

Is it LOVE, or Codependence?

By Ken and Mary Richardson

While February is thought of as the month of Love, Romance and Valentines, it also is the month of *Expectations*, *Fantasy* and *Disappointment*. So, what better time to talk about relationships?

Nearly all of us desire love and loving. We have heard how love heals all wounds. That love is the answer. Love fills the heart and soul. That we are here to learn how to love and be loved. There are numerous love songs playing on the radio at any given moment and books and movies about love. In many spiritual teachings it is said that love is the answer. We are surrounded with TV and magazine ads that promise if we dress a certain way or use a particular product, we will find love. Or if we look a particular way, have the right credentials, the right car.....then we will be lovable. Human beings love, love. It is the Holy Grail.....to love and be loved. And understandably, human beings are relational by nature. We relate to each other, ourselves, a Higher Power, the earth, our pet friends, our cars or any other thing we have connected with. The fact is, we are relational.

Some of us have been blessed with love in our lives and some of us have not. Instead we have experienced rejection, hurt or abandonment. But the *desire to love and be loved never leaves*. It may be buried deep inside where no one can touch it, but it is still there....the desire for loving relationships. One of the greatest detriments to loving relationships is codependence. Codependence is the “dysfunction” in dysfunctional relationships. It is the “fantasy” in romance. It is the “enmeshment” in oneness and it is the “avoidance” in independence.



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“Emotional reactions in relationships are generally indicators of a back log of unresolved emotions, whether the back log is from the past in the relationship or the greater past that we came into the relationship with, or both.”

“Codependence is learned patterns of unhealthy and dysfunctional thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors which adversely affect an individual’s relationship with themselves and others. It is cyclic and progressively results in mild to chronically severe consequences. Codependence is primarily learned in childhood through experiences of abuse, abandonment, neglect or enmeshment and/or a significant traumatic event. Codependent thoughts and beliefs generally manifest in moderate to extreme passive and/or aggressive behaviors, which may include avoidant, enmeshing, compliant and/ or controlling behaviors. Codependence often develops into and is masked by addictions and other compulsive behaviors and is generally seen as the underlying cause of addiction and relapse. Codependence is treatable and generally results in an individual’s progressively healthy and loving relationship with themselves and others.”

— Ken and Mary Richardson

In codependent relationships we take from others to fill ourselves up — or avoid because we are afraid. In recovering relationships we practice loving boundaries, giving without fear, needs or expectations of outcomes and lovingly allowing ourselves to receive what is given, always as enough. In our years of working with alcoholics and addicts and their families and friends, we have come to understand 8 primary steps that help these relationships move from codependent dynamics into progressively loving and healthy relationships.

8 Steps to a Healthy Relationship

1. Know your history and keep it separate from the relationship. Move from fantasy to reality. Each of us brings an incredibly unique history of experiences and perceptions from our entire past to a relationship. As such, there is a risk of pasting our past on our present relationship and not seeing our present relationship for what it truly may be. Learning to bridge those two histories and create a relationship reality which

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Publisher's Note

By Barbara Nicholson-Brown
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Love never dies, It changes form

February is the month of romance, love and connection, and it's about all of our relationships, not just the romantic ones. Many of us who are single should not feel left out in the cold. Valentine's Day can still carry deep meaning, be it from our memories or our wishes for the future, and remembering to love ourselves.

On the 18th of this month, Bill and I would be celebrating our 25th wedding anniversary, but he is no longer here. When I thought about 'our' day coming up my first inclination was, "oh it's going to be a sad day", and then realized the love we have for someone doesn't die when they do, it lives on in our hearts — in a different form.

In day to day life while he isn't physically with me, in my heart, he is. He was the great love of my life and we were blessed to have the years together we were given. In our marriage, I learned more about love than I knew existed. When we passed the euphoric stage, that is when our love solidified and took on deeper meaning. Our connection and bond, friendship and commitment, and boundaries too, with trial and error, provided us with a foundation that would not crumble.

We did it till death parted us, through the sickness and health, the good times and struggles; our arguments eventually led to understanding one another, the triggers reminded us we all carry some part of our past with us.

We learned how to listen, communicate and let go of the expectation we needed the other to be perfect. There is so much that I miss. But I am grateful. I learned how to accept love and I learned how to give love. None of it could have been possible without both of us being sober and God being first over everything else.

If you are with someone, love them deeply, not just on the 14th but every day you have together, if you're single, or alone for now, love yourself with all you've got. As Bill always said, "Be good to yourself." Happy February.

Barb

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What's Your EQ?

By Dina Evan, PhD

We live in tenuous times. These are times in which we are hesitant to connect because we have no idea what's going to come at us from people if we do. It feels like we are getting trapped in our I.Q. and we have not expanded our E.Q. We just want the facts...who cares about the feelings...we should!

E.Q. is an abbreviation for Emotional Quotient

Why should we care? Your success in life is dependent upon your level of E.Q. You can have a very high I.Q. but not be able to relate to other people. Without understanding and expressing emotions you cannot be successful. The Collins Dictionary says "Having a high E.Q. means you know your strengths and you know how to lean into them and use them to your full advantage while keeping your weaknesses from holding you back." Unfortunately we have often been taught expressing emotion is tantamount to being weak. Actually, it's just the opposite. Let's look at what it really means.

- What is the difference between a person who says, "I refuse to talk about this." And one who says, "This is upsetting to me, let me think about this before I answer." The difference is E.Q. Without E.Q. you are apt to have a knee jerk reaction to something someone says before you even understand their intention or what they were trying to convey. The slightest hint that it may be some criticism about you, if you have low E.Q. or low self-esteem, will shut you and the other person down and kill the conversation.

We all have people in our families who think they already have all the answers or their answer is the only answer, and are therefore closed to any new information or alternative ideas. That is extremely frustrating and it's even gotten to the point where the Millennials, have a cruel joke about it when they say while rolling their eyes, "OK Boomer." In other words you know nothing. People who have high E.Q.s are open and receptive to other ideas and perspectives, no matter where or from whom they come. They want to learn and are not threatened or protective of their egos.

If there are people in your life you simply just cannot talk to about almost anything because they are so rigid with their single points of view, you are dealing with a person who is not emotionally mature. They lack a sense of themselves and are not yet authentic so they present as if they know everything already. Emotionally mature people can let go of their opinions to be open to yours without being threatened because they know they will end up believing whatever is right for them, and they still want to hear everything.

An emotionally immature person often feels as if the world is against them and people "never give them a break," Because they often feel attacked or put down, they lack a sense of peace, stability and compassion in their lives. They can't seem to get beyond their own needs and wants.

Okay, so now we have learned to recognize it let's find out how to raise our E.Q.

One of the first steps is to **start actively listening to others.** Get interested in where they're coming from and why they feel the way they do. Ask questions and be interactive and be aware of when you start to shut down or get defensive, and ask yourself what is causing you to be afraid. That shut down or defense response always comes from a fear.

Once you identify it, you can probably figure out (1) is it true, such as this person is saying I am wrong (probably not, but could be and so what?) (2) is it about now or the past because most of our fears get triggered from past experiences and (3) do I need to hear this such asI am judgmental. I am doing it right now by judging myself.

Another tool is learning to respond from a positive place and not ego. Practice responding out of curiosity instead of reacting in a negative way. You can safely listen to anything and you still get to decide if you agree or don't, want to adopt the belief or not. You still have all the power and control and in addition, you might learn something wonderful and new.

Practice being self-aware

No one else ever makes us feel anything. We choose to feel everything we feel. Imagine if you could take everything everyone else has experienced and learned and put it in your tool box for life...you would be and can be amazing. Take a breath, open up and start now with love for yourself and others.



