

Second Chances

Axiom Care Marks 13 Years of Healing and Hope

By Natalie Moreno

The Start of Axiom Care

In 2012, Axiom Care began as a nonprofit passion project for Vern Johnson and Duane Mantey. With backgrounds in social work, health care and real estate, they stepped in to help when they saw gaps in the addiction care system. Their mission: recovery and long-term stability. ending addiction through compassion and helping people rebuild their lives. Today, the company that **Axiom Care's Growing** grew from their passion employs more than 150 and serves over 3,000 individuals annually through a full continuum of care designed to heal, empower, addiction and justice-involved populaand uplift.

"Our vision has always been to restore lives and empower people to thrive person." beyond addiction," said Vern Johnson, Founder of Axiom Care.

"We meet clients where they are and walk with them through every step of their recovery."

From day one, Johnson and Mantey were driven homelessness. Their vision has expanded into fullservice behavioral health and housing, offering ev- building on its current Ocotillo Campus in Apache

ery level of care from detox to outpatient treatment to long-term re-entry support. Axiom Care primarily serves financially at-risk and justice-involved individuals, providing a comprehensive pathway to

Mission

"Vern and Duane saw a gap in how tions were being served," said John Wake, CEO of Axiom Care. "They believed in building something that could not only treat addiction but nurture the whole

Wake's connection to Axiom Care's mission is personal. Fifteen years ago, he was battling opioid addiction and cycling in and out of jail. It wasn't until he accepted help that he began to rebuild his life, a journey that eventually led him to Axiom Care.

Axiom Care continues to expand with a new by a mission to support the most vulnerable, parintegrated clinic at 3724 N. 3rd Street in midtown ticularly those facing addiction, incarceration, and Phoenix opened this spring, as well as two new residential treatment centers, a new three-story 60-bed



Axiom Co-Founder Duane Mantey, Ashley Oddo, Deputy Director, Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation, and Reentry, Vern Johnson, Axiom Co-Founder. Submitted photo

Junction and a three-story 90-bed facility owned by the Navajo Nation and operated in partnership with the Navajo Department of Health, both opening in early fall.

Healing through Creativity: Axiom Community of Recovery Nonprofit

Axiom Care has stayed true to their mission of transformation, with a strong focus on second chances for those who've been incarcerated or justice system involved.

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Three Roadblocks to Recovery and One Intervention

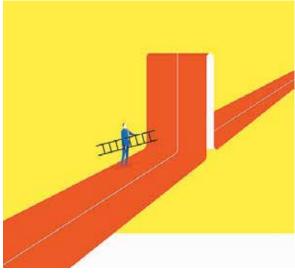
By Douglas Withrow MDiv, LMFT, MSC, S-PSB, CSAT

Sobriety and recovery require a great deal of self awareness. The process of knowing self is key When we lack self awareness it is difficult to live with intention and know when and how to intervene. Initially, it is important to identify behaviors that block us from healthy living.

Defensiveness, isolation, and impatience are three common roadblocks to recovery.

Defensiveness

Defensiveness is a familiar response early in recovery. It is an attempt to hide shame, to convince others (and ourselves) that "I am not a bad person." Defensiveness is an attempt to distract the people who have been harmed from our offenses and shift the focus to them or minimize the behavior related to addiction. We defend because sitting with pain we have caused can be overwhelming.



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- Resources and Helplines



Publisher's Note

By Barbara Nicholson-Brown

Recovery = Honesty

Honesty — it's the absolute essential ingredient to maintaining my sobriety. When I was using, lying was second nature, even though I was never particularly good at it. As a kid, my parents could always tell when I wasn't being honest by my averted gaze, flushed cheeks, shaky voice, and a stare fixed on the floor were dead giveaways.

This pattern of deception continued into my rebellious teenage years and throughout my active addiction. Most of my lies revolved around my drinking, which only intensified my feelings of shame and guilt.

The consequences of my dishonesty and addiction were severe, and frankly, I'm incredibly fortunate to have survived. It's truly by the grace of God that I'm here today.

