need to gamble. The big win was near,

I could feel it and I chased it. Of course after hitting the jackpot, I’d quit.

Even though I had lost jobs, places to live and friends over my debt, I could not stop, and soon found another way to fill the void — a man.

We hit it off and moved to Tucson for his job and watching over our finances was my responsibility.

While he worked six or seven days a week, my days were spent in casinos. I had access to his money and the ATM became my best friend. My scheme worked until we started looking to buy a home. At the bank, he discovered our accounts were near empty. I had to admit what I was doing and *promised to stop*.

Soon after we moved to Phoenix. I managed to stay off the bet for nearly six months but was constantly taunted by casino signs luring me in. And just like any relapse with an addict or alcoholic, before I knew it, I was in front of a slot machine, zoned out, chasing again.

Because I could no longer take his money, I found another way to fund my habit. I stole from my employer but was caught and fired. To make the situation worse, I was pregnant again. The thought of losing our child if I went to jail horrified me and I called a gambling hotline, and attended my first GA meeting. My boyfriend paid back what I had stolen from my employer.

## Attempts to Stop the Madness

I went to meetings until the birth of my son, never gambling during his first year. While I often thought of it, I never talked about it to the recovering gamblers I met at meetings — I wasn’t ready to give it up.

On the move again, we were in Flagstaff. While there were no casinos in town, I located one an hour away from home. After settling in, I took a job at a restaurant and hid most of my tips until I had enough for a quick trip. I stuck to my plan and stayed one hour and won. Denial told me *“there’s no problem here you’ve got winnings in your pocket.”* So there! I proved everything was under control. Yet it wasn’t long before my casino time increased from hours into days. Win, lose, win a little, lose all.

Confronted again by friends and family, I returned to GA. The members suggested I work the steps and get a sponsor, I did neither and my attendance at meetings was infrequent. I didn’t want to stop or be around people who had.

So I kept alive by pawning items I did or didn’t own, and embezzling again. Each time I wrote a check to myself, I vowed it was the last. I was working for people who trusted me with their books and payroll, and there I was taking advantage of them, and their bottom line.

CHASING THE WIN continued page 6



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## Publisher's Note



By Barbara Nicholson-Brown

### Dare I Say it Out Loud?

While working on every edition of *Together AZ* over the years, I'm more and more amazed at far we have come — as millions of us are no longer wrapped in the shame and despair about our addictions. We're sober, recovering people, and I'm proud to say that out loud.

Probably from my first drink, possibly to my last, I carried so much shame, always fearing someone would know my secret. *Who was I kidding?* Anyone who knew me had it figured out quick, and if they weren't the type of drinker or drug taker like me, they were gone in less than 60 seconds.

When confronted; **I denied it.** When I felt so horrible from headaches and hangovers, to every noise from outside my window sounding like a thousand jackhammers in my head; **I denied it.** I had such a fear of revealing who I was, alcoholism held me captive and **I denied** that too.

I'm not sure (*and it really doesn't matter*) if I hit my bottom or my bottom hit me, but I am grateful I live and breathe a sober life today. And that is what I have, we all have...today.

There must have been a few occasions when I agreed with family or friends about my behaviors, but every sentence had a **'I know'** attached to it, or the ever famous word **BUT**.

I wasn't planning on getting so drunk, **but...** I wasn't intending to make a fool of myself, **but...** I didn't mean to hurt you, **but**, and the list could go on.

Today, I work and associate with people who have been where I have, and the camaraderie we have is beautiful and real. We say who we are, out loud.



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While working with Mo Michaels on her gambling story this month, I felt a connection, like sister to sister. Our drugs of choice may be different but the feelings we experienced are similar. And I applaud her on her honesty and courage to share publicly where addiction took her. Kidding I said, "Well your story is out now," and we both agreed if it can help one person, family member or friend, that's what it's all about.

## Hot Topics

### CarePortal Expands to Maricopa County

Governor Doug Ducey announced the official launch of **CarePortal** in Maricopa County to help keep more vulnerable Arizona families together.

The CarePortal is one of many partnerships formed through the Council on Child Safety and Family Empowerment, chaired by First Lady Angela Ducey, and is designed to connect

families in crisis with local faith-based organizations willing to lend a hand.

The program equips caseworkers at the Arizona Department of Child Safety with a communications network through which to notify nearby churches of a specific child or family in need, allowing churches to fill the need based on the resources they have available.

"Healing and strengthening our communities takes people working together," said DCS Director Greg

**HOT TOPICS** continued page 9



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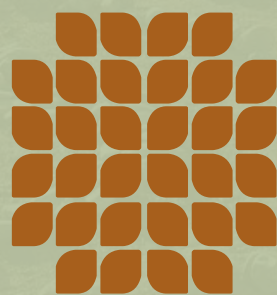
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### Michael Phelps and Allison Schmitt Named Honorary Chairpersons for SAMHSA's National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day 2017

Olympic champions Michael Phelps, the world's most decorated Olympian, and Allison Schmitt, an eight-time Olympic medalist, are partnering with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) over the next year to focus attention on the needs of children, youth, and young adults who experience behavioral health disorders, such as mental illnesses and addictions.

Teammates and personal friends, Phelps and Schmitt have spoken candidly about their respective struggles with behavioral health and how they have supported each other through difficult times. The duo will collaborate with SAMHSA to promote children's behavioral health initiatives.

The Awareness Day 2017 national event will take place on Thursday, May 4, at The George Washington University School of Media & Public Affairs Jack Morton Auditorium. Phelps and Schmitt will receive SAMHSA's Special Recognition Award for speaking openly about their behavioral health challenges and encouraging youth to lead healthy and active lives.

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## Another Master Teacher

By Dr. Dina Evan



My sister died on the 9th of February. Ours was an odd relationship. For years, she had been a member of a religion that prohibited her from being with people, including her family, who were not in her organization. Recently, she had begun to question those beliefs and we had several lunches of her cautiously dipping her toes in the idea of feeling free. Her death was unexpected, and in the shock of it, I felt like I was on a roller coaster, sitting in the present to examine every relationship with my beloved family and friends, then sliding into a review of every relationship of my past growing up with her, our absentee parents, and with those who deeply influenced our lives, much of which was filled with deep teary pain and tremendous gratitude.

I think the thing that finally got me off the roller coaster was remembering that Suzanne, like everyone in my life, is simply another master teacher.

Teaching me that love is malleable, it bends and it twists and because we are humans and fallible, sometimes it even hurts — but when it's real, it reaches down into my soul and grabs my heart and asks me to re-examine who I am and who I want to be. After all, in the end we only have two choices. We can be in our integrity, authentic, empowered, standing in love and staying present to the task of finding our best and highest selves... *or not*.