Dr. Dina is a Marriage, Family, and Child Therapist and Consciousness Counselor. She has presented nationwide seminars and workshops, written several books and created meditation CDs for couples, individual and mental health professionals. She has also won national acclaim as a human rights advocate. Visit www.dr dinaevan.com or call her at 602 571-8228.



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What to do if Your Partner is an Addict

Intimate relationships are meant to be safe havens from the rest of the world. For those who are in a relationship with an addict, the relationship can quickly turn into a state of emotional distress, physical violence and day-to-day chaos. Substance abuse can destroy partnerships and marriages because of neglect, a lack of trust and physical and emotional abuse.

If your partner is an addict, you're probably concerned about what the future holds. Fortunately, you do not have to sit back and wait for the addiction to grow more severe. You can work on getting your loved one into a holistic recovery center. However, it's important to understand — no matter how much support you give your partner, you probably can't force them into treatment. Ultimately, the choice to get clean and sober is up to them.

Addiction in Marriage

Marriages and partnerships require a lot of work to be happy and healthy, so as anyone can imagine, addiction throws a wrench into things. For many couples, addiction isn't an issue until later on in the relationship. What once seemed like normal drinking and having fun ends up spiraling out of control. For other couples, the addiction is immediately present. One partner may be good at hiding their behavior, or the other partner may turn a blind eye.

Signs that your partner's misuse of drugs or alcohol is spiraling:

- *Personality changes*
- *Unusual need for money*
- *Loss of interest in hobbies*
- *Change in physical appearance*
- *Private, secretive behaviors*
- *Physical signs (i.e., bloodshot eyes)*

Keep in mind these changes can be attributed to something else like depression. Be sure to talk with your partner to find out why they're feeling the way they are. Don't be surprised if they resist, especially if addiction is present. But, it's important to be aware of other potential causes, too.

What to Do?

When addiction takes over your relationship, you may no longer recognize the person you fell in love with. Here are some considerations you'll have to make:

Acknowledge the problem. Addiction is a painful disease on its own. There is also a stigma surrounding it, which makes people feel isolated and alone. As a result, some people feel it's easier to ignore the problem. However, this won't help you or your loved one. Recognize what's going on and be honest with yourself.

Educate yourself. Your partner is not trying to hurt you on purpose. Addiction is a chronic disease that causes changes in the brain. By educating yourself on addiction, you can have a healthier perspective and realistic expectations.

Avoid codependency. Everyone in the family is affected by addiction. Unfortunately, some partners find themselves obsessing over their loved one. While this may seem like the natural thing to do, it can actually form a codependent relationship. As consuming as addiction is, you have to take care of yourself first.

Be aware of enabling. Another unhealthy behavior you'll want to avoid is enabling. Despite good intentions, some partners find themselves allowing the addiction to continue without consequences. However, enabling hurts more than it helps.

Join a support group. While you may feel alone in your situation, there are many people in a similar position. Groups like Al-Anon or Nar-Anon can help you feel less alone. Find a group in your area to stay connected to others and grow your support network.

Set your boundaries. Each relationship has different circumstances, only you can make the decision as to whether you want to stay in the relationship. But you should never accept physical or sexual violence. Know your boundaries – and follow through with them.

Getting Your Loved One Treatment

With your support, your loved one has a greater chance of recovering. However, this is a long road that requires ongoing support. Holistic recovery for addiction is not over when treatment is complete. Your partner will continue to need your compassion, understanding, patience and support.

The first step to helping your partner is by choosing the right program. Start by picking inpatient or outpatient treatment to narrow down your options. Inpatient treatment centers are inclusive and will require your loved one to live at the facility. This is a good option if they have a severe addiction and need to remove themselves from their environment. On the other hand, if you have a family to take care of, a home to manage and bills to pay, you may find outpatient treatment is a better fit. With holistic outpatient drug treatment, your partner can get professional support most days of the week while returning home at night. This way, they can still continue helping out at home.

A few more considerations to make when selecting a treatment center for your partner:

- **Detox.** Before starting treatment, your partner must be off drugs and alcohol.



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- Does the treatment center offer detox or any other assistance getting clean?
- **Length.** How long is the program? Inpatient treatment usually lasts 30, 60 or 90 days. Outpatient rehab for substance abuse is more flexible and can last for several months or as long as you need help.
 - **Insurance.** Does the treatment center accept your insurance? How much will you have to pay out of pocket? Most rehabs will verify your insurance over the phone. You can also call your insurance carrier directly.
 - **Therapies.** What type of therapy does the treatment center offer? Aside from group, individual and family counseling, it's helpful to have access to holistic healing practices like meditation, yoga and nutrition information.
- Addiction is a painful, lonely disease that affects the family unit. Without intervention and treatment, addictions almost never get better on their own. Fortunately, you do not have to go through this alone.

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Where to Find the Love of Your Life

By Alan Cohen

When I asked my friend Brenda, “How’s your love life?” she sighed and answered, “Working on it, like everyone.”

Were we really born to be constantly working on our love life, or were we born to be enjoying it?

After many years of coaching and leading seminars, I’ve discovered two areas most people ask about most frequently: **prosperity** and **relationships**. Most people are looking for their love mate, or, if they have one, are seeking a better connection. Since February is the month of Valentine’s Day, let’s dive in to illuminate what makes relationships work.

The simplest answer comes from a woman named Georgia who told an astounding story in a seminar in Greece. Georgia reported she had been married to an emotionally abusive man. When she requested a divorce, her husband refused. In Greece it is harder to get a divorce than in America, so Georgia realized she had to stay with him, for a while at least.

In the meantime, Georgia decided to give herself the love she was missing from her husband. She wrote herself a passionate, poetic love letter as if from a man who worshipped her.

“Georgia, my love, you are the light of my life. I am entranced by your ravishing beauty, deep wisdom, and generous heart. You are sexy beyond words. I have never felt so deeply for anyone. I want to hold you in my arms and love you like no one ever has. I cannot wait to see you again. Until then, my heart is with you. I love you forever.”

Receiving such an inspired missive, even from an imaginary lover, felt so good Georgia decided to write herself another love letter the next day. And the next, and the next, until she was writing and receiving an impassioned message daily. Gradually she felt lighter, freer, and more filled with the love she had been missing.

Then her husband found one of the letters. Since it was unsigned, he believed it had been writ-

ten by a secret lover. He came to Georgia, waving the letter in his hand. “I can’t compete with this,” he blurted out. “You can have your divorce!”

Georgia literally loved herself out of a bad marriage. When her husband had been unkind to her, she was agreeing with her diminished self-worth. Thus the empty marriage kept the two stuck together like pieces of Velcro with matching hooks. When Georgia upleveled her vibration and established her mind and heart in self-love, there was no more match. Her husband had to either rise to meet her or leave.

Just as you can love yourself out of a bad relationship, you can love yourself into one. The way to do this seems antithetical to the way nearly every romantic book and movie has taught you to find a great partner. You have been taught that when you find someone who loves you, you will know that you are lovable. Yet it works just the opposite way: When you know you are lovable, you will find someone who loves you. To try to get someone to love you when you don’t love yourself defies the law of attraction, which clearly states that as you think and feel, so you attract. Great relationships are not achieved from the outside in. They proceed from the inside out.



When coaching clients complain to me that their partner is not meeting their needs, I ask them a question that seems completely insane in light of how we have been trained to have a happy partnership: “Why do you allow your partner’s behavior to be a factor in your happiness?” This question seems absurd because we have been taught that the role of a partner is to make us happy. But if you have ever given the power of your happiness to your partner, you know that this approach always backfires. If you wish to have a good relationship, you must look not outside for love, but within. Any sincere journey within will lead you to all the love you have sought without.