Despite the number of days or years I accumulate in sobriety, I'm never immune to relapse. That healthy fear is a powerful motivator; this disease is, after all, deadly. My sobriety is the most important thing in my life, and I'm committed to protecting it through ongoing honesty.

Welcome, Axiom Care!

Together AZ is excited to partner with Axiom Care! We admire your mission to provide compassionate and effective addiction treatment, a vision that's both inspiring and vital for our community.

As always I extend a very special thank you to our supporters and contributors. We remain committed to our mission of providing our community—YOU—with the most trusted resources. We hope to be an ongoing inspiration on your recovery journey.

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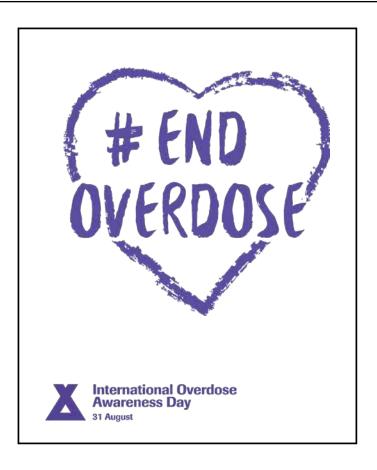
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A New Place to Heal:

Scottsdale Eating Disorder Program Built Just for Teens

By Amelia Smith

A family gathers around a table—not just for dinner, but for healing. Parents, teens, nutritionists, and counselors sit side-by-side learning to navigate be happy to be in," Zimmerman said, recovery together. This is a Tuesday night at Meadows Behavioral Healthcare in Scottsdale, where a new Adolescent Eating Disorder Program opened its doors, with no fanfare, at the end of May.

The Need for Disordered Eating Programs

The program didn't emerge from a formal plan. It was built in response to a growing need, as research published by the American Medical Association shows that 22% of children and adolescents worldwide experience disordered eating.

"Let's try to be courageous and try new things. We'll see what works and maybe go outside our comfort zone," said Ryan Zimmerman, Director of Adolescent Outpatient Services. That philosophy applies as much to his clinical team as to the teens they serve.

"I think more like an artist, so a set manual is not the way I would go," he said.

Zimmerman has worked at Meadows for nearly a decade, specializing in young adults with substance use, trauma, anxiety, depression, and co-occurring disorders. Before that, though, his life looked very different. "My first career was tour musician, frontman of a hardcore band," said Zimmerman. "The kind of Warped Tour scene, you know?"

Now, his creative spirit lives through his approach to adolescent care—and in his aesthetic. Concert tees, Converse, and tattooed arms match the laidback energy of the clinic itself.

"If you show up someplace and it feels gross, or it feels cold or sterile, no one wants to be there, kid or not," he said.

Teens Find Comfort and Connection

Rather, Meadows' adolescent wing is designed for comfort and connection: a mindfulness room softly lit and scattered with beanbags, an art studio stocked with supplies, a brain center where galaxies swirl across the ceiling. It's a place where adolescents can feel at ease as they work toward healing.

"It feels like a place my kid would echoing the comments he often hears from parents touring the space.

At its core, the program follows a stepped-care approach to help teens gradually build confidence and community. Patients begin in the Partial Hospitalization Program (PHP), spending their days in small, skills-based groups with individualized attention. As they gain confidence, they transition into the larger Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) in the evenings to practice and connect with a broader peer group.



Zimmerman has worked at Meadows for nearly a decade, specializing in young

Continuity of care

What makes the program particularly distinctive is its seamless continuity of care. Because it operates within an established Meadows facility, teens stay with the same clinical team across both PHP and IOP, avoiding the disruption of new staff or environments. That consistency is especially valuable for adolescents in maintaining trust and rapport.

Another hallmark of the program is its trauma-informed foundation, shared Dietitian and Life Coach Brittany Gill. At Meadows, disordered eating isn't viewed in isolation—it's understood as a coping mechanism linked to deeper struggles.