Death is such an odd thing to most people. It's that 'not to be discussed topic' and it is often greeted with the widening of eyes and an oh no, non-verbal expression, as if even talking about it might create the reality. For most it's a fearful topic. I don't fear death, albeit I am not quite there yet.

I hadn't lost anyone in a long time, so my sister's death gave me a new perspective of the journey, the diversity and beauty of it and how it effects each of us. Part of my sister's teaching, for me is remembering life is short, I can't to wait too long or hold back in fear, anger or any temporary feeling that separates me from myself or another.

I must be brave enough to reconnect as quickly as humanly possible and to create resolve or healing with those

in my life. I tell myself, do it even if it means risking rejection, embarrassment or failure. Do it because life is short, and obviously filled with the unexpected.

At her memorial, there was almost no common feeling in the room. Everyone had a story of Suzanne, their experience and impact of her in their lives. Some were angry, sad and confused yet trying desperately to find peace and resolve. I realized that death too is a master teacher, teaching us something about ourselves.

If we are the one leaving because of age or the unexpected, it requires us to ask the hard questions of how much we believe what we believe. It also asks us to look at whether we have done what we came here to do and if we are willing to finish what is still unfinished.

Those of us who are older or those of us who know we may be leaving, have the great gift of time to create a sense of completion with our journey. We get to ask the question, *who am I* and *who do I want to be*, with time to *be it*.

The Buddhist say, "Today is a good day to die." I love that saying because it reminds us that each day is a precious portion, a sequential gift that allows us a chance to reach a place of peace and completion. We can remind ourselves to live fully in each moment, be fully present with each person who walks with us, and to stay profoundly in our integrity so when we are ready for the next part of our path on the other side, we can turn around, look behind us knowing we did what we came here to do in a way that echoes well done.

Everything in life and death is in service to our soul, giving us repeated opportunities to find ourselves. And, for those who wonder or might be concerned, no it doesn't stop at death. This wonderful journey, simply begins again.



*Dr. Evan specializes in relationships, personal and professional empowerment, compassion and consciousness. 602-997-1200, [DrDinaEvan@cox.net](mailto:DrDinaEvan@cox.net) and [www.DrDinaEvan.com](http://www.DrDinaEvan.com).*

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# Relationship Tips for People in Recovery

By Dr Mel Pohl, *Chief Medical Officer at Las Vegas Recovery Center*



Here are a few behavioral patterns people in recovery should keep in mind when (re)starting a relationship.

## Tip 1: Wait a year before you start a new relationship

If you're single and new to recovery, it is strongly recommended you wait until you have at least one year of solid sobriety under your belt before you enter into a new romantic relationship. This is so that you can remain focused on your top priority: staying sober.

New romances can actually become a substitute for alcohol or drugs (i.e., replacing one intoxicating feeling with another one, all of which stimulate dopamine), which can make you vulnerable to relapse.

## Tip 2: Don't keep feelings bottled up inside

Communication is vital to the health of any relationship, and it's a skill that many people in recovery may struggle with. You've likely spent several years or decades burying your feelings with alcohol or pills in order to avoid facing your emotions head on; which can make voicing your thoughts (even just to yourself) challenging and scary, especially at first. But staying with the vulnerability — no matter how uncomfortable it may feel — will help make these emotions more manageable, especially with practice. If you're unsure where to begin, start by simply telling your spouse or significant other how hard it is for you to talk about your

feelings. Sometimes the simple act of "telling on yourself" can open the doors to communication and make it easier to be honest.

## Tip 3: Focus on the needs of others

Self-absorption is a hallmark of addiction and when you've spent so long focused on your wants and needs, it can be difficult to begin to consider another person's. But a healthy relationship is 50-50, so it's important those in recovery learn how to be fully present and committed to making the relationship work.

## Tip 4: Know yourself well

A big part of recovery is learning who you are as this new, emotionally vulnerable person and discovering healthier ways of coping with life stressors. As you get to know yourself better, you may realize that the qualities you seek in a partner or relationship have changed. Whether you are single, in a relationship, new to recovery or have been living substance-free for years, it's a good idea to have an in-depth understanding of your motivations, needs and desires. Before you can understand others, you have to understand yourself first.



*Mel Pohl, MD, DFASAM is the Chief Medical Officer of the Las Vegas Recovery Center (LVRC). Dr. Pohl was a major force in developing LVRC's Chronic Pain Recovery Program. He is a Board Certified Family Practitioner, certified by the American Board of Addiction Medicine. [www.lasvegasrecovery.com](http://www.lasvegasrecovery.com)*

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The Consequences Chase Me

Somehow I managed to get another great job as an accountant but after four years of the vicious cycle of gambling and stealing; as I was leaving the office one afternoon, the gig was up. The police were waiting. Handcuffed and humiliated, could my life get any worse? I was booked and released and told everyone I lost my job. I could not admit the truth.

Over six months passed and I had not heard anything about my arrest. “Was I forgiven? Did the company I stole from write off the loss?”

I returned to GA, still unwilling to be honest with anyone. And I fell further down by playing away all the money I had cashed in from a 401K. I was living paycheck to paycheck and had severe legal problems.

Nearly two years after the arrest, a packet from the DA’s Office with my indictment papers arrived. As I ripped it open — my heart sank.

At a meeting with the public defender the outcome looked like incarceration was in my future. My attorney suggested it would be favorable if I had a chunk of money at sentencing to show remorse and willingness to pay the victim back. This financial stress pushed me right back to the casino. *“I absolutely must win now.”*

A few weeks before sentencing, due to downsizing I lost another job. Why I thought I would get away with any of this is beyond me.

Back at home, I looked at my boys, thoughts of going to prison and not watching them grow up left me paralyzed. My mind raced trying to figure out a way to get out of my self-created disaster and fear filled my body.

Around that time I received a call from my first born; the son I had given up for adoption had found me. He was 18 and coming into my life when I was an absolute mess. While he wasn’t ready to meet in person, we did communicate by email.


A few days before sentencing, I took the money I saved to pay the court and went off to win enough to pay restitution. In a panic I packed my car, took my boys to their dads and drove off to Laughlin to win my fortune.

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*Suicide rates among gambling addicts are staggeringly high. The National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG) has estimated that one in five problem gamblers attempt to kill themselves, about twice the rate of other addictions.*

Because of that poor decision I missed my court date. Now, officially on the run, I was going to hide out until I won enough to repay every penny of my debt. Ten days later, I lost my last dollar. And there I was, thinking the only way out was to end my life.

Financially ruined and facing prison, I figured my children and everyone else would be better off without me. I thought about taking pills and leaving a note — but I couldn’t get my boys sweet faces out of my mind. “I can’t do this to them,” I cried out, and asked God for help.

Somehow I found the strength to get out of that dingy hotel, drive home and decided to turn myself in. I had to tell my younger sons what I had done, and sent an honest email to my eldest. Even knowing the truth, he wanted to meet before I went away. We all met for the first time. Looking back, the irony is, at the start of my addiction I gave him up for adoption and at the beginning of my recovery — we were reunited.