This does not mean you cannot have a great partner with whom you share deep love, and who enhances your life. This will happen only when you come from wholeness, rather than seeking a person to make you whole. When two whole people get together and celebrate and support each other rather than trying to get from each other, your relationship becomes completely satisfying and miracles of love manifest.

A Course in Miracles tells us that relationships offer the quickest route to healing. Not by finding someone who will satisfy your needs, but by joining with someone with whom you can practice knowing that all your needs have already been met. Empty people create empty relationships. Whole people create whole relationships. The recognition of your deep, innate, perfect lovableness is the key to finding someone who matches the light you are, and with whom you both shine brighter. When you are your own Valentine, your perfect Valentine will show up beside you.

Alan Cohen is the author of many inspirational books including A Course in Miracles Made Easy. Join Alan for his life-changing Holistic Life Coach Training beginning September 1, 2020. For information on this program and Alan’s books, videos, audios, online courses, retreats, and other inspirational events and materials, visit www.AlanCohen.com.



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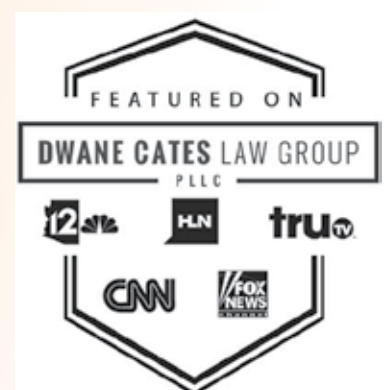
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includes a common ground for communications, intimacy, closeness, loving behaviors, problem solving, loving confrontation and mature conflict resolution, while maintaining boundaries, empowerment and our true sense of self, is what codependence recovery is about. In this we progressively move from fantasies, whether negative or positive, about the relationship into healthy, loving and mature relationship reality.

2. *Be conscious and mindful of your thoughts.*

We are, each, fully responsible for our thinking. Being mindful and conscious of our thoughts and “changing our minds” from fear based thoughts to loving respectful thoughts about ourselves and others, especially those we love, is a major step toward greater respect, compassion and intimacy in our relationships. To do so, we have to be mindful of, responsible for and intervene on our thoughts if we see them as blaming, helpless, judgmental, critical, and fearful, etc. and are creating assumptions, expectations, projections or suppositions. If we find them to be, then it is our responsibility to create thinking that is respectful, empowered, loving and compassionate, based in equality and lovingly allowing for one another’s differences. Our thoughts create our feelings. If we don’t like the way we are feeling about ourselves and our relationships, we need to change our thoughts. The choice is ours.

3. *Know and be honest with and accountable for your feelings.*

For many this may mean discovering, developing and practicing emotional awareness and empowered responses. It means recognizing and being accountable for our own individual unique emotional reactions (whether over reacting, under reacting or avoiding altogether) and learning healthy, empowered, emotional responses instead of reaction or withdrawal. It helps to look at emotional intensity with a scale of 0 to 10. When our emotional reactions are a 4 or more on the 10 point scale or when we are at a 1 or less in our emotional response, all real and effective communication stops and our emotions and defenses are now controlling the communication. Effective communication can take place when we monitor our emotions and keep them in a 2 to 4 range. This is called responding emotionally as opposed to either reacting or withdrawing emotionally. Emotional reactions in relationships are generally indicators of a back log of unresolved emotions, whether the back log is from the past in the relationship or the greater past that we came into the relationship with, or both. Our goal is to move from reaction or withdrawal to effective emotional responses.

4. *Establish and maintain healthy boundaries.*

Boundaries are our personal definition of what is okay for us to experience and what is not, whether that is individually or in relationship. It is important for each individual to define their physical, emotional, sexual, intellectual and spiritual boundaries and to communicate them lovingly and clearly to each other. Boundaries are different than walls or defenses. Walls and defenses are generally fear based, creating impenetrable blocks to communication and intimacy. Boundaries define what is acceptable or unacceptable within the individual or within the relationship. When we are identifying our healthy boundaries, they allow room for us to change, evolve and grow individually and within the relationship. They are not written in stone. We may change some of our boundaries as we grow and change throughout our life. We can honor our personal boundaries while honoring another’s boundaries without it harming the relationship. Boundaries are based in a love for ourselves, which enhance our self empowerment and self esteem when communicated in a loving, empowered and compassionate manner.

5. *Identify and Express your negotiable and non-negotiable desires.*

We all have desires. In the past, they have been

“Boundaries are different than walls or defenses. Walls and defenses are generally fear based, creating impenetrable blocks to communication and intimacy. Boundaries define what is acceptable or unacceptable within the individual or within the relationship.”

described as needs and wants. In recent years we have come to understand that need is an illusion and drains us of our power. We simply have desires. When we negotiate our emotional, physical, sexual, intellectual and spiritual desires with our partner, we are teaching them how we want to be loved in all those areas. When we don’t negotiate our desires with our partner, they have to guess at what we want and they have a 50/50 chance at guessing rightly or failing. These are very poor odds. Ultimately, we are responsible to fulfill our hearts desires. We achieve this by being simple and clear about them, negotiating with the other person how we want them to be fulfilled and by not attaching expectations to the outcome. If for some reason they did not follow through on what they agreed to do or not do, then we lovingly confront this issue. As love is both words and actions, when we talk about our desires with our partner, we are loving ourselves. When we negotiate our desires with our partner, we are teaching them how we want to be loved. And, when our partner agrees to fulfill the desire and then does so, they are expressing their love not only in words, but more importantly, in actions.

6. *Practice empowered loving communication.*

Communication is the only way we will let others know who we are, how we feel, what we desire and what we think. Empowered Loving Communication is about communicating with love, compassion, honesty, clarity and assertiveness and is without any shame, blame, judgment or criticism of ourselves or others. We share with “I” statements and not “you” statements about how we feel and think and what our desires are. Many times we may be fearful of sharing our truth out of the fear that we will not be heard, that we will be judged, or that the other person will

react negatively to us. This is where the development of boundaries both emotionally and intellectually comes into play. It is important to share and listen with boundaries so we do not take on the reactions or realities of others and to share and listen without expectation. Learning to communicate with love and empowerment is a skill that takes time and practice to become proficient at. We have to be willing to let go of any fearful needs and expectations of outcomes and instead be willing to share our truth clearly without these needs. Empowered Loving Communication allows us to communicate in a manner that is both loving and respectful of ourselves as well as to the other person. It gives us a greater sense of confidence, self love and self esteem while allowing others to know us.

