



The Conversation Starter on Bullying

‘Brandon’s Big Fit’



By: Brandon Lee & Jordana Houchins
Illustrations By: Kyle Kwiatkowski

“Brandon is sad, mad, acting bad and having trouble coping with some very unkind classmates. That is, until his creative and compassionate teacher Miss Wigglesworth shows him a fun way to overcome his outbursts, face his feelings, gain confidence and take the first step toward self-acceptance.”

May is recognized as Mental Health month, and anyone who has experienced bullying knows first hand the damaging long term effects it can have.

Yet talking about bullying can be a difficult conversation. Kids of any age who have experienced or witnessed bullying may want to discuss it, but are afraid, embarrassed or feel shame about bringing up the subject.

Kids who are bullied can experience negative physical, social, emotional, academic, and mental health issues. Childhood trauma, bullying, abuse and neglect can lead to emotional and behavioral issues like low self-esteem, feelings of unworthiness, anxiety, depression as well as addictions, suicide ideation or suicide completion.

Inspiring Awareness and Healing

As trauma survivors themselves, **Brandon Lee** and **Jordana Houchins** are passionate about helping children learn to *understand, accept and love*

themselves. The book introduces parents, caregivers and educators to creative outlets as a modality to help any child express their feelings.

Through the book, Brandon and Jordana hope to raise awareness and help children develop skills to heal and deal with their feelings in a healthy way — ultimately building confidence and cultivating compassion.

Brandon’s Big Fit is inspired by the real-life childhood of Brandon Lee, former news anchor and best-selling author of **Mascara Boy**. Brandon overcame his own painful past and has channeled it into his “*Art of Our Soul*” studio. The studio is a place



where trauma survivors come to heal by creating beautiful works of acrylic pouring art.

Don’t wait to start talking!

Talk about what bullying is and how to stand up to it safely. Bullying is unacceptable. Make sure kids know how to get help.

Visit www.splatbrandonsbigfit.com

Wizards and the Therapeutic Relationship

By Stevie Mae Douglas, PsyD. Postdoctoral Resident, PCS

Early in my professional years, I was asking the question: How can I cure or change this person. Now, I would phrase the question this way: How can I provide a relationship which this person may use for personal growth.—Carl Rogers, PhD. (Psychologist)

The therapeutic relationship is one of the most sacred relationships of all. It can involve a mental health therapist of some kind and a client seeking mental health services. The therapist and client are not friends, and, in many ways, the relationship is one-sided (i.e., the client shares intimate details about their own lives while the therapist shares very little about themselves). Still, there is a closeness between the two. Theoretically, the client becomes vulnerable in the therapy room, bringing with them their darkest secrets, their most difficult struggles, and their need for healing and guidance. The therapist can feel protective of their client and often expresses concern and hope for them.

Many people wonder how therapy works and what makes for lasting, successful outcomes. The mental health field can often debate the answers to these questions. Much research has been shared examining therapy techniques and other factors that make for successful therapy results. In many cases, par-

ticularly with those clients who have endured significant trauma or who have been continually invalidated, the therapeutic relationship itself can become the main curative factor. There are solid reasons why.

The therapist not only provides an objective, educated point of view, bringing with them various modalities of therapy, but the actual therapeutic relationship alone can provide the following:

- **Modeling:** The therapist (ideally) is an intentionally healthy human who understands interpersonal relationships and human development. They can model self-care, and they can model emotion regulation and emotional intelligence. Additionally, the therapeutic relationship models a healthy relationship for clients, one with healthy boundaries, boundaries in which many clients have never learned. Therapists are to be responsive and emotionally attuned to their clients. Essentially, the therapeutic relationship becomes a “practice relationship” for clients who struggle relationally at home and beyond.
- **Surrogate attachment:** The therapist can become a surrogate attachment for the client, a temporary secure attachment in which the client

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Publisher's Note

By Barbara Nicholson-Brown
Email: barb@togetheraz.com

Recovery is about Caring

Besides being a deadly disease of the mind, body and spirit — addiction can be a self-centered monster, at least it was for me.

My goals were limited to figuring how I'd get my hands on the next drink or bottle and oftentimes drugs. "Where can I party? Who's buying the rounds tonight? Can't wait till work is over." I did not care about much — except how I was going to feed to my addiction.