Facing Reality

Walking into the police station, heart thumping, I told an officer about the warrant and was there to turn myself in. The next few weeks were a bit of a blur. I wavered back and forth about my decision and desperately tried to find someone to bail me out. **No one did.** The consequences were mine — mine alone.

After all counts were officially charged, 53 felonies were against me. As the months passed, I attended every AA, GA and NA meeting I could find. I wanted to turn my life around no matter what.

My first plea was for 7-12 years in prison. My attorney asked for an evaluation by a psychiatrist and it was concluded I suffered from pathological gambling. The plea remained the same. I vividly remember the prosecutor referring to my gambling as “Miss Reilly’s so called Addiction.”

During the next few months I came to peace with my fate. My attorney located a counselor in Phoenix who specialized in gambling addiction

and told her my story. We met and I told her every last detail. She wrote a recommendation to the prosecutor and judge asking them to allow me to receive treatment in lieu of prison. After days of negotiation, I had 2 pleas on the table; 7-12 years in prison, or one year of treatment with maximum probation time (14 years).

The women in my jail pod encouraged me to take the prison deal because 14 years was too long “on paper”, they said. I was torn on what to do, but a guard said, “If you really want to change, it won’t matter how long you’re on probation; don’t get a DOC number.” I took those words to heart and sincerely wanted help.

Most of the charges were dismissed except for two felonies. I attended long term treatment and slowly began to put my life together. When I arrived at the facility all I had were the clothes on my back and a bible from jail.

After treatment I moved into sober living. Seeking employment was a challenge due to my felonies, but I was offered a position as house manager. That is when I discovered I wanted to work with others with gambling issues like mine and returned to school.

Wanting What I Want

At two years clean, I wanted to have my boys back and they did come to Prescott to live with me. I found an affordable apartment, enrolled them in school and we began our new life — until my middle boy announced he wanted to return to his dad.

Stubbornly, I didn’t listen, I so desperately wanted my way. But I had to agree to let him return to his father. Over the next few months my younger wanted the same opportunity and again I couldn’t let go. I was so selfish it was difficult to consider what his needs might be.

I had dropped him off at his fathers and as I was driving away my heart physically hurt because the pain was so unbearable. Who loses their kids in sobriety? I needed relief and knew how to get it 50 miles south of Flagstaff at my ‘playground’. I was almost hysterical as I drove down the highway, screaming at God—how He could let this happen.

Ready to Surrender Again

I am not sure why, but on the drive I picked up the phone and made a call, and another, until I reached my boyfriend. He talked with me all the way home and I didn’t gamble.



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The next few days I stayed in bed and cried. I couldn't get up. On day three of this behavior my roommate came into my room and said "Get up!" I refused. She insisted. While I am not sure why I listened to her I returned to work, to life.

I am very grateful now that God put people in my circle who did not allow me to wallow for too long in my pity. I was back in meetings and spent hours with my sponsor reviewing and re-doing the 12 steps to get back on track and connected.

And another miracle occurred. I was approved to visit the women's prison as a guest. I will never forget returning there, I even jumped with fright when the doors closed behind me.

But all of the tension and anxiety was worth it as I walked into the room for a meeting. I had the freedom to leave when it was over. Sharing my story with them was one of the most humbling experiences I ever had. Maybe I did have a reason to be here.

Continuing the Journey

After starting school in 2009, I received my B.S. in Counseling in 2014 and began working on my master's in Professional Counseling in 2015.

My purpose became realized helping other problem gamblers. Today I'm married and together with my husband work in the field of treatment and was offered an opportunity to open Compass Recovery Center, along with my brother-in-law.

The blessings in my recovery are many. Sadly not every gamblers' story turns out as positive as mine.

What Keeps Me in Recovery

There are actions I must take daily to stay on the path. Connecting with my 12-step program and sponsor are an absolute must. I cannot play lottery games, bingo and I won't flip a coin. I stay away from places where I don't belong, and all games on Facebook or other devices are triggers. For some it's fun, for me it's complete devastation or my demise.

The only win I'm after is another 24-hours of sobriety and *it doesn't get any better than this!*

About the Author



Maureen "Mo" started working in the treatment field in 2008 where she first started as a residential house manager. Mo currently works as the Program Director for Compass Recovery Center in Prescott, AZ. She is currently pursuing her Master's Degree in Professional Counseling at Grand Canyon University. Mo began her own journey in recovery in 2007 and believes that working with others to recover from addiction is what she is meant to be doing. Mo loves the outdoors, playing softball, cooking, riding her Harley, and spending time with her husband, kids and grandkids. Mo believes the key to happiness is having "An attitude of Gratitude."

To reach her email: [mmichael@compassrecoverycenters.com](mailto:mmichael@compassrecoverycenters.com) or call (928) 863-8703.

Resources

Gamblers Anonymous/Gam-Anon meetings  
<http://www.gaphoenix.org/>

Arizona Office of Problem Gambling  
<https://problemgambling.az.gov/>  
**1-800-NEXT STEP (1-800-639-8783)**

Compass Recovery  
**1-800-216-1840**

National Gambling Hotline  
**1-800-522-4700**

AZ Council on Compulsive Gambling  
**1-800-777-7207**

ACT Counseling & Education  
**602-569-4328**

A comprehensive Gambling Treatment Provider list is available: [problemgambling.az.gov/treatment-counseling/treatment-providers](https://problemgambling.az.gov/treatment-counseling/treatment-providers)

Gambling affects men, women, teens, young adults and seniors. It does not discriminate by race, age, religion or socio-economic background. If you suspect a problem with a loved one or yourself, reach out for help.

# RECOVERY IS POSSIBLE

## CBI

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By Alan Cohen

Some friends of mine decided to sell their house, and found a buyer. On the day before the sale was to close, they walked into their living room to find a wall covered with carpenter ants. The couple had never seen such ants in the house before, and had no idea where they came from. In integrity, they disclosed the discovery to the buyer, who cancelled the sale. At that point my friends realized they did not really want to sell the house, and they kept it. The next day the ants disappeared and they never saw them again. That was 20 years ago. They are still living in the house and loving it.

### C.C.C.C.

The ants were dispatched by a brilliant creative organization called the “C.C.C.C.”—the Cosmic Coincidence Control Center. This is the agency behind synchronicity, a term coined by psychologist Carl Jung, indicating “a meaningful coincidence.”

Jung defined the principle after he conducted a psychotherapy session with a woman who reported she had had a dream of a golden scarab (beetle). At that very moment a golden scarab flew into the room, capturing Jung’s attention and the patient’s. That type of beetle was very rare in that region, and it was out of season. The chances of such an insect entering that space at the precise moment they were discussing it were infinitesimal.