"There's a reason why we're acting out in these areas," said Zimmerman. "Whether it's OCD, substance use, trauma, those are going to be addressed."

The team is also focused on incorporating more hands-on learning experiences to help adolescents build skills they can carry beyond treatment, Gill added.

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What was the A-HA moment that led to the creation of I AM Teen Strong?

In 2017, I found myself at a professional crossroads. Not really sure which direction to take, I entrenched myself in attending community meetings sponsored by the Mesa Chamber of Commerce, all to address the rapidly increasing teen suicide rate in Mesa and Queen Creek. Many of the conversations centered around education and resources. As I researched, it became apparent that there was not a centralized source truly dedicated to teens. A safe space that allowed teens to reach out and connect with the services and resources they desperately needed.

I saw this as my moment to help fill a need in our community, create a website specifically geared to the needs of teen mental, emotional, and physical health. In June 2018, we launched the **I am Teen Strong** website, which features over 120 Arizona resources. The website features articles that discuss topics such as creating healthy boundaries, cultivating a positive body image, practicing self-care, and developing effective communication skills.

In our rapidly evolving world, what are the most significant challenges facing teenagers that I AM Teen Strong specifically aims to address?

Today's teens are facing significant challenges, much more so than my generation. In a word, RESILIENCE. I think that regardless of the challenge a teen faces, I see our role to be a tool, a tool to build resiliency and make better (informed) decisions, in whatever situation they are facing.

If we can help a teen become more confident, practice self-care and mindfulness, and feel heard and valued for who they are, we are preparing them for life's challenges.

Do you think constant engagement with social media platforms contributes to mental health challenges among youth?

Most definitely!

I am currently reading the book *Over the Influence: Why Social Media is Toxic for Women and Girls ~ and How We Can Take It Back*, written by Kara Alaimo. This book sadly underscores the negative impact social platforms have on women and girls in all aspects of their lives, mental and physical! Content that is purposely designed to hold girls back and target their vulnerability is the norm.



Unfortunately, boys are also negatively impacted by constant social media engagement in much of the same ways as girls...increased anxiety and depression, low self-esteem and body image, feelings of isolation, etc.

We strive to be the alternative to the negative experience.

In the face of challenges: peer pressure, body image, and increasing rates of depression and anxiety, how can we best empower young people to build resilience and truly believe in their own worth?

As a parent, loved one, or mentor, there are many things we can do to promote and build resilient youth.

- Create safe spaces—at home, school, and in communities where youth feel seen, heard, and valued
- Create and engage in one-on-one time
- Prioritize meaningful relationships over performance or popularity
- Help teens manage emotions through expressive tools (journaling, art, music, poetry, cooking, photography)
- Normalize talking about mental health as part of overall wellness, not a weakness
- Reinforce body neutrality and self-worth beyond looks—highlight what
 their bodies can do (create, move, connect, care). We talk a lot about this
 on the I am Teen Strong website.
- Support them in finding purpose through passions, service, creativity, or activism
- Reframe failure as feedback and challenge as growth
- Introduce practical coping tools: mindfulness, breathing techniques, time in nature, healthy boundaries, and the practice of gratitude.

Resilience grows through connection, practice, and empowerment, not perfection. Teens thrive when they know they're not alone, their voice matters, and they have tools to navigate life's ups and downs.

Is the focus of I AM Teen Strong exclusively on resources for young women, or does it cater to a broader audience of teenagers?

As a woman, I wanted to be able to come from a personal perspective; therefore, our emphasis is on teen girls. However, much of our material applies to teens in general. For an organization, facility, or program to be included in

our directory, it must support teen girls ages 12 – 18 years; nevertheless, if they support teen boys, that's great!

In our directory there are multiple national helplines that support all ages and genders, such as the 988 suicide crisis hotline.

How can the community support the mission?

As a small nonprofit, we are always looking for community partners to help us spread the word and increase our outreach. Become a financial partner as a **I am Teen Strong Friend**.