My façade was as transparent as glass and I fooled no one. While I acted as though I cared about something or someone other than myself, I didn't. Caring was used as a manipulation tool. I did not care about myself, how could I be capable of caring for another?

Through years of continuous sobriety and learning an entire new way to live, I honestly do care about others — without each other this would be a very lonely life and road to travel.

I've learned how to care in sobriety. I've learned how to listen and not make everything about me. Sometimes I may give too much or too often, and other times not enough. But each day my intention is to be of service in some capacity, outside of my bubble.

Caring in recovery. Caring is connection. When struggles or hurdles seem overwhelming, I know who I can reach out to. I know who to trust. As we welcome Mental Health Awareness month, let someone in your life know you care, because during these uncertain times, we all need a boost.



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Pot Poisoning in Pets?

As marijuana restrictions ease and access becomes more widespread, we've seen a number of warnings about unintended consequences, especially inadvertent exposure among children. ***But kids aren't the only ones at risk.*** A new study from the University of Guelph in Canada found a significant rise in reports of cannabis poisonings among household pets in the past few years.



Researchers from the Ontario Veterinary College surveyed 251 vets in Canada, where recreational marijuana has been legal since 2018, and the U.S., where it's now legal in 18 states.

Vets reported a rise in exposures since 2018, most commonly among dogs, although cats, iguanas, ferrets, horses and even cockatoos were also affected. The biggest risk came from pets ingesting edibles, which are often packaged with chocolate and other ingredients appealing and dangerous to animals. Some of the pets encountered cannabis in discarded joints, and compost. Symptoms included incontinence, disorientation, loss of coordination and hypersensitivity to light and touch.

Khokhar plans a study on how cats metabolize cannabis, the results of which may be applicable to small children as well as pets.

Most pets that consumed cannabis recovered within 24 hours with monitoring or moderate treatment, the study found, but vets did report a small

Protect our fur babies! The biggest risk comes from pets ingesting edibles

number of deaths. Lead author Jibran Khokhar, PhD, noted the difficulty in assessing cannabis toxicosis across pets that range widely in size, weight and species; and research on the subject so far is scanty. He said the fatalities "could be related to other additives like chocolate or xylitol that might have been in the cannabis edible. ... If the pets are consuming an edible, you have to be concerned about both the cannabis in it, [and] also those other ingredients."

The most common symptoms in pets exposed to cannabis included disorientation, lethargy, abnormal or uncoordinated movements such as swaying, lowered heart rate and urinary incontinence. Protect our pets!

(Source: Treatment Magazine By Mark Mravic)

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Investments will bolster crisis care infrastructure

The Department of Health and Human Services, through Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), is awarding nearly \$105 million in grant funding, provided by the American Rescue Plan, to 54 states and territories in advance of the transition of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline from the current 10-digit number to the 988 three-digit dialing code in July.

Strengthening our crisis care infrastructure is a core priority of President Biden’s Mental Health Strategy. Improving **988** readiness and responsiveness is a critical step to realizing this objective.

States and territories are expected to use the funds to improve response rates, increase capacity to meet future demand, and ensure calls initiated are first routed to local, regional, or state crisis call centers. Award recipients may also use the funds to build the workforce necessary for enhancing local text and chat response. These grants along with other recent funding from the administration, represent a 40-fold increase in federal support of the Lifeline over the past four years. With states at varying degrees of operational readiness, the success of 988 now rests heavily on the willingness of state, territorial and local leaders to make additional investments in shoring up the crisis care continuum.

SAMHSA’s 2020 National Survey on Drug Use and Health data show 4.9 percent of adults 18 or older had serious thoughts of suicide, 1.3 percent made a suicide plan, and 0.5 percent attempted suicide in the past year.

Among adolescents 12 to 17, 12 percent had serious thoughts of suicide, 5.3 percent made a suicide plan, and 2.5 percent attempted suicide in the past year. The findings vary by race and ethnicity, with people of mixed ethnicity reporting higher rates of serious thoughts of suicide.

In 2020, Congress designated the new 988 dialing code to be operated through the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. As the country transitions to this easy-to-remember, three-digit number, SAMHSA is focused on efforts to strengthen and expand the existing Lifeline network—providing the public with easier access to lifesaving services.