Synchronicity is always working on our behalf, but we are only occasionally aware of it. We cannot plan synchronicities; we just need to get clear on our intention and then be open to signs and guidance.

A happy-looking couple came to me after a lecture. “I was seeking my soulmate,” the fellow told me, “and then I fell into a coma. When I awoke in the hospital, I looked up to see the most beautiful angel looking down at me. She turned out to be a nurse, and I married her.”

You do not need to create a coma or some dramatic circumstance to meet your life partner or fulfill your dream. When you are relaxed, open, and in the flow of life, synchronicities show up gently, easily, and joyfully. The wisdom of benevolence is working 24/7 to help us receive the good we desire and deserve. Its ability to find and serve us depends on our willingness and openness to receive blessings.

If something matches you and belongs to you, it will find you by right of your consciousness. When I visited Japan I met a radiant healer named Shinichiro Terayama, who years earlier had healed himself of a disease that doctors said would cause him to die. Shin decided to simply practice gratitude and just be happy, and the disease departed. After that he became a well-known and beloved healer. He is recognizable by his shiny bald head, gray

# Who Sent the ANTS?

beard, and the cello he totes to musical engagements. Shin’s bright energy made in impression on me and I wanted to see him again.

A week later I was passing through Shinagawa Station, one of the most crowded terminals in a city of nearly 14 million people. Then I saw a familiar bald head and encased cello coming my way. It was Shin. I was stunned to run into one of the few people I knew in all of Japan, the one I wanted to see the most. The C.C.C.C. strikes again!

A young woman at a seminar nervously asked, “What if I am here in North Carolina and my soulmate is in California? How will we ever meet?” I told her, “Synchronicity and the Law of Attraction are not impeded by geography. The universe can overcome any seeming obstacle to join people who belong together.”

Just out of college, I saw an ad for my ideal job as the director of a municipal youth guidance center. I barged into the township supervisor’s office and applied for the job. A conservative fellow, the supervisor told me he disagreed with everything I said. I figured I had lost the job and I forgot about it.

A month later I received a call from his secretary informing me of a second interview with the board of directors, who hired me over another candidate by a vote of 5-4. I went on to enjoy years of reward in that position, helping lots of teens get a direction in life. I and that job were a perfect match, and, in spite of my doubts and fears, the universe lined me up with it.

What seems to be working against you may be working for you. Only the ego judges and interprets against one’s self. The Higher Mind recognizes that all events fit into the big picture of Benevolution. When things seem to be going wrong, ask “How might they be going right?”

Quit trying to organize and micromanage your destiny, which is already being handled by a Mind that sees far beyond the human intellect. Someone gave me a coffee mug with the motto, “Relax. God is in charge.” We need to trust that all events have the potential to lead us where we want or need to go, and surprise ants may be dispatched by angels.

*Alan Cohen is the author the bestselling A Course in Miracles Made Easy: Mastering the Journey from Fear to Love. Become a certified professional life coach through Alan’s upcoming transformational Life Coach Training. For more information about this program, his books and videos, free daily inspirational quotes, online courses, and weekly radio show, visit [www.alancohen.com](http://www.alancohen.com).*

“It's not how far you fall, but how high you bounce that counts.”  
— Zig Ziglar



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<b>PHOENIX TEEN CHALLENGE</b> (Male 18+) <b>602-271-4084</b>	<b>HOME OF HOPE</b> (Female 18+) Women or Women with Children Casa Grande, Arizona <b>520-836-5038</b>	<b>SPRINGBOARD</b> Home for Adolescent Girls (Female 12-17) Tucson, Arizona <b>520-887-8773</b>	<b>PREVENTION</b> <b>Stay Sharp</b> THINK ABOUT IT® To schedule a Drug Prevention Presentation for your group or school, contact the Public Relations office at 602-271-4084 <a href="http://www.tcaz.org">www.tcaz.org</a>
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State Corporate Office P.O. Box 5966 Tucson, AZ 85703 800-346-7859

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration  
www.samhsa.gov



McKay. “For more than one year the CarePortal has been a bridge connecting public servants, local churches, and Arizonans in need. We’re excited to expand the program to Maricopa County.”

This program is one of many actions Arizona has taken to increase foster care and adoption in Arizona. But the CarePortal is about more than that, too. Requests can be anything from money for baby formula to a crib for a newborn to sleep in.

Once the request is submitted to the network, the CarePortal sends out an alert to participating organizations within the family’s zip code — and, after receiving the alert, the organization can identify parishioners willing to assist families in their community.

“We are so excited to expand this successful program,” said Governor’s Office Of Youth, Faith And Family Director Debbie Moak. “The CarePortal is wonderful opportunity to have the public sector and the faith-based community team up to support Arizona families in need.”

The program has operated in Arizona since December 2015, primarily in Pima County. Since its initial launch, the CarePortal has recruited 46 churches that have helped 419 families meet the needs of 1,066 children in our state.

*“Our goal is ambitious but simple: keeping our communities strong and ensuring that all children in Arizona have warm homes and loving families,”* said Governor Ducey. “This innovative program emphasizes the important role that our communities play in helping families in need, and I encourage Arizonans to do anything they can to help expand the CarePortal’s reach.”

On February 14, Governor Doug Ducey, First Lady Angela Ducey, DCS Director Greg McKay, and GOYFF Director Debbie Moak joined officials from CarePortal and Grand Canyon University for a special launch event to kick off the program’s expansion in Maricopa County.

Why do Teens try Alcohol?

There is no single reason why, but here are some core issues and influences behind the behavior of teenage drug and alcohol use.

**Other People** — Teens see lots of people consuming various substances. They see their parents and other adults drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes and, sometimes try other substances. A teenager’s social scene often revolves around drinking and smoking marijuana. Sometimes friends urge one another to have a drink or smoke pot. It’s just

as common for teens to start trying a substance because it’s readily available and they see their friends enjoying it. In their minds, they see drug use as a part of the normal teenage experience.

**Popular Media** — Forty-five percent of teens agree with the statement: “The music that teens listen to makes marijuana seem cool.” And 45 percent of teens agree with the statement “Movies and TV shows make drugs seem like an OK thing to do.” So be aware of the media they watch or listen to.

**Escape and Self-Medication** — When teens are unhappy and can’t find a healthy outlet for their frustration they may turn to chemicals for solace.

The often-rough teenage years can take an emotional toll on children, sometimes causing depression, so when teens are given a chance to take something to make them feel better, many can’t resist.

Some may abuse prescription medicine to manage stress or regulate their lives. They abuse prescription stimulants (*used to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder*) to provide additional energy and the ability to focus on studying or taking tests. Others abuse prescription pain relievers and tranquilizers to cope with academic, social or emotional stress.

**Boredom** — Teens who can’t tolerate being alone, have trouble keeping themselves occupied or crave excitement are prime candidates for substance use. Alcohol and marijuana give them something to do, those substances help fill the internal void they may feel.