Join our Event

On August 23rd, we are having a Paint, Paper & Purpose fundraiser. Check out our Events page for details. https://iamteenstrong.org/paint-paper-purpose/

Sherry Eklund is the Founder/Executive Director of I am Teen Strong, a local nonprofit supporting the health & wellness of teen girls. You may reach Sherry at seklund@iamteenstrong.org or www.IamTeenStrong.org







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It's August!

Back to School and Family Fun Month!

By Amy Tilley, PsyD

Where is summer going? I blinked and it is almost over. Of course, in Arizona, it will feel like summer until about October, but who is counting?

Summertime brings a break from structure and routine and can allow for more time with family and friends. Children may get to sleep in longer, experience day camps, and give parents a bit of a break from the hustle and bustle of the Monday-Friday school routine.

Did you get to take a road trip and enjoy some extra time making memories with your family? Enjoy evenings in the backyard or pool time with friends? If you are still trying to hang on to the last bit of summer, August is a perfect month to focus on family time and getting back into the school routine — it is Back to School and Family Fun Month.

Back to School: This month is designated for this national holiday to recognize the importance of education and helps families prepare to get back into a routine. It promotes mental health and wellness, and stresses the importance of the structure academics provide for children across the country. While the school year start dates vary, this month is a good reminder for parents to re-establish goals for the new school year, a set time for homework, dinner, and bedtime routine. Did your children stay up late during the summer? Take a week or 10 days before school starts and establish the bedtime / wake up schedule you want during the school year. This will reset your children's biological clock and get them ready for that early wakeup call on the first day of school.

Setting up a family calendar: A great way to see what the work/school week looks like for the entire family. Who has practice after school? Who will drop off/pick up the children when they are done with band/track/soccer/ football, or the myriads of other activities they may be involved in.

Most major box stores have great deals on school supplies and clothing. Make sure to check your children's school supply list so they are ready for day one! Many schools have 'meet the teacher nights', where you can take a tour of the school and drop off the supplies early, easing your load and lessening the chaos on that first day of school.

This is a good opportunity to speak with your child's teacher about any concerns or special needs that may need to be addressed during the school year. If your child has an IEP or a mental health concern that needs to be addressed, don't wait to schedule those appointments for them. It can be



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"Host a dinner party or have a movie night in your own backyard. "

challenging to navigate academics, social groups, and personal growth for young children and teenagers, and support for them is vital as they begin a new school year. Utilize the school counselor or reach out to a therapist to schedule an appointment for your child. Check out NAMI for additional resources (www.nami.org/kids-teens-and-young-adults/school-resources/ back-to-school-resources/)

Family Fun Month: Another fun holiday this month celebrates the importance of quality time as a family. It serves as a reminder to make time for your loved ones before the school year kicks off. Summertime can be full of experiences and memories with family and friends, vacations, camping, and late nights making smores in the backyard, but there is something special about taking a day with your children and creating more memories.

Here is a list of activities to foster quality time and make lasting memories:

- Be a tourist in your own town. Visit a local museum or botanic garden.
- Have a movie night in your backyard. Bring out the popcorn, lemonade, and sleeping bags and enjoy the outdoors.
- Have a dinner party. This is a great opportunity for the entire family to get involved in the cooking process and it teaches children a valuable life skill!

The important thing to remember about spending time together is the intentionality behind the activities. Put away the phones, the tablets, turn off the TV...and enjoy the time together. Relationships are vital for all of us, and everyone will remember the fun time you had together creating memories and strengthening your connections.

Amy Tilley, PsyD. has 20 years in the mental health and addiction recovery field. Her clinical interests include working with young adults and adults diagnosed with co-occurring conditions. Desert Star Addiction Recovery Center.

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info@reviverecoveryaz.com

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The organization doesn't just offer clinical care it also helps people rediscover their purpose and rebuild their lives. Axiom Care's nonprofit partner, Axiom Community of Recovery (ACR), offers programs that help with healing through creativity, meditation, self-care, and workforce development.



Art Of Our Soul has become a powerful outlet for those navigating early recovery and reintegration.