The Lifeline currently helps thousands of people overcome crisis situations every day. The 988 dialing code will be available nationally for call, text, or chat beginning on July 16, 2022.



According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the United States had one death by suicide every 11 minutes in 2020. Suicide was the second leading cause of death for ages 10-14 and 25-34.

In addition to the support provided through this funding, SAMHSA is also convening national partners to help advance 988 planning efforts at state and local levels. These national-level meetings have brought together states, territories, and tribes; crisis contact centers; public safety answering points; and behavioral health providers to exchange resources and best practices for facilitating the 988 transition. SAMHSA has collaborated with national partners to create playbooks and other guidance documents to assess and improve the operational readiness of these critical groups to support implementation of 988.

Formal launch of 988 in July

Until the formal launch of 988 in July 2022, anyone in mental health crisis or emotional distress should call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255). People not in crisis who are seeking treatment options for mental health conditions should visit **findtreatment.samhsa.gov** or call **1-800-662-HELP (4357)**.

More information on the National Tour to Strengthen Mental Health is available at **HHS.gov/HHSTour**.

The Gift in the Silence

By Dina Evan, PhD

Personally, I don't believe we will ever see a time as trying and lonely as this and this era. Covid has somehow whittled away our family ties, brought fear to travel, worn us down and left us in the silence, hearing just the echo of alone.

According to the *American Psychological Association*, social distancing and being isolated from friends and family can have the same health impacts as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. With many of us still maintaining our distance, it's not uncommon for loneliness to kick in and take its toll, especially since there doesn't seem to be any end in sight. Are we getting to accustomed to it? Is this the new norm? We hear things are letting up even as the number of cases are increasing in many places. Who is right? And what it is doing to our sense of connection and our humanity?

Are we beginning to forget there is only one of us — only one human family? Big stars, regular people, national leaders, political parties and everyday people of different nationalities and colors are turning to violence with words and actions to vent their frustration and feel power return.

Over the last several months, many people have experienced some, if not all of the following effects of distancing: anxiety, sadness, isolation, depression, impaired decision making, poor sleep quality, poor cardiovascular function and impaired immunity. ***The truth is we need each other!*** We need to know people care about us. We have to make sure we make heart connections, to keep our hearts open and healthy. Here are few suggestions from *Psychology Today*, and me, to alleviate the deep sense of loneliness and build social networks:

- **Volunteer**, even remotely. Serving others alleviates loneliness, anxiety and uncertainty. Sponsor someone. ([Volunteer Match](#).)
- **Don't miss your meetings**. Join other support groups with people isolated by the same issues. Start a support group online or in person with distancing and masks. ([Search for groups, for example, on Meetup.com, 211.org, or Facebook.](#))

- **Smile** at someone in the grocery store, or help someone who needs it. It can be as simple as picking up a loaf of bread for your neighbor.
- **Get support**. Find people to confide in, such as friends, family members whom you've been out of contact with or therapists, coaches, or chaplains.
- **Take classes or join study groups**. Common interests, values, and passions start lively and meaningful conversations. You can also do on-line courses. Learning brings a sense of excitement back.
- **Share your favorite uplifting media** and start conversations about them—Spotify music playlists, TikTok videos, movie recommendations, podcasts, or books. Create a virtual book club or start a Facebook Watch party.
- This is a great time to focus on important relationships. Go to my site [DrDinaEvan.com](#) to download the free Communication exercises and watch the free Communication and Ethical Boundary videos. Start talking to each other again. You'll be surprised how quickly that puts the love, energy and fire back in your friendships and relationships again.

The truth is—we need each other to stay healthy and to feel life is worthwhile. It takes such little effort to reach out and each connection brings huge gifts to both you and the other person. We toss the word love around in cards and songs, but the truth is...love is all that matters. It is vital to our health emotionally, intellectually, physically and spiritually. When you are giving and receiving it, life becomes precious again and the real meaning of life returns, bringing a sense of safety and peace. You can feel that if you stop, sit in the silence of now for just a moment and feel the love that is always still here.

It's not that hard to find someone to love.

He or she is standing right in front of you, beside you or through the two big doors at Costco or Target. It's as simple as starting with a smile and a simple question...How can I help? And since there is only one of us...one big human family, for that moment, and in every moment that you do it, you and the person you help are both healed, and so is your part of the world.