7. *Strive to maintain greater levels of intimacy and spirituality.*

Relationships feel better and better as we each develop a common ground for the relationship which allows us a sense of safety for each of us to be and express who we are; express even greater respect for one another and practice the tools and skills of their unique relationship recovery. The difficult areas become farther and farther apart. And as they arise, they are much easier and quicker to move through and learn from. Like each of us, relationships are always evolving. They never “arrive”. This is part of our individual human/spiritual nature and that of relationships as well. It is important to remember that as each person feels better within the relationship, complacency can creep into one or more areas of the relationship emotionally, physically, sexually, spiritually and/or intellectually. To guard against complacency, it is important to create daily and



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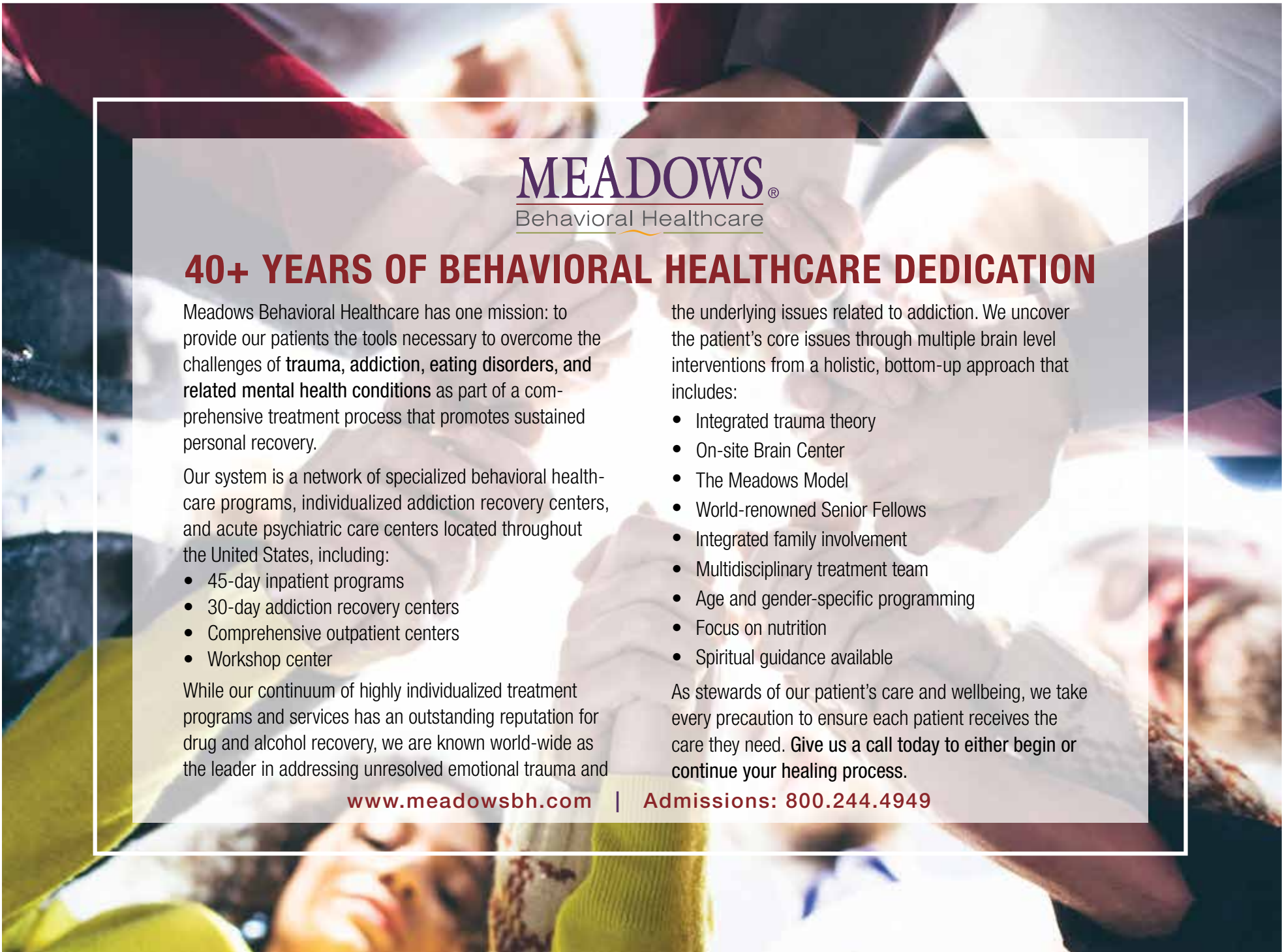
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weekly practices of communication and intimacy in the relationship which will allow for the continued evolution and growth.

Codependence has been seen as a conflict in gods.

Our true sense of worth, self, well being and happiness come directly from our relationship with our Higher Power. When we expect another person to give us our sense of worth, self, well being and happiness we have given that power over to them. The priority in relationships is first with our Higher Power, secondly with ourselves and lastly with others. Just as our human relationships take time, attention and energy, so does our relationship with our Higher Power. Lovingly growing and evolving this relationship on a daily basis and sharing it with others will help us in our ability to progressively love and create intimacy with ourselves and others.

8. Seek support to grow your relationship through outside support systems.

It is helpful to develop a relationship support system of people committed to you both and your relationship successfully evolving. These may include 12 Step Programs, Relationship Sponsors and Counseling, if necessary. Discretion in choosing your relationship support system is critical. It is helpful to avoid those who may find it difficult to not choose sides and instead to seek out those who are committed to supporting the best interests of you both and the health, growth and evolution of the relationship. Reaching out beyond the relationship helps keep the relationship open and to bring fresh perspectives, new insights and greater energy to grow your loving empowerment in the relationship.

Developing healthy, loving and intimate relationships is a process that develops over time. It is not an event. It first requires us to develop a loving relationship with our self and with a Higher Power. We can't

give what we do not have. Creating a healthy loving relationship can be an enjoyable exciting journey of discovery, change and evolution. With desire, commitment and practice, the rewards of relationship recovery and the progressive change, love and intimacy that develops as a result, are absolutely indescribable.



Ken and Mary Richardson both participate in recovery for alcoholism, addictions and codependence and have been married for 36 years. They have shared a private practice since 1987 and have conducted workshops and retreats throughout the United States and the United Kingdom, providing services in the areas of Addictions, Codependence, Relationships and Spirituality through consulting, coaching, education, workshops, seminars, treatment design and development. Ken and Mary have developed and facilitated "Your Healing Journey Workshop" an innovative intensive individually designed workshop for individuals or couples, "Continuing the Journey to the Heart" Retreats, "Women's Weekend Circle on Codependence", "Relationship Recovery Workshop", and "The Body, Mind, and Spirit" Workshop. They are in private practice in Scottsdale.

For more information contact Ken and Mary Richardson at 480-789-2947/480-455-7700 or visit www.kmrc.world

BREATHE

Take a moment, maybe two, during your day or late at night or in your meditation and practice this simple exercise. To begin, breathe in slowly and deeply and repeat each Mantra in your mind one at a time. And then, exhale slowly and consciously repeating the exhale Mantra one at a time.

Inhale.....In this moment, I breathe in Love
Exhale....In this moment, I breathe Love into the world

Inhale....In this moment, I breathe in Peace
Exhale....In this moment, I breathe Peace into the world

Inhale....In this moment, I breathe in Gratitude
Exhale....In this moment, I breathe Gratitude into the world

Inhale....In this moment, I breathe in Grace
Exhale....In this moment, I breathe Grace into the world

Inhale....In this moment, I breathe in Peace
Exhale....In this moment, I breathe Peace into the world

Inhale....In this moment, I breathe in Life
Exhale....In this moment, I breathe Life into the world

Inhale....In this moment, I breathe in Oneness
Exhale....In this moment, I breathe Oneness into the world

How to Handle Triggers in Sobriety

By Scottsdale Recovery Center Staff

It's quite normal for addicts to relapse at least once while they're in recovery. It can be hard to completely rid oneself of temptation before they get clean for the last time. The emotional and physical indications, which make us feel like having the substances we put in place for good, are a long-standing obstacle to recovery. These indications are mostly known as triggers and for people, they can be expressed differently.