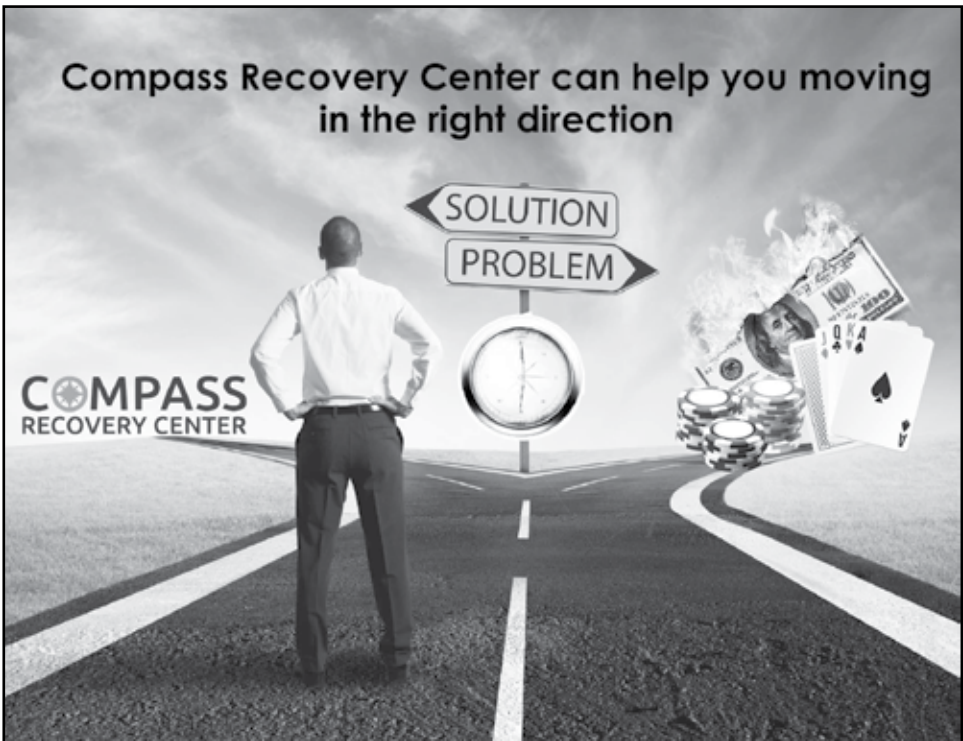
**Rebellion** — Rebellious teens choose different substances to use based on their personalities. Alcohol is the drug of choice for the angry teenager because it frees him to behave aggressively. Meth encourages aggressive, violent behavior, and can be far more dangerous and potent than alcohol.

Marijuana seems to reduce aggression and is more of an avoidance drug. Some teens abuse prescription medicine to party and get high.

**Instant Gratification** — Drugs and alcohol work quickly. Teenagers turn to drug use because they see it as a short-term shortcut to happiness.

**Lack of Confidence** — Many shy teens who lack confidence report they’ll do things under the influence of alcohol or drugs that they might not otherwise. Alcohol and other drugs tend not only to loosen, inhibitions alleviate social anxiety.


Compass Recovery Center can help you moving in the right direction



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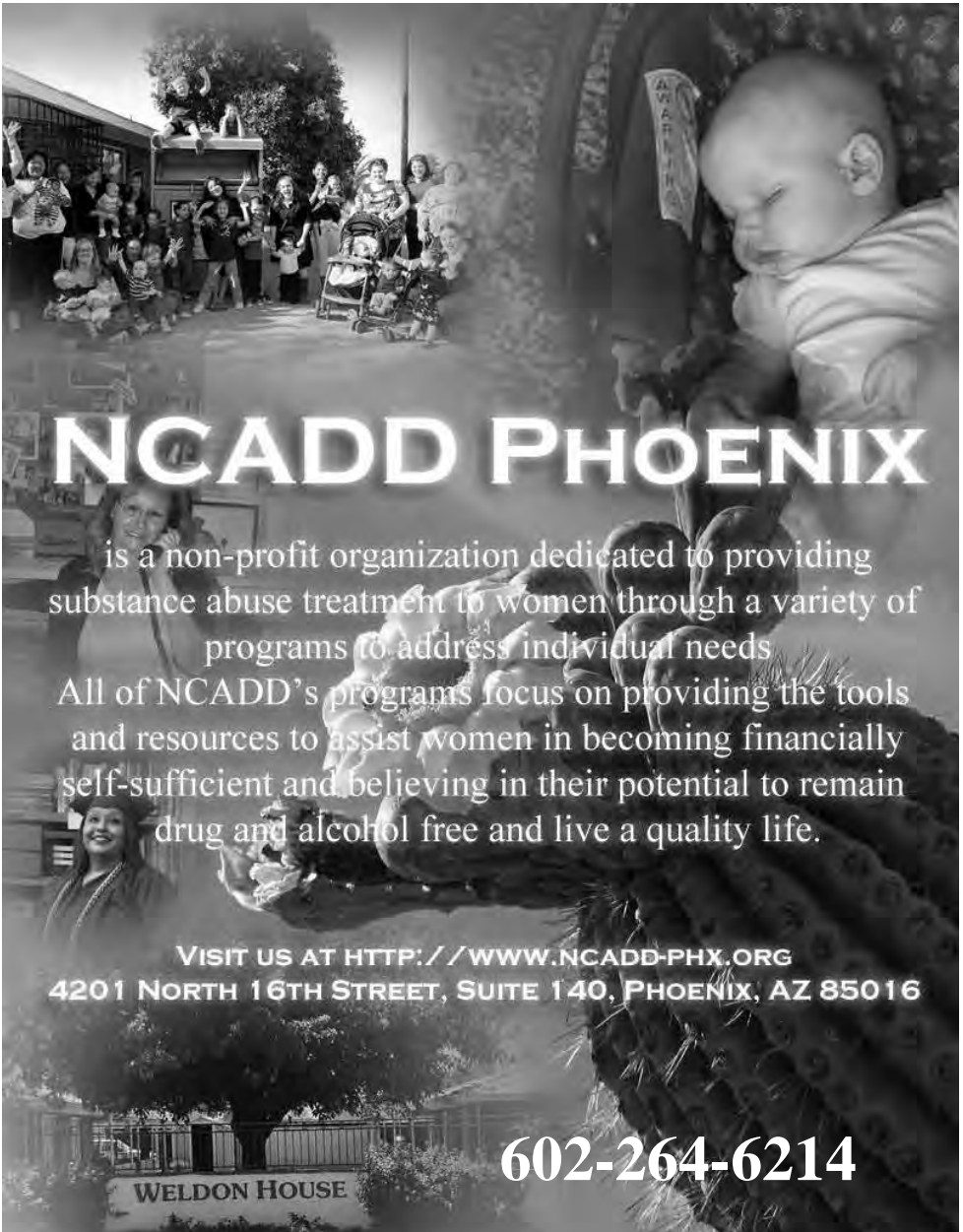
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RECOVERY CENTER