You matter to all of us. We are creating the future together. What will it be?



Dr. Evan is a marriage, family, 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. Visit [drdinaevan.com](#) or call 602-571-8228.



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We have to face the pain we have been running from. In fact, we need to learn to rest in it and let its searing power transform us.

**Charlotte Joko Beck,
Zen teacher**

Is It Possible To Change Your Mood Habits?

by Leslie Glass
(Source: <https://reachoutrecovery.com>)

Have you ever noticed you have mood habits? When you wake up, you have certain feelings that may repeat themselves through the day?

Sometimes you're happy and serene, or agitated from the get-go. Then there are the triggers of past trauma that immediately remind you of catastrophic events, and sad feelings keep returning. You're crazed by politics and everything that's going wrong in the world. There's plenty to worry about. Especially right now.

I used to refer to my "autoreset" and what that meant was my mood habit was always returning to a kind of anxious, unhappy state as a normal. But, as the years passed, I learned many techniques to help manage my mood and change my reset to a more even-keeled place.

Worried about the To Do list you can't accomplish right now?

You always have a list of things in your head you feel you have to do and stay focused on until the list is completed. You're listless and can't get moving, and that feeling stays with you all day. Your mood habits tell a lot about you. In fact, mood habits can make you a success or...not so much. While you don't have control over what's happening in the world, but you do have control over your moods and can turn them around.

Mood habits are like muscle memory

It may seem hard to believe that, like athletes create muscle memory that makes them excel, all of us have emotional memory we have cultivated that helps or hinders us every day. Our feelings about ourselves, situations, and other people are often ingrained habits we've learned over time. We repeat the feelings every day because we are used to them, even if they make us miserable.

Mood habits makes us feel bad, sad, useless

No one wants to wake up feeling mad, sad, bad, useless, scared, defeated. But those feelings are our excuses. Where do those feelings come from and do we have to keep them? The feelings come from our experiences as children, teens, young adults, and the way other people have treated us in many situations. If your parent has told you you're no good, you're not going to grow



up feeling good. If you experienced problems with math or sports or relationships, you may decide you're really and truly no good. Then you may be stuck in those feelings until something changes it.

Don't beat yourself or loved ones up

Bipolar disorder, clinical depression, substance use, food disorders and other mental health problems, however, are not bad habits that can be changed by positive thinking. That is a myth. Treatment is necessary. Get a mental health check up and get help if you need it.

Feelings are not reality — they aren't always your best guide

We often hear in recovery that feelings are not reality. Resentments, rage, disappointments, unhappiness and discontent are all feelings that you have to nurture to sustain. You have to work at unhappiness to be unhappy. If you stop nurturing and feeding negative feelings, they can go away, or at least lessen. Truly. And that is a great goal. But it takes practice and you really have to want it. If you want to feel better and lift your mood, the best thing to do is to substitute a whole different palette of feelings. Think of it like changing your thought diet.

Wake up with a list of things that make you feel good or happy

Of course, there may be many reasons for feeling unhappy or low, or resentful, defeated or sad. There are just as many reasons to be happy, contented, and grateful no matter what your situation. If you start listing and repeating to yourself what makes you happy, what you're grateful about, you can lose the negativity over time. Journaling is great way to change your mood, try writing about what makes you happen.

(Source: <https://reachoutrecovery.com>)

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can operate from and explore their healing and growth. They can grow confidence. This is particularly helpful for clients who have experienced the more insecure attachment styles as a child and, consequently, experience insecure attachments with their significant others when they are older.

- **Trust:** When a therapist cultivates a strong rapport and alliance with the client, there is trust. The therapist can gently push and challenge when needed. Not only does the client trust the therapist to do so (and that is healing within itself), but the therapist also shows trust in the client. This can be empowering. The therapist's trust in the client's intuitive wisdom and ability to self-actualize can be felt, and this can build confidence within the client that is needed to progress through their self-healing journey and to build healthy relationships in their personal lives.



“When a therapist cultivates a strong rapport and alliance with the client, there is trust.”