Identifying Triggers

It is not easy to identify a trigger since sometimes it can not have a direct somatic effect on your body (a physical effect). There are several common symptoms caused by a trigger for addiction. These symptoms are divided into physical and psychological categories and knowledge of them can help protect your recovery, they include:

- Tension through your body
- Accelerated heart rate
- Profuse sweating
- Shakiness
- Psychological Symptoms of Triggers
- You may have more ideas on how well you want to cope with substances.
- You used to remember times in the past.
- You are considering how to get substances.
- Experiencing feelings that you need substances to live

Prevention of Triggers

Among the most effective methods to deter relapse is the detection and analysis of your specific relapse causes. And although some common relapse triggers are obvious, some are not.

Types of Triggers

HALT (Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired)

The HALT term is used to define high-risk rehabilitation conditions. If your priority is recovery, then you will need to also prioritize avoiding getting too hungry, angry, lonely, or tired. This can involve food planning, sleeping and attending support groups.

Emotions

Potentially negative thoughts sometimes lead people to drugs or alcohol and cause them to choose substances quickly in an effort to cope. You cannot always feel sorry, wrathful, angry or alone. It is natural and an important aspect to have these feelings, but they are not easy to deal with. Effective recovery will be important as we learn how to deal with our feelings when they emerge.

Stress

Stress can have serious consequences on mental and physical health. Finances, family/friend issues, relationships, jobs, and other responsibilities can cause a lot of stress in life. If a person gets stressed, they'll seek out ways of dealing with it. For a former addict, they may be inclined to fall back into substance abuse. The main thing is to be proactive in avoiding stress and to be conscious of what causes it.

Mental or physical illness

Drug or alcohol relapses may be triggered by depression, anxiety, or any other underlying mental health disorders. Mental illnesses can come about prior to substance abuse or it can be worsened through substance abuse. Drugs and alcohol can alter the mind and trigger dependence and relapse. Treat yourself for any underlying mental issues and keep up with your mental health to make sure old behavior patterns do not come back.

Isolation

A lack of communication may result in relational isolation and loneliness in a recovering addict. The more disconnected you are, the harder it is to seek support when you need it most. It becomes easier to fall into self-pity and then relapse. Consider it a goal to create a strong network of supportive individuals who encourage sobriety.

Relationships

A general conception, but an often overlooked recommendation is dating in the first year of recovery should be avoided. If a relationship ends, a person may experience some depression and this could cause them to relapse. If a relationship turns toxic, this could also trigger the same thing. Remember why it is important to avoid early recovery relationships; if you are sober for more than a year, you need to make sure you worked on yourself long enough so you can have a healthy, stable relationship with someone.

Getting a promotion or new job

When it comes to triggers for relapse, positive life events are often overlooked. A raise or new job may contribute to a celebrating impulse. You may get the

wrong idea to enjoy a substance 'just once'. This kind of mindset can be dangerous and can easily cause someone to fall back into their old habits.

Past Events/Individuals/Places that Recall Substance Abuse

Environmental stimuli. This is basically something that reminds the person of their past substance abuse habits. This can be a person, place, or thing that they correlate with substance abuse. A parking lot they used to use drugs in secret and a person that encouraged drinking too much are good examples. Even places where substances are present like bars, nightclubs, parties, shady parts of town, etc. can all be considered triggers.

Managing your triggers

The easiest way of managing triggers is first to know what they are. When you are able to understand what your triggers are, you can better avoid them. Next is to get a set of skills that can help fight against these triggers. This way a former addict can avoid becoming overwhelmed and stay strong in their sobriety. Find healthy coping mechanisms through therapy or counseling. Below are some good examples of coping you can use in order to fight back against any triggers that may cause a relapse.

Take part in some productive practices.

You may read a book, clean the house, go for a walk, play a video game; as long as the activity keeps your mind or body active it could help against triggers.

Find someone you feel comfortable talking to.

As is often suggested in rehabilitation, communicating with a counselor, advisor, loved one or acquaintance will help support sobriety, resolve issues, and avoid triggers in the future.

Challenge your ideas and change them.

We often only remember what is good about our previous use when a trigger occurs; changing our way of thinking about this usage may help us change our thoughts and help us to transcend a trigger.

Talk to Someone Who's Been There. Talk to Someone Who Can Help. Scottsdale Recovery Center holds the highest accreditation (Joint Commission) and is Arizona's premier rehab facility since 2007. Call 866.893.6816.



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Sober Inspiration

Who needs sober inspiration every single day? We all need to get used to the new life of sobriety. It's not easy when you first get sober, the only sober inspiration you need is not feel so horrible. Just the idea of shakes and withdrawals being over and having a clear head sounds like heaven. It seems impossible to get sober, it's an incredible goal once it's achieved. But...what about the happily ever after?

30, 60, 90 days later, things change and finding some sober inspiration is critical

Suddenly being sober isn't such a miracle. The pink cloud, if you ever even had one, has floated away and life and life's problem have returned and you may not yet have the tools and coping skills to navigate safely through.

This is when inspiration becomes your friend

Anyone who has gotten sober has had moments where they needed sober inspiration. Some people need it on a daily basis. For that reason, remembering why you started or where you're headed becomes imperative.

A shortlist of things to remember when you're just not feeling sobriety.

What was life like when you used?

What will it be like if you use again? Most people don't get sober because drinking or drugging was improving their life. Because it certainly wasn't improving mine. Remember what drinking and drugging did to your life. Remember how you felt when you realized you needed to get sober. Remember the looks on the faces of people you disappointed. Think about what it will be like in a day, a week, a month and what it will take to get back. If you do make it back. So, take a minute to pause and think past the f*ckits.

Think about what you want.

How much farther will you be from that goal if you ditch sobriety? What's your vision for your life? If you don't know, figure it out because it will help keep you sober. It helped me to always be working towards my goals, even when it wasn't going well. I'd get discouraged sometimes, but I never lost hope and that made all the difference.

Do you feel better?

Do you wake up feeling even happy some days? You won't for long if you relapse. Weigh in your mind what it would be like to detox again or lose your mental health. Or just spend days coming down or being hungover from whatever substances got used to make you feel high or drunk.

What about your loved ones?

They say you have to get sober for yourself but never forget all the people who would be hurt if you went back to those old bad habits. Think about your family, friends, a sober community, a professional community. There came a moment for me when I had to take all this recovery stuff seriously because I had to grow up. I had responsibilities and I wanted to show up for them. For me, when I thoroughly followed the path, it worked.

Got a pet?

Discuss it with them. Tell that furry loved one what you want to do and let them tell you what they want you to do. Sometimes animals have a funny way of getting through if you give them the chance.

If these don't strike a chord for you make your own list of sober inspiration

The important thing is to find things outside yourself to focus on when times are tough. IT's in the mind where we get turned around sometimes, especially if our wiring isn't shatterproof.