[compassrecoverycenters.com](http://compassrecoverycenters.com)

**(800) 216-1840**

**Misinformation** — Perhaps the most avoidable cause of substance use is inaccurate information about drugs and alcohol. Nearly every teenager has friends who claim to be experts on various recreational substances, and they’re happy to assure her that the risks are minimal. Educate your

teenagers about drug use, so they get the real facts about the dangers of drug use. For more information on how to talk to your children visit [drugfree.org](http://drugfree.org) or call Parent Toll-Free Helpline: **1-855-DRUGFREE.**




**NCADD PHOENIX**

is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing substance abuse treatment to women through a variety of programs to address individual needs. All of NCADD’s programs focus on providing the tools and resources to assist women in becoming financially self-sufficient and believing in their potential to remain drug and alcohol free and live a quality life.

VISIT US AT [HTTP://WWW.NCADD-PHX.ORG](http://WWW.NCADD-PHX.ORG)  
4201 NORTH 16TH STREET, SUITE 140, PHOENIX, AZ 85016

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## Arizona Support Groups

Alcoholics Anonymous	602-264-1341	Heroin Anonymous	602-870-3665
Al-Anon	602-249-1257	Marijuana Anonymous	800-766-6779
ACA	aca-arizona.org	Narcotics Anonymous	480-897-4636
Bipolar Wellness Network	602-274-0068	National Domestic Violence	800-799-SAFE
Celebrate Recovery Chandler		Overeaters Anonymous	602-234-1195
Christian Church	480-963-39972	Parents Anonymous	602-248-0428
Cocaine Anonymous	602-279-3838	Phoenix Metro SAA	602-735-1681
Co-Anon	602-697-9550	Rape Hotline (CASA)	602-241-9010
CoDA	602-277-7991	Sexaholics Anonymous	602-439-3000
COSA	480-385-8454	Sex/Love Addicts Anonymous	602-337-7117
Crystal Meth Anonymous	602-235-0955	Sex/Love Addicts Anonymous	520-792-6450
Emotions Anonymous	480-969-6813	Sex Addicts Anonymous	602-735-1681
Families Anonymous	602-647-5800	S-ANON	480-545-0520
Gamblers Anonymous	602-266-9784	Suicide Hotline	800-254-HELP
Grief Recovery	800-334-7606		

## Treatment Service Resources

TOGETHER AZ	602-684-1136	River Source-12 Step Holistic	480-827-0322 or 866-891-4221
Art of Recovery Expo	602-684-1136	St. Luke’s Behavioral	602-251-8535
ACT Counseling & Education	602-569-4328	Sundance Center	844-878-4925
AZ. Dept. of Health	602-364-2086	Teen Challenge of AZ	800-346-7859
Office of Problem Gambling	800-NEXTSTEP	TERROS	602-685-6000
Aurora Behavioral Health	623-344-4400	Valley Hosptial	602-952-3939
AzRHA	602-421-8066		
Calvary Addiction Recovery	866-76-SOBER	<b>Legal Services</b>	
Carla Vista Sober Living	480-612-0296	Dwane Cates	480-905-3117
Chandler Valley Hope	480-899-3335	<b>Tax Intervention</b>	
Choices Network	800-631-1314 - 602-222-9444	Renee Sieradski, EA	602-687-9768
CBI, Inc.	480-831-7566	www.tax-intervention.com	
CBI, Inc. Access to Care	877-931-9142		
Core Recovery Services	602-810-1210		
Cottonwood Tucson	800-877-4520		
Crisis Response Network	602-222-9444		
The Crossroads	602-279-2585		
Decision Point Center	928-778-4600		
Dr. Marlo Archer	480-705-5007		
Dr. Janice Blair	602-460-5464		
Dr. Dina Evan	602-997-1200		
Dr. Dan Glick	480-614-5622		
Foundations Recovery Network	855-316-0114		
Gallus Detox	928-227-2300		
Gifts Anon	480-483-6006		
Governor’s Office of Youth, Faith & Family	602-542-4043		
Hayes/Davidson	800-219-0570		
Hunkapi Programs	480- 393-0870		
Geffen Liberman, LISAC	480-388-1495		
Lafrontera -EMPACT	800-273-8255		
The Meadows	800-632-3697		
Mercy Maricopa Integrated Care	602-222-9444 or 1-800-631-1314		
NCADD	602-264-6214		
Pathway Programs	480-921-4050		
PITCH 4 KIDZ	480-607-4472		
Psychological Counseling Services (PCS)	480-947-5739		
Remuda Ranch	800-445-1900		
Rio Retreat Center	800-244-4949		

## TUCSON

ACA	aca-arizona.org
Alcoholics Anonymous	520-624-4183
Al-Anon	520-323-2229
Anger Management	520-887-7079
Center For Life Skills Development	520-229-6220
Co-Anon Family Groups	520-513-5028
Cocaine Anonymous	520-326-2211
Cottonwood Tucson	800-877-4520
Crisis Intervention	520-323-9373
Desert Star	520-638-6000
Narcotics Anonymous	520-881-8381
Nicotine Anonymous	520-299-7057
Overeaters Anonymous	520-733-0880
Sex/Love Addicts Anonymous	520-792-6450
Sex Addicts Anonymous	520-745-0775
Sierra Tucson	800-842-4487
Suicide Prevention	520-323-9372
Men’s Teen Challenge	520-792-1790
Turn Your Life Around	520-887-2643
Workaholics Anonymous	520-403-3559

Get listed email

Barbara Nicholson Brown:  
aztogether@yahoo.com

# Community Calendar

Send your events and support group information to aztogether@yahoo.com. Due 20th of month prior to printing

**Tuesday, MARCH 14—FREE Professional Networking Luncheon — Psychological Counseling Services (PCS)** 12:15-1:45 p.m. Mark your calendars. If you have attended in the past, join us. If new send an email request to [pcs@pcsearle.com](mailto:pcs@pcsearle.com) or call Ellen Hamilton for details **480-947-5739**.

**MARCH 6 — 11th Annual Department of Problem Gambling Symposium** 8:15 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.*Gathering Perspectives on the Road to Recovery.* Black Canyon Conference Center, 9440 N. 25th Ave. Phoenix, AZ 85021. Visit <https://problemgambling.az.gov/> to register.

**MARCH 15 — 11:30 am. – 1:30 pm. Calvary Addiction Recovery Center** presents *Therapeutic Tools for Healing the Effects of Childhood Trauma and its Impact on Addictions*, with Charles Atkinson, MA, MSW, LCSW. Franciscan Renewal Center, 5802 E. Lincoln Dr., Scottsdale. Cost \$15. Register 480-948-7460 ext. 133 or e: [counseling@thecasa.org](mailto:counseling@thecasa.org).