- **Corrective emotional experiences:** All of the aforementioned factors can create a corrective emotional experience for clients. These experiences have the ability to heal negative past moments where it was reinforced for the client that they were not safe nor empowered. Those painful experiences can cause them to develop distortions in cognition and behavior from which they operate presently. With the therapist, they can experience the safety to advocate for themselves and not be dismissed, to share their inner world and not be shamed, or to reach out for connection and find it. These are only a few of the corrective emotional experiences that clients can use to transform their lives, creating changes not only in the mind but the body, too.
- **Changes in neural pathways and physiological systems:** Research has shown how our environments can affect our genes through epigenetics and how they can shape the development of our natural bodily and brain systems. The environment in which we grow as children and the environment we are in as adults matter. Environments include the people around us. In this article, there is not enough time to explore the world of epigenetics, the discoveries of neuroplasticity, or the polyvagal theory addressing our autonomic nervous system and co-regulation impacts. However, you are encouraged to look further into these areas for a

deeper understanding of how our environment can impact our lives in substantial ways. For the purpose of this article, know that humans have the ability to turn genes on or off, they have the ability to reprogram brain patterns, and they have the ability to reprogram their nervous system: all through addressing their environment. When the therapist provides a safe, nurturing environment for the client in session and the client feels safe enough to explore without negative consequence, physical and mental changes can occur. Over time, these positive changes cannot only affect clients' daily lives but the lives of their children and grandchildren as well.

It was a therapeutic relationship that saved this writer's life not so long ago. My psychologist and I cultivated a relationship of trust, safety, and healing after my military journey. This was important for my growth because I had not experienced a completely healthy relationship prior, and the complex trauma I endured throughout my life altered my healthy development. During our work together, I never really understood what was happening in session. It felt like some sort of wizardry. I just knew that over time, I felt safer and more empowered. I became more grounded and in control of myself. I then earned my doctorate in psychology, and I finally understood the main factor that so strongly impacted my mental health (and consequently my physical health, too). It was the unique and sacred therapeutic relationship that made room for change.

Rapport leads to the alliance that leads to an effective therapeutic relationship. Research sup-

ports that the therapeutic relationship makes up 30% of the four factors creating lasting and positive therapeutic outcomes for clients while the therapist's technique or model makes up only 15 percent. (Client factors make up 40% and expectations make up 15 percent: Asay & Lambert, 1999; Duncan & Miller, 2000). It is what I respect and admire most about therapists (i.e., ones who can cultivate healing and empowering therapeutic relationships from which clients can grow and transform their lives). It is why I call these therapists "Wizards."



About Stevie Mae Douglas, PSYD

Inner work through therapy is one of the bravest things one can ever do. Along with courage, it requires intention and dedication. I know this because not only am I a therapist to others, I have also done personal work with a therapist of my own. I see my role as walking beside you to offer guidance, reflection, and gentle challenges. My clinical experience includes addiction, depression, anxiety, psychosis, relationship issues, and personality challenges. Trauma and grief are my areas of focus, particularly as it relates to human development and to military veterans.

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Strips to test drugs for the presence of the deadly synthetic opioid are becoming more commonplace in bars, restaurants and venues as the country grapples with the opioid epidemic and soaring death toll. [read more](#)

- Fentanyl has flooded U.S. streets and contributed to nearly 500,000 U.S. opioid overdose deaths over two decades. Fentanyl, a 100 times more potent than morphine, produces effects similar to other opioids, like sedation, drowsiness and nausea. Overdosing can cause respiratory failure leading to death.
- Fentanyl overdoses are now the top cause of death among U.S. residents ages 18-45, surpassing suicide, car accidents and COVID, according to an analysis of federal data by opioid awareness organization **Families Against Fentanyl**.(<https://www.familiesagainstoffentanyl.org/>)

Fentanyl is now the #1 cause of death for Americans age 18 to 45.

To prevent such deaths, Heller, FentCheck co-founder Dean Shold and a team of volunteers regularly visit a network of businesses in Oakland, San Francisco, New York and Philadelphia to replenish stocks of the test strips.

"We're done with dead kids. We're done with accidental overdoses. We are also serving people who are struggling with drug addiction," Heller said. "They cannot make it to rehab, they cannot make it to the next step in their sobriety if they die that night."

FentCheck staples the strips from Canadian company BTNX to simple instructions for users to test their drugs. The results show up – like a pregnancy or COVID-19 test – with lines indicating positive or negative.