(Source: reachoutrecovery.com/)

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Calvary Healing Center	866-76-SOBER
CBI, Inc.	480-831-7566
CBI, Inc. Access to Care	877-931-9142
Continuum Recovery Ctr.	877-893-8962
Cohn Media	866-578-4947
(Online Marketing/SEO)	
Dept.Problem Gaming	800-NEXTSTEP
Gifts Anon	480-483-6006
The Meadows	800-632-3697
Meadows Ranch	866-390-5100
Men’s Teen Challenge	520-792-1790
Mercy Care	602-222-9444 /800-631-1314
NCADD	602-264-6214
Psychological Counseling Services (PCS)	480-947-5739
Rio Retreat Center	800-244-4949
Scottsdale Recovery Center	888-663-7847
Sierra Tucson	800-842-4487
Sober Living AZ	602-737-2458
Sunlight Medical	480-300-6065
Stewart Counseling Services	602-316-3197
Valley Hospital	602-952-3939
Teen Challenge of AZ	800-346-7859
Legal Services	
Dwane Cates	480-905-3117

RESOURCES

ACT Counseling	602-569-4328
AZ Center for Change	602-253-8488
AZ. Dept. of Health	602-364-2086
AzRHA	602-421-8066
Building Blocks-BBC	602-626-8112
Chandler Valley Hope	480-899-3335
Choices Network	602-222-9444
Cornerstone Healing Center	480-653-8618
Crisis Response Network	602-222-9444
The Crossroads	602-279-2585
Desert Drug Dog	602-908-2042
Fit FOUR Recovery	480) 828-7867
Governor’s Office of Youth, Faith & Family	

	602-542-4043
Hunkapi Programs	480- 393-0870
Lafrontera -EMPACT	800-273-8255
River Source	480-827-0322
TERROS Health	602-685-6000
VIVRE	480- 389-4779

Therapists/Interventionists

Dr. Marlo Archer	480-705-5007
Carey Davidson	928-308-0831
Dr. Dina Evan	602-997-1200
Dr. Dan Glick	480-614-5622
Bobbe McGinley	602-569-4328
Julian Pickens, EdD, LISAC	480-491-1554

TUCSON

ACA	aca-arizona.org
Alcoholics Anonymous	520-624-4183
Tucson Al-Anon Information Service Office	520-323-2229
Amity Foundation	520-749-5980
Anger Management	520-887-7079
Behavioral Awareness Center	520 629 9126
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
The Mark Youth & Family Care Campus	520-326-6182
Narcotics Anonymous	520-881-8381
Nicotine Anonymous	520-299-7057
Overeaters Anonymous	520-733-0880
Recovery in Motion	520-975-2141
Sex/Love Addicts Anonymous	520-792-6450
Sex Addicts Anonymous	520-745-0775
Sierra Tucson	800-842-4487
Sonora Behavioral Health	520-829-1012
Suicide Prevention	520-323-9372
Turn Your Life Around	520-887-2643
Workaholics Anonymous	520-403-3559

Are you a resource?
Send your request by email to
barb@togetheraz.com

If you or a loved one are facing a crisis, we encourage you to call for professional guidance. Every moment counts.

Alcoholics Anonymous	602-264-1341
Al-Anon	602-249-1257
Tucson Al-Anon Information	520-323-2229
Adult Children of Alcoholics	aca-arizona.org
Arizona Addiction	602-737-1619
Bipolar Wellness	602-274-0068
Child Abuse Hotline – Support & Information	800-422-4453
Cocaine Anonymous	602-279-3838
Co-Anon	602-697-9550
CoDA	602-277-7991
COSA	480-385-8454
Crisis Help Line – For Any Kind of Crisis	800-233-4357
Crisis Text Line	Text HOME to 741741
Crystal Meth Anonymous	602-235-0955
Debtors Anonymous	(800) 421-2383
Domestic Violence	800-799-SAFE
Families Anonymous	602-647-5800
Gamblers Anonymous	602-266-9784
Grief Recovery	800-334-7606
Heroin Anonymous	602-870-3665
Marijuana Anonymous	800-766-6779
NDMDA Depression Hotline – Support Group	800-826-3632
Narcotics Anonymous/Phoenix	480-897-4636
Narcotics Anonymous/Casa Grande	520-426-0121
Narcotics Anonymous/Flagstaff	928-255-4655
Narcotics Anonymous/Prescott	928-458-7488
Narcotics Anonymous/Tucson	520-881-8381
Nar-Anon Family Groups	(800) 477-6291
National Youth Crisis Hotline	800-448-4663
NCADD	602-264-6214
Overeaters Anonymous	602-234-1195
PAL (Parents of Addicted Loved Ones)	480-300-4712
Parents Anonymous	602-248-0428
Phoenix Metro SAA	602-735-1681
RAINN (Rape, Abuse, Incest National Network)	RAINN.ORG
Rape Hotline (CASA)	602-241-9010
Sexaholics Anonymous	602-439-3000
Sexual Assault Hotline (24/7, English & Spanish)	800-223-5001
Sex/Love Addicts	602-337-7117
Sex/Love Addicts	520-792-6450
Sex Addicts Anonymous	602-735-1681
S-ANON	480-545-0520
Sober Living AZ	602-737-2458
Suicide Hotline	800-254-HELP
US Suicide Prevention Lifeline	800-273-8255



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Seeking Support

FEB. 26 AT 4PM PST, 1 PM EST —Lift the Shame: Timberline Knolls, a leading treatment center for women and adolescent girls struggling with eating disorders, substance abuse, trauma and co-occurring disorders, invites all pregnant women and mothers struggling with eating disorders and related issues to join ***Lift the Shame***, a free online anonymous support group conducted by Crystal Claytonia Karges, MS, RDN, IBCLC, RD. Feb. 26 at 4pm PST, 1 pm EST. For those interested, email Crystal Karges at crystal@crystalkarges.com.

Rising Phoenix Wellness Services—MARA (Medication-Assisted Recovery Anonymous) group. Tues 5:30-6:30 pm, 7807 E. Greenway Rd. Suite #5, Scottsdale, **480-427-2290**

LGBTQ - IOP Program. Specialty program designed to meet the mental health and substance abuse, treatment needs of the LGBTQ+ population. Mon., Tues., Thurs. 6:00-9:00 p.m. Transportation available. **602-952-3939/602-952-3907.Valley Hospital**, 3550 E.Pinchof Ave. Phoenix. **valleyhospital-phoenix.com**

DOORWAYS—Outpatient mental health treatment center providing individual counseling and psychiatric services for teens, young adults ages 13-25 and their families. Groups provided exclusively for 13-18 year old’s - Skills groups (DBT 101 and De-Stress) 1x per week, along with 4 Intensive Outpatient Programs (IOP’s) 3x per week - Anxiety IOP, DBT IOP, Eating Disorder IOP and Substance Use IOP. **602-997-2880** or info@doorwaysarizona.com.

SIERRA TUCSON—Alumni Group. Scottsdale, Tues., 6:00- 7:00 p.m.Valley Presbyterian Church. 6947 E. Mc-Donald Drive, Paradise Valley. 480-991-4267. Counseling Center (Parlor Room). Rob L. **602-339-4244/** stscottsdalealumni@gmail.com.

SIERRA TUCSON—Continuing Care Groups—Phoenix. Thurs. –Resident Alumni. PCS, 3302 N. Miller, Scottsdale. 5:30–7:00 p.m. email: Courtney.Martinez@SierraTucson.com.

FAMILY RECOVERY GROUP—Facilitator, Brough Stewart, LPC. 5:30-7:30 p.m. Designed to help begin/continue family recovery. **Meadows Outpatient Center**, 19120 N. Pima Rd., Ste. 125, Scottsdale. **602-740-8403**

Copa Health Information & Resources - A FREE Service! Information & Resources for: Mental Health Support Groups / Crisis Lines / Petitioning (Involuntary Commitment / Therapists / Seriously Mentally Ill (SMI) / AHCCCS (Medicaid), AND MORE! 480-994-4407, Monday through Friday, 9 am - 4 pm.

The Grace Alliance— Glendale: Mondays 6:30 - 8 pm. Scottsdale: 2nd & 4th Tuesdays, 6 - 8 pm. Gilbert: Every other Wednesday, 6:15 - 7:45pm. Looking for faith-based mental health support? The Grace Alliance can help. Info: www.mentalhealthgracealliance.org.