**MARCH 16 — 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. Foster, Adoptive and Kinship Training Series: Children on the Autism Spectrum.** Rise Services, 4554 E. Inverness Ave., Mesa Training designed to give foster, adoptive and kinship caregivers the tools they need to support and nurture the children and youth in their care. Interpreter available. No cost. Certificates of attendance for two credit hours provided. To sign up, email [dcs@mercymaricopa.org](mailto:dcs@mercymaricopa.org) or call **602-414-7575**.

**MARCH 20 — 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. Phoenix Be Informed, Hosted by Sierra Tucson. The Gut Brain Connection: How Digestion Affects Mental Health.** Presenter: **Maureen Schwehr, NMD**, Director of Integrative Services, Medical Department, Sierra Tucson. Presentation explores the science and research behind the complex gut brain relationship. 1.5 CECs available. Arizona Biltmore, Grand Canyon Room, 2400 East Missouri Ave. Phoenix. For questions contact Ryan Young at [Ryan.Young@acadiahealthcare.com](mailto:Ryan.Young@acadiahealthcare.com) or visit [sierratucson.com](http://sierratucson.com) event schedule.

**MARCH 29 – 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. Child and Family Advisory Partnership (CFAP) Community Forum at Family Involvement Center**, 5333 N. 7th St., Ste. A-100, Phoenix. Get connected to the support you need to raise a child with emotional, physical and/or behavioral health needs. Talk directly with service providers. Enjoy dinner and meet other families. Spanish interpretation and child watch provided. No cost. Dinner and networking, 5:30 to 6 p.m., meeting starts at 6 p.m. **602-288-0155 to pre-register.**

**Mondays– Scottsdale– FAMILY RECOVERY GROUP—The Meadows Outpatient Center.** Brough Stewart, LPC. 5:30-7:30 p.m. Designed to help begin/continue family recovery. **No charge.** The Meadows Outpatient Center, 19120 N. Pima Rd., Ste. 125, Scottsdale. Contact: Jim Corrington LCSW, **602-740-8403**.

**SIERRA TUCSON— Alumni Groups. Scottsdale, Tues., 6:00- 7:00 p.m.Valley Presbyterian Church.** 6947 E. McDonald Drive, Paradise Valley. 480-991-4267. Alumni meet in the Counseling Center (Parlor Room). Contact: Rob L. **602-339-4244** or [stscottsdalealumni@gmail.com](mailto:stscottsdalealumni@gmail.com).

**SIERRA TUCSON— Continuing Care Groups in Phoenix.Wednesdays —** for Family Member Alumni (18 and over). (PCS) Psychological Counseling Services, 7530 E. Angus Drive, Scottsdale. 5:30 – 7:00 p.m. **Thursdays —** for Patient Alumni, PCS, 3302 N. Miller Rd., Scottsdale, 5:30 – 7:00 p.m. Facilitated by the clinical staff of PCS. **No charge for Patient and Family Member Alumni.**

## ON GOING SUPPORT

**Celebrate Recovery —Chandler Christian Church.** Fridays 7 p.m. Room B-200. For men and women dealing with chemical or

sexual addictions, co-dependency and other **Hurts, Hang-ups and Habits.** 1825 S. Alma School Rd. Chandler. **480-963-3997.** Pastor Larry Daily, E: [larrydaily@chandlercc.org](mailto:larrydaily@chandlercc.org).

**Valley Hospital— IOP Group for Chemical Dependency/Co-Occuring.** Mon.,Tues., Thurs. 6:00-9:00 p.m. **602-952-3939.** 3550 E. Pinchot Avenue, Phoenix. [www.valley-hospital-phoenix.com](http://www.valley-hospital-phoenix.com)

**Open Hearts Counseling Services — Women’s Therapeutic Group for Partners of Sex Addicts.** Find comfort, strength and hope while exploring intimacy issues. Cynthia A. Criss, LPC, CSAT **602-677-3557.**

**FAMILIES ANONYMOUS—**12 step program for family members of addicts. Phoenix -Mon. 7:00 p.m., First Methodist Church, 5510 N. Central Ave. 602-647-5800. Scottsdale Sun. 4:00 p.m., 10427 N. Scottsdale Rd., N. Scottsdale Fellowship **480-225-1555** or **602-647-5800**

**NICOTINE ANONYMOUS (NicA)** Fellowship for those with a desire to stop using nicotine. Phoenix Sat., 5-6:00 p.m. at Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church, 1212 E. Glendale Ave., Glendale, Sun., 9:15-10:15 a.m. Fellowship Hall, 8910 N. 43rd Ave. **480-990-3860** or [www.nicotine-anonymous.org](http://www.nicotine-anonymous.org)

**Chronic Pain Sufferers “Harvesting Support for Chronic Pain,”** 3rd Saturday of month, 12-1:00 p.m. Harvest of Tempe, 710 W. Elliot Rd., Suite 103, Tempe. **480-246-7029.**

Jewish Alcoholics, Addicts, Families and Friends (**JACS**) 1st / 3rd Wednesday, 7:30 p.m. Ina Levine Jewish Community Campus, 2nd floor. 12701 N. Scottsdale Rd. **602-971-1234** ext. 280 or at [JACSarizona@gmail.com](mailto:JACSarizona@gmail.com)

**COSA** (12-step recovery program for those whose lives have been affected by another person’s compulsive sexual behavior) Thurs. 11:00 a.m.-Noon. 2210 W. Southern Ave. Mesa. **602-793-4120.**

**WOMEN For SOBRIETY — www.womenforsobriety.org.** Sat. 10-11:30 a.m. All Saints of the Desert Episcopal Church-9502 W. Hutton Drive. Sun City. Christy **602-316-5136.**

**Co-Anon Family Support** - Carrying the message of hope and personal recovery to family members and friends of someone who is addicted to cocaine or other mind altering substances. **“Off the Roller Coaster”** Thurs., 6:30-7:45 p.m., 2121 S. Rural Rd., Tempe. Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church. Donna **602-697-9550 /Maggie 480-567-8002.**

**COTTONWOOD TUCSON ALUMNI—**First Wednesday of month 6:00-7:30 p.m. 4110 W. Sweetwater Drive. 5:00 p.m. dinner. **800-877-4520 x2141.** cottonwood-tucson.com

**ACOA** Thurs., 7:00 p.m., North Scottsdale United Methodist Church, 11735 N. Scottsdale Rd., Scottsdale.[www.aca.arizona.org](http://www.aca.arizona.org)

**ACA.** Tucson. Wed. 5:30-7:00 p.m *Streams In the Desert Church* 5360 E. Pima Street. West of Craycroft. Room A. Michael **520-419-6723.**

**(OA)-** 12 Step program for addictions to food, food behaviors. **520-733-0880** or [www.oasouthernaz.org](http://www.oasouthernaz.org).