Melissa Myers, owner of the Good Hop, called it a “no brainer” to offer the strips to her customers and train her staff to use naloxone, a medicine that rapidly reverses the effect of opioid overdoses.

Some cities have gone even further in the fight against drug overdoses. One of the nation’s first supervised drug-injection sites opened last year in New York City, allowing users to inject drugs under the supervision of trained staff.

Hensley doubts that providing fentanyl test strips would affect drug users’ behavior.

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- Veterans

"Momentos, Symbols and Keepsakes"



By Ken Wells, MDiv, MA, LPC, CSAT, LSAC

When I was a kid my dad carried a buckeye with him in the pocket of his work pants for good luck. A friend at church always had a rabbit's foot in his pocket for the same reason. The parents of one of my friends at school who were Catholic decided to sell their house so they could move to a new one. They took a small statue of St Joseph and buried him upside down in their front yard. They believed that the saint would help them sell their house quickly in order to turn him right side up. They sold their house in two days.

Symbols and mementos have meaning and purpose

A crucifix is important to a Christian. A conch shell is meaningful to a Buddhist. A bear claw is sacred to a Native American. The Star of David is hallowed by Jewish people.

Keepsakes are also treasured. Some guys save the baseball card collection they built up when they were kids. After a wedding, a couple will dry the flowers and preserve them as a keepsake of their love. Some people carry a special rock or an engraved bracelet that anchors them in memory to someone special.

Addicts often overlook the value and purpose of mementos, symbols, and keepsakes. Maybe, like me, they grew up in an environment where symbolism, keepsakes, and mementos were never emphasized. The symbols of the church, the cross, healing oil and the altar — were used to abuse me. So, of course, Christian symbols were always rejected by me. In truth, addiction actually helped me to forget the symbols associated with Christian faith. Many addicts took keepsakes, symbols, mementos and sold them to gain access to their drug of choice. They were the first things to go to satisfy an immediate craving. The organizing principle of addictive rationale was about getting what you want when you want it and using any means to achieve it.

In healing and recovery, symbols, mementos, and keepsakes reappear for addicts as precious. Recovering addicts covet the chips and medallions that mark length of sobriety. The journey in recovery is long and arduous. The daily grind of doing next right thing is carried out in the common experience of daily living. Addicts know that the challenging tasks of recovery must be relentlessly addressed every day. There are struggles like remaining sober, healing a broken relationship, maintaining good standing at work and addressing past experiences of abuse that claw at the heart and trigger self-sabotage.

Scrapes and strains are realities that must be managed

Noting progress and growth helps to endure the trials and tribulations that are real for every recovering addict. It helps to establish ebb and flow in recovery. The journey is not only an uphill climb. It's important to take time to celebrate victories and establish rituals and symbols that remind you of hard-earned gains. Symbols and mementos are important markers and reminders of who you are and the direction toward healing you have determined to go.

One couple whose trust was eviscerated by alcoholism and infidelity chose to transform the darkest day of disclosure to one of hope through a symbolic ceremony by attending a mass, lighting a candle, renewing their vows, and then taking a walk around a well-lit city pond late at night while holding hands in quiet solitude. They do this each year on the anniversary of the disclosure.

Another addict places a picture of his family on the dashboard of his car to help ground himself when he is driving to and from. He shared that when he is tempted to cruise for a sexual hit, go to a strip club, or visit a massage parlor, the picture helps to bring him back to the center of his values. Another addict put a picture of his daughter as phone wallpaper to help him not seek a sexual hit through his phone. A partner to a sex addict placed the phone number of her sponsor as phone wallpaper to help when she is tempted to monitor her partner's whereabouts. She said the phone number is a symbol reminding her to reach out to manage her fear and anxiety.

I carry a red rock that has "Yes you can" engraved on it, reminding me that I can achieve pursuing my own brilliance and deepen my serenity. I wear a bracelet with a peace sign reminding me that in the presence of pain, I can know deep peace within. A friend gave me a black rock with a bracelet saying that "we have been luckier than most" that reminds me that commitment to friendship is deep and everlasting. These items are symbols and keepsakes that anchor me to my destiny, clarify my recovery journey and remind me of my personal brilliance as I live out the tasks of recovery each day.