TUCSON SLAA—Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous (S.L.A.A.) University Medical Center - Room “E” - Sunday 10:00am Step Meeting, St. Phillip’s Church - La Parroquia - Mesquite Room. Mon. 6:00pm Book/ The Journal Meeting, Streams in the Desert Lutheran Church-5360 E. Pima St. (West of Craycroft, south side of Pima) Meeting Room A, Wed. 6:30pm Women’s Meeting, St. Phillip’s Church La Parroquia - Mesquite Wednesday 7:00 pm Men’s Meeting, Our Savior’s Lutheran Church East Activity Building, enter from north parking lot off Mabel St. Friday 6:00pm Discussion meeting. Call **520-261-SLAA(7522)**E: tucsonslaa@gmail.com. www.tucsonslaa.org

VALLEY HOSPITAL—IOP for Chemical Dependency/ Co-Occuring. Mon.,Tues., Thurs. 6:00-9:00 p.m. **602-952-3939**. 3550 E. Pinchof Ave., Phoenix. valleyhospital-phoenix.com

Open Hearts Counseling Services Women’s Therapeutic Group for Partners of Sex Addicts. 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. Scottsdale Sun. 4:00 p.m., 10427

N. Scottsdale Rd., N. Scottsdale Fellowship 480-225-1555 /602-647-5800

NICOTINE ANONYMOUS—Phoenix Sat., 5-6:00 p.m. 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 - nicotine-anonymous.org

CHRONIC PAIN SUFFERERS —“Harvesting Support for Chronic Pain,” 3rd Sat. of month, 12-1:00 p.m. Harvest of Tempe, 710 W. Elliot Rd., Suite 103, Tempe. 480-246-7029.

Jewish Alcoholics, Addicts, Families, Friends. 1st/3rd Wed., 7:30 p.m. Ina Levine Jewish Community Campus, 12701 N. Scottsdale Rd. **602-971-1234 ext. 280.**

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

LIVING GRACE SUPPORT— Christ centered approach for individuals and families affected by mental illness. Oasis Community Church, 15014 N. 56th St. Scottsdale. 602-494-9557. 2nd & 4th Tuesday 6-8 p.m.

WOMEN for SOBRIETY —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— Message of hope and personal recovery to family and friends of someone who is addicted to cocaine or other 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.

ACOA Thurs., 7:00 p.m., North Scottsdale United Methodist Church, 11735 N. Scottsdale Rd., Scottsdale.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, Tucson. Room A. Michael 520-419-6723.

OA—12 Step program for addictions to food, food behaviors. 520-733-0880 or www.oasouthernaz.org.

PILLS ANONYMOUS—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.

GA—Christ the Redeemer Lutheran Church, 8801 N. 43rd Ave. Sunday, Spanish 7:00-9:00 p.m. Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 3040 N 7th Ave. Sunday, English 6:00-8:00 p.m. 5010 E. Shea Blvd., Ste. D-202, Sue F. 602-349-0372

SAA — www.saa-phoenix.org 602-735-1681 or 520-745-0775.

Valley Hope Alumni Support. Thursdays 6-7:00 p.m., 2115 E. Southern Ave. Phoenix. Tues. 8-9:00 p.m., 3233 W. Peoria Ave. Ste. 203, Open.

SPECIAL NEEDS —AA Meetings. Cynthia SN/AC Coordinator 480-946-1384, E: Mike at mphaes@mac.com

SLAA—Sex and Love Addict Anonymous 602-337-7117. slaa-arizona.org

GAM-ANON: Sun. 7:30 p.m. Desert Cross Lutheran Church, 8600 S. McClintock, Tempe. Mon. 7:30 p.m., Cross in the Desert Church, 12835 N. 32nd St., Phoenix, Tues. 7:00 p.m., First Christian Church, 6750 N. 7th Ave., Phoenix, Tues. 7:15 p.m. Desert Cross Lutheran Church, Education Building, 8600 S. McClintock, Tempe, Thurs. 7:30 p.m.

DEBTORS ANONYMOUS—Mon., 7-8:00 p.m., St. Philip’s Church, 4440 N. Campbell Ave., Palo Verde Room. Thurs. 6-7:00 p.m., University Medical Center, 1501 N. Campbell. 520-570-7990, www.arizonada.org.

EATING DISORDER SUPPORT GROUPS— PHX—Monday 7:00 p.m. 2927 E. Campbell Dr. Ste. 104, (Mt. View Christian Church). Jen (602) 316-7799 or edaphoenix@gmail.com. Wed. 7:00 p.m. Liberation Center, 650 N. 6th Ave, Phoenix. (cross street McKinley). Jennifer (602) 316-7799. Tempe—Thursday 6:30 p.m. Big Book/5:30 - 6:30 p.m. Steps to the Solution. Mountain View Retirement Village, 7900 N. La Canada Drive, Tucson. leeeverholly@gmail.com. Thurs. 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. EDA Big Book Step Study. Mountain View Retirement Village, 7900 N. La Canada Drive, Tucson. (203) 592-7742 / leeeverholly@gmail.com. Wickenburg—Wed. 7:15 p.m. and Sunday 7:45 p.m. (N,D/SP,O.) Capri PHP program. (928) 684-9594 or (800) 845-2211.Yuma —Wed. @ 5:00 - 6:00 p.m. 3970 W. 24th St. Ste. 206 Yuma. Alyssa (928) 920-0008 or email 2014yumae.d.a@gmail.com.

CRYSTAL METH ANONYMOUS www.cmaaz.org or 602-235-0955. Tues. and Thurs. Stepping Stone Place, 1311 N. 14th St. Phoenix.

GODDESSESS & KACHINAS Philosophical, spiritual, religious 12 step, 12 Tradition/12 Promises support group. 480-203-6518.

AA,NA,CA,CMA,ACA, ALANON - Would you like to start a meeting? The Northwest Alano Club would like to help. ***Free rent and coffee for the first 4 meetings!*** 3120 W. Curtis Rd. Tucson (520) 293-2929

SEND EVENT OR SUPPORT GROUP INFO:
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What is MASK?

MASK (Mothers Awareness on School-age Kids) is a non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization created in 2007 by a group of dedicated mothers who recognized the need to consistently educate families on rapidly changing issues.

MASK fulfills its mission by engaging, educating and empowering families through the MASK E3 Institute, MASK The Magazine, an informative website, and the MASKMatters App. The MASK E3 Institute is a comprehensive year long multi-year approach to building and strengthening life skills for children, including MASK Storytime (pre-school), MASK Academy (kindergarten-6th grade), MASK Prep (middle and high school), MASK Leadership (college) and Parent University. This new digital format teaches pre-kindergarten through college age students pro social-emotional skills and provides tools for how to cope with a number of issues including peer pressure, technology-related challenges, refusal skills, emotional regulation, frustration tolerance, self-esteem and healthy boundaries.

Why MASK The Magazine?

The Magazine is the parenting manual offering solutions to the modern day challenges families face. You’ll learn age-appropriate conversation starters, which can help open the lines of communication between you and your child(ren).

Why The MASK Matters App?

The MASKMatters app has been designed to give students, parents, and teachers tools and resources to compliment all the topics MASK addresses. This information is all available age-appropriately and in Spanish right at the users fingertips. Getting quick and current information about these issues has never been easier... or more convenient. Download the MASKMatters App today, and have modern-day solutions right at your fingertips. **maskmatters.org**

Healthy Relationships Start with You

By Kim Miller, LISAC

When doing education on relationships, my focus is primarily on codependency, love addiction, love avoidance, or the symptoms thereof. Common reasons why people seek professional counseling services are “relationship issues.” It seems as though this verbiage would cover most problems experienced by the human race.

Trouble with interpersonal relationships, attachment disorders, and intimacy seem to plague all of us. A recent report on statistics regarding world health mentions problems related to domestic violence resulting in billions of dollars of services.