**Pills Anonymous (PA)—Glendale** Tues. 7-8:00 pm. HealthSouth Rehab 13460 N. 67th Ave. Rosalie 602-540-2540. **Mesa** Tues. 7-8:00 pm, St. Matthew United Methodist Church. 2540 W. Baseline. B-14. Jim, 480-813-3406. Meggan 480-603-8892. **Scottsdale,** Wed. 5:30-6:30 pm, N. Scottsdale Fellowship, 10427 N. Scottsdale Rd., Rm 3. Tom N. 602-290-0998. **Phoenix,** Thurs. 7-8:00 pm. First Mennonite Church 1612 W. Northern. Marc 623-217-9495, Pam 602-944-0834, Janice 602-909-8937.

**EVENTS** continued page 12



# Reentry: It's About the People

By Wesley Perdue, MS, MAC

When it comes to the topic of reentry, into the mainstream of life, there is abundant discussion of programs and the research that drives their development. This is important because it encourages continual evolution in programming that can reduce recidivism, lower costs, and hopefully rehabilitate those who participate in those programs.

But, reentry is really about the men and women going through the process, and what would make the biggest difference in their lives. What each person needs is unique, but there are many commonalities, too. They will want to make sure they can consistently take care of their most basic needs. They will want and need communities to create reasonably accessible avenues to kickstart and support their reentry to the community. They will face assumptions and stigma that threaten to keep them locked in a mind-set of antisocial thoughts and behaviors. Many will have unresolved trauma of varying degrees. Some which pre-dates incarceration, and some the result of it.

## The Staggering Numbers

At the close of 2010, there were more than 1.6 million prisoners in state and federal facilities — about one out of every 200 U.S. residents was incarcerated. That's an incredible number of lives directly impacted by incarceration, and countless other lives impacted in other ways. In the same year, 708,677 prisoners were released from state and federal prisons. Every day, these women and men of all ages and walks of life, begin the process of reentering the community and face significant challenges.

They are two to four times likely to have a serious mental illness, and three-fourths have a history of substance abuse. They will face major challenges finding adequate and stable employment and housing, due to a criminal history. Many will have health problems in need of ongoing medical attention. And far too often, they lack a high school diploma or equivalent, while others will struggle with basic literacy. (NRCC Facts and Trends. <https://csgjusticecenter.org/nrcc/facts-and-trends>.)

These statistics underscore both the complexity and importance of reentry... it touches hundreds of thousands of lives each year, all of them in unique ways.

## What is Reentry?

"Reentry" is the term used to describe the very complex process of an individual returning to the community, following incarceration. While this process is unique to each individual and his or her network of intrinsic talents, skills, opportunities and resources, what is common among them is the necessity they become able to meet their needs in effective, legal, sustainable, and healthy ways. Those who are unable to achieve this, or who consistently struggle to do so, are likely to become part of the recidivism statistics...those who return to prison.

Many do find ways of meeting their needs in socially responsible ways, and with the right kind of support, many become successful and self-reliant.

In thinking about what will make the process of reentry successful for any individual, it is important to consider what it is that each individual needs in order to be happy, healthy and whole.

In *Choice Theory*, William Glasser identified that all humans share five basic needs: survival, love and belonging, power, freedom and fun.

Successful reintegration into the community, and the restoration of one's life, must ensure these needs are met, at least in a basic way. But, it is important to remember many of these women and men may not have the necessary skills to master these challenges, which likely played a role in them becoming involved in the justice system. Still others have learned criminal lifestyles and tactics from early ages as a means of survival, or as part of the community in which they lived. For these reasons, reentry is also often the intersection at which individuals are faced with the decision to return to what is familiar, or create something new for themselves and those important to them.

This is where healthy family members, supportive communities and their members, and agencies and programs play an important role. As these individuals begin settling back into their communities they need places to live, jobs to earn a living, and resources for addressing health care needs, mental health concerns and substance abuse treatment. Communities must work collaboratively to create accessible avenues for them to obtain housing, employment and healthcare, irrespective of their criminal history. Programs and supports that require mutual effort from the individual tend to be the most effective in teaching skills, maintaining engagement, and creating change that is sustainable so that supports can gradually decrease over time. In the absence of avenues that address these concerns, individuals will have very difficult times moving toward self-sufficiency.

## How Arizona is Helping

One initiative Arizona has taken through the Department of Corrections, is to create a Residential Community Behavioral Modification (RCBM) program. Through this program, they have partnered with Vivre Recovery Housing to provide a 90 to 120-day residential program that provides housing utilizing a structured sober living model, and treatment for substance use and mental health issues, through a partnership with Building Blocks Counseling.

In addition to housing and treatment, residents receive case management services that assist them to link to employment opportunities and training, and also to other community supports that they can access long-term. A creative element to this program is that its funding comes from the Spirit Tax (tax on alcoholic beverages). This is just

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one such example of how communities and community agencies can play an important and supportive role in this important process of helping people to regain happy and healthy lives.

Another common barrier these returning citizens face is stigma from the community, media and even their families and other loved ones. Damaging, and often inaccurate assumptions are made about who these citizens are.

Assumptions tend to be worst-case scenarios of crimes they may have committed, and what they might do next. In reality, many of these individuals have not committed dangerous offenses.

And even those who have, with the right kind of supervision, support and treatment, can be healthy and productive members of the communities in which they live.

It is normal for people to have questions and concerns, and to want to feel a sense of safety in their homes and neighborhoods. By welcoming these returning citizens, and supporting them as they create a new life, communities make themselves immeasurably safer. When people establish roots and become involved in the schools, religious centers, markets and social environment they become a part of the community. Inclusion — feeling a part of something — naturally reduces the likelihood of one acting in ways that would cause harm or disruption.

**Unresolved Trauma**

Incarceration can have traumatic impacts from the loss of freedom and privacy, facing potential threats to personal safety, to separation from loved ones. All have a devastating impact on the mental wellness of anyone, regardless of how long they are incarcerated.

For many, the reentry period involves having to re-learn and re-sensitize themselves to a different set of social norms and cues. There can often be a hypervigilance that presents challenges to interacting in appropriate ways in family, social and work-related settings.

There are effective ways of treating trauma, which can make significant improvement in day-to-day living and personal relationships. Not everyone needs therapy, but it will be important to be patient with the process and talk constructively and transparently about concerns or fears.

It’s important to note that hope,

and a belief that change is possible, is critical. The problem is often these returning people struggle to have this kind of hope for themselves, and therefore, can benefit from drawing this hope from others. There are many ways to empower and support them as they build their own sense of value and worth, which can become the internal motivation to propel them forward.

These are our neighbors, and deserving of happy, healthy and fulfilling lives.

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