- Have you created symbols that represent important meaning to you in your recovery journey?
- Are there keepsakes that serve as reminders of where you have been and point toward where your future lies?
- Are there recovery mementos that you could gather to mark your progress on your journey in recovery?

In your recovery, gather mementos that remind you that you are an unrepeatable miracle of God. Allow the symbols of recovery to remind you that bringing yourself back to your center is the way through every addictive urge.

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Law Allows FDA to Regulate Puff Bar and Other Products Using Synthetic Nicotine

A law that took effect last week allows the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to regulate e-cigarette products that use synthetic nicotine.

The law targets several vaping companies including **Puff Bar**, which switched their formulas to laboratory-manufactured nicotine to avoid oversight by the FDA, according to the Associated Press. Puff Bar, which is sold in flavors such as banana, mango, strawberry and blueberry, has become the most popular e-cigarettes among teenagers, the article notes.

The company, under FDA pressure, announced it was stopping sales in 2020. In February 2021, the company announced it was re-launching its products using synthetic nicotine. Puff Bar's marketing materials said the company's products "do not contain tobacco or anything derived from tobacco."

Under the new law, e-cigarette products using synthetic nicotine will be held to the same public health standards as other tobacco products. E-cigarette companies using synthetic nicotine must register with the FDA and submit their products for review within 30 days.

(Source <https://drugfree.org>)



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Recovery Begins at Home

CBI serves the Veteran community with Wraparound Services that connect Veterans with housing and ongoing care and services. Our ultimate goal is to improve housing and income stability, along with making meaningful connections and engaging in community activities. This sets the path for long-term vibrancy in the community.



Learn more at communitybridgesaz.org
24/7 Access to Care (877) 931-9142



Resources & Helplines

The providers listed are available to assist you. In an emergency dial 911

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
AZ Women's Recovery Center	602-264-6214
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
Copper Springs	480-418-4367
Crisis Help Line – For Any Kind of Crisis	800-233-4357
Crisis Response Network	602-222-9444
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
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
Suicide Prevention Lifeline	800-273-8255
Teen Challenge	888-352-4940
Teen Life Line	800-248-8336

ARIZONA CRISIS HOTLINES

Suicide and Crisis Hotlines by County

- Maricopa County served by Mercy Care:
1-800-631-1314 or 602-222-9444
- Cochise, Graham, Greenlee, La Paz, Pima, Pinal, Santa Cruz and Yuma Counties served by Arizona Complete Health—Complete Care Plan: **1-866-495-6735**
- Apache, Coconino, Gila, Mohave, Navajo and Yavapai Counties served by Health Choice Arizona: **1-877-756-4090**
- Gila River and Ak-Chin Indian Communities:
1-800-259-3449
- Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community:
1-855-331-6432

Dangers of Denial

An inability to accept that you have a problem with substance use will prevent you from getting the help you need. Here's advice for overcoming thoughts and acts of denial

By Patrick McElwaine, Psy.D., LPC for Treatment Magazine
www.treatmentmagazine.com

The hardest part of my addiction was accepting that I had a problem with drugs and alcohol. Denial is the first line of defense for someone struggling with a substance use disorder. It is said that denial is the hallmark of addiction. Denial can be a powerful coping mechanism to delay or distract from the truth.

Many other defense mechanisms are associated with denial, such as rationalization (rationalizing why one uses), blaming (blaming others/situations for their use) and minimization (minimizing the harm that substance use is causing). I have worked with many clients who have used denial and other defenses to distance addiction and much-needed treatment.

If you're struggling with your own recovery or are afraid of starting because you feel like you won't get it, please talk to someone. There is support for you.

Denial is insidious. In my own life, I had numerous situations and events that demonstrated I had a problem with drugs and alcohol, but I was able to come up with multiple reasons why I was OK, in control and could stop whenever I wanted.

Signs of Addiction Denial

With addiction, denial is the refusal to face facts or review the evidence that one has a problem with drugs and/or alcohol. Recognition of other defense mechanisms may help you come to an understanding of problematic substance use, including:

Rationalization, the act of attempting to explain or justify addiction-related behaviors or attitudes with logical reasons, even if it's inappropriate or incorrect. Examples: "I work hard, I deserve a few beers when I get home" or "This helps with my anxiety, helps me sleep."