Codependency often holds a strong place in the running for the underpinnings of partner violence and emotional issues, including trauma. When we turn away from all of these topics that paint a picture of unhealthy relationships, we begin to turn toward the positive view of where we are hoping to head: Healthy Relationships with other people.

Sometimes in the void of not knowing, we can only cite what we don’t want. Unchecked addictions, enmeshment, control, jealousy, negativity, avoidance, defensive relating, even gaslighting and emotional hostage taking make the list of what we want to avoid. What may be harder to define is the nebulous area where we say “I want healthy relationships” but it is hard to pin down what could make already imperfect beings, workable as companions in work, friendship, and love.

Check the Flag List

Did you know the two to three people you surround yourself most in your life could be creating more of our attitude than we think?

We all want to believe we are not affected by other people or their actions, but studies continue to show this isn’t the case. We are often influenced by who we associate with on a daily basis. As with some things in life, you can’t choose everything or everyone, but there may be room where there is conscious choice.

We are not perfect people. We all make mistakes, have defects of character, and are capable of doing wrong. If someone appears to be perfect you might want to run the other way and wonder if they are human at all. Sometimes the mask of always being right or perfect can be a defense mechanism that manifests in rigidity and unkindness.

On the other hand a relationship where someone crosses a boundary, but is able to say “I apologize,” is a person healthy enough to look at themselves. This is a good sign, as is self-responsibility. Anyone who can look within and is self-searching is a winning horse.

When the people closest to you support your growth, even better. They have your back and are honest with you. Attempting to holding back another’s growth is a red flag.

Being proud and excited with you, for your accomplishments is a green flag. When they are there to help you up when you stumble is just as important. When people in our lives have the ability to communicate openly, are able to form and maintain relationships, is spiritual, joyful and positive make the green flag list.

Something else to look for that is key to the foundation of any relationship is vulnerability. This powerful word encompasses the very advanced and vital component of a good companion. Without vulnerability there is no intimacy or truth, and without truth there is no connection. Last but not least, a friend or partner who is empathetic is truly important. We look for lists of thing we want out of our partners and out of life, but if we walk away and don’t feel as though someone’s basic nature is kindness, consider running.




Healthy people look for ‘playmates’, while unhealthy people look for ‘hostages’. If we are feeling drained, tired, and a bit hopeless it may be time to evaluate our circumstances. While it always has to start with an assessment of ourselves to find what in us is drawing attracting or maintaining relationships with others, a true inventory of our life partners and friends could be an adventure. While these seem rather elementary principles, who among us doesn’t get caught up in the net of unhealthy people and circumstances from time to time? Ask yourself the question... does this being bring me joy and could this move me toward growth and improvement — questions worth asking.



Kim Miller, LISAC, LCSW is a blog writer, EMDR and Somatic Experiencing Practitioner, Certified Life/Executive Coach, Addictions Counselor, and Family Support Coach in private practice. President/Owner MAC Associates LLC. Millercounseling@live.com

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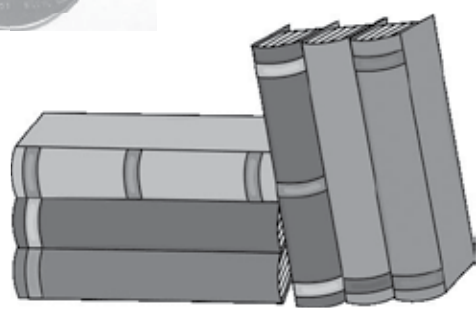
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Sierra Tucson Expands Recovery Offerings with California Campuses

Sierra Tucson, an international leader in behavioral, mental and integrated healthcare, has assumed management of Sober Living by the Sea located in Newport Beach, Calif. and Sunrise Recovery Ranch located in Riverside, Calif. These locations, which are now part of the Sierra Tucson Group, are now Sierra by the Sea and Sunrise Ranch.

Sierra Tucson, Sierra by the Sea, and Sunrise Ranch represent a combined legacy of over 70 years for transforming lives. With a focus on providing trauma-informed care for addiction and co-occurring disorders, these treatment centers offer an intimate beachfront location and gender-specific lodging.

Sierra by the Sea, whose tagline is ‘Where Waves of Change Begin,’ has beachfront locations offering all levels of care, including detox, inpatient, residential, partial hospitalization and intensive outpatient. Located on a serene, rustic campus across 10 acres, Sunrise Ranch, whose tagline is ‘Moving Recovery Forward,’ offers traditional substance use disorder programming in a compassionate and nurturing environment. Equine psychotherapy will now be added to their list of treatment options.

Jaime Vinck, successfully operating Acadia Healthcare’s flagship facility as CEO of Sierra Tucson, has been elevated to CEO of the Sierra Tucson Group.

“This expansion into California allows us to serve more individuals by increasing access to care and expanding the reach of our integrated behavioral healthcare model of care,” said Vinck.

For further information on Sierra by the Sea, visit sierra-bythesea.com; and for Sunrise Ranch, go to sunriserecoveryranch.com.

About the Sierra Tucson Group

The Sierra Tucson Group, which is part of Acadia Healthcare, is currently comprised of Sierra Tucson, Sunrise Ranch and Sierra by the Sea. Internationally renowned for its innovative approach and legacy of providing clinically excellent care for behavioral and mental health concerns, Sierra Tucson combines integrated care with evidence-based practices to provide a full range of leading treatment methods. www.sierratucson.com



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How Families Can Find Relief from Addiction

Addiction Affects Families

In June of 2019, the Commonwealth Fund's Scorecard on State Health System Performance released a 2019 report that looked at "deaths of despair", or deaths caused by drug overdoses, alcohol and suicide.

The report found from 2005 to 2017, the death rate in Arizona caused by drug overdoses increased 57 percent. And when looking at deaths caused by alcohol for that same time period, the rate had increased 43 percent. In other words, 22.2 out of 100,000 Arizona residents died from a drug overdose and 16.2 out of 100,000 Arizona residents died from an alcohol overdose in 2017.

For families, that meant losing a loved one too soon, struggling with their loved one's outstanding financial debts and trying to pick up the pieces and returning to a life of normalcy without a key family member or friend.

The Arizona Department of Health Services tracks state-wide opioid data in real time to see how opioid addiction, specifically, has affected the state's communities. From June 15, 2017 to December 5, 2019, there have been 30,178 suspected opioid overdoses and 1,764 cases of neonatal abstinence syndrome.

At Fountain Hills Recovery, the mission is to provide compassionate and effective addiction treatment that helps families like yours find lasting recovery.

1. Family Therapy. We work with you to help your family overcome the pain and damage addiction has caused. We then work with both you and your loved one together to help rebuild your relationship and heal the family system.

2. Evidence-Based Approach to Treatment. We leverage therapies like cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), group talk therapy, EMDR and many more that are proven to help people overcome addiction and dual diagnosis disorders.

3. Highly Personalized. While millions of people struggle with addiction, your situation is still unique to you. There are underlying causes for your loved one's substance abuse and there is pain and trauma that needs to be addressed. When your loved one comes to treatment, we take the time to get to know your loved one and family, allowing us to create a personalized effective treatment plan.

4. Holistic Healing. Sometimes, people need more than individual and group therapy to really heal from addiction. Your loved one will participate in yoga, equine therapy, music therapy and other holistic treatments that help heal the mind, body and spirit after addiction. These holistic therapies can give your loved one a new outlook on life that they can then take with them when they return to you after treatment.

This personalized and holistic approach can help your loved one find lasting recovery and bring some much-needed relief and healing to your family.

For more information visit fountainhillsrecovery.com.

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