Minimization, an attempt to make the addiction seem less than it is. Examples: "It's only one DUI, it's no big deal," "My use doesn't hurt anyone, just leave me alone" or "It's not a problem, I can quit whenever I want."

Projection, casting unacceptable behaviors on others. Example: "Why is everyone on my case, I don't drink as bad as Pat."

Humor, failing to get serious about your addiction and enter recovery. Examples: Making jokes while others are trying to have serious discussions about substance use or entering recovery.

How to Counter Addiction Denial

If the hallmark of addiction is denial, the hallmark of recovery is acceptance. I started therapy and 12-step meetings and focused on being honest with myself and others. I was so used to lying that I started to believe the lies; being honest was very hard for me. I couldn't picture my life without drugs and alcohol. I began to take responsibility for my actions from the past and engage in recovery work. I went to therapy and meetings even when I didn't want to. I would listen to loved ones in my life regarding my behavior.

When I started to focus on treatment, recovery and acceptance ... I was less defensive.

When I first entered treatment in 2005, I struggled and would often relapse. My wife sometimes would say, "You look like you need a meeting," and I would respond extremely negatively, either directly to her or to myself. I would say things like, "I'm good," "I'm okay, but thanks" and "I think I'd know when I need a meeting." When I started to focus on treatment, recovery and acceptance in 2009, my wife would state the same thing to me, and I would listen and go to a meeting. I was less defensive. Later, she told me that the shift in attitude I had with her feedback gave her confidence in my recovery.

It's a Leap of Faith

Early in my recovery, I had an overwhelming thought that this would never work for me over the long term. Sure, I had some good days, but they never lasted. During my relapses, I would tell myself that recovery didn't work for me and that I would never get it. I'd think, If people really loved me, they would accept me for being a drug addict alcoholic.

So, if you're struggling with your own recovery or are afraid of starting because you feel like you won't get it, please talk to someone. There is support for you. Please don't give up. I had to learn to trust the recovery process; I kept going despite the negative thoughts. I took the leap of faith, and slowly things started to click in recovery.

(Source: Patrick McElwaine, Psy.D., LPC, is known as "Dr. Mac" to his clients, students and colleagues. He has his own counseling practice, teaches counseling psychology at Holy Family University in Pennsylvania, is a faculty member at the Beck Institute, and serves on the Bucks County National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) board of trustees. His column publishes regularly on TreatmentMagazine.com.



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Arizona Addiction Recovery
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AZ Women's Recovery Center
602-264-6214

Aurora Behavioral Health

877-870-7012

Calvary Healing Center

866-76-SOBER

CBI, Inc. 480-831-7566

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877-931-9142

Cohn Media 866-578-4947

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

Psychological Counseling Services
(PCS) 480-947-5739

Recovery Ways 844-299-5792

Rio Retreat Center 800-244-4949

Scottsdale Recovery Center
888-663-7847

Sierra Tucson 800-842-4487

Sierra at Scottsdale 844-749-1567

Valley Hospital 602-952-3939

Teen Challenge AZ 800-346-7859

RESOURCES

ACT Counseling 602-569-4328

AZ Center for Change 602-253-8488

AZ. Dept. of Health 602-364-2086

AzRHA 602-421-8066

Chandler Valley Hope 480-899-3335

Compass Recovery 800-216-1840

Copper Springs 480-418-4367

Cornerstone Healing 480-653-8618

The Crossroads 602-279-2585

Problem Gaming 800-NEXTSTEP

Desert Drug Dog 602-908-2042

Fit FOUR Recovery 480) 828-7867

Hunkapi Programs 480- 393-0870

Lafrontera -EMPACT 800-273-8255

River Source 480-827-0322

Scottsdale Providence 480-210-5528

TERROS Health 602-685-6000

Therapists/Interventionists/Coaches

Dr. Marlo Archer 480-705-5007

Carey Davidson 928-308-0831

Dr. Dina Evan 602-571-8228

Julian Pickens, EdD 480-491-1554

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ACA aca-arizona.org

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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 Cam-
pus 520-326-6182

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Nicotine Anonymous 520-299-7057

Overeaters Anonymous
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Recovery in Motion 520-975-2141

Sex/Love Addicts Anonymous
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Sex Addicts Anonymous
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Sierra Tucson 800-842-4487

Sonora Behavioral Health
520-829-1012

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Workaholics Anonymous
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