ACR recently partnered with **Art of Our Soul,** a creative healing program founded by Emmy Award winning journalist and artist Brandon Lee. This Art Of Our Soul location is the first studio partnership with a re-entry program, using guided art therapy to help participants process trauma, access their emotions, and tell their stories.

The program gives people a voice. Through art, they can express pain, joy, growth in a space for healing and reconnecting with who they are beyond their past. Art Of Our Soul has become a powerful outlet for those navigating early recovery and reintegration. By blending creativity with therapy, it creates emotional breakthroughs and a lasting impact for an often overlooked population.

ACR plans to expand their services through yoga classes and workforce development. Yoga classes will be offered to individuals for meditation and self-care to help center them and focus on healing techniques. The workforce development program will include computer training, resume building, interview preparation and connections with prospective employers.

Axiom Care's Services

Axiom Care's growth reflects a deep commitment to treating the whole person, not just their clinical needs, but their emotional, social, and spiritual well-being. Services span the entire continuum of care, including inpatient and outpatient treatment, medication-assisted therapy, supportive housing, and aftercare programs. But at the heart of it all is a core belief: **everyone deserves a second chance.**

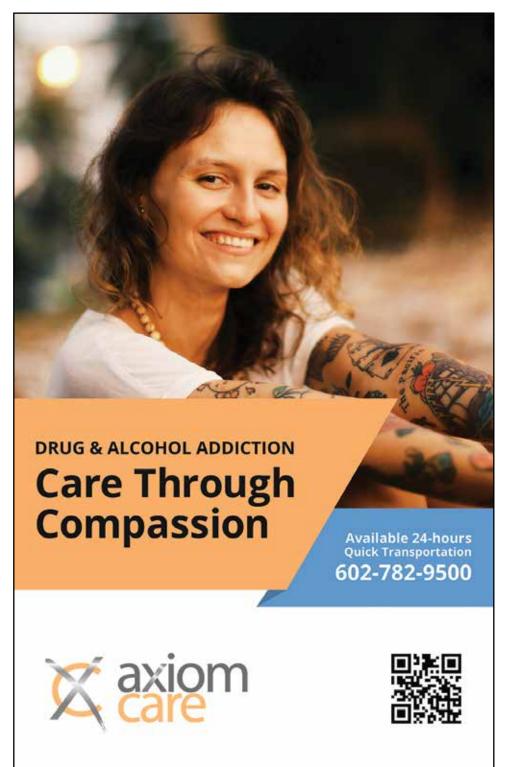
Axiom Care operates the following AZDHS licensed facilities:

- A 24-bed residential substance use treatment center in Phoenix
- A 24-bed inpatient detox facility and 24-chair observation unit in Apache Junction
- A 110-bed housing and outpatient center in Phoenix, supporting the Residential Community Behavior Modification Program (RCBM) in partnership with the Arizona Department of Corrections Rehabilitation and Reentry (ADCRR)
- An ADCRR Set for Success program launched in 2022 to help behavioral health clients successfully reintegrate into the community
- A new integrated clinic in Phoenix, opened in Spring 2025
- A new 90-bed residential substance use treatment center owned by the Navajo Nation and operated in partnership with the Navajo Department of Health, opening in late summer 2025
- A new 60-bed residential substance use treatment center in Apache Junction, opening in early fall 2025

"Our team is deeply committed to restoring dignity and offering hope," said John Wake, CEO of Axiom Care. "As we expand our services and facilities, our focus remains on removing barriers and helping individuals reclaim their lives."

With an expanding network and a growing reputation for innovation in recovery care, Axiom Care continues to build a future where every Arizonan has access to life-changing behavioral health services regardless of their past.

Axiom Care is accredited by the Joint Commission and licensed with all AHCCCS insurers. **To learn more, visit www.axiomcareofaz.com**



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"Our nutritional philosophy is very individualized," she said, "which honors unique needs, and balances structure with flexibility."

Sometimes that flexibility means serving familiar comfort foods; other times, it's reintroducing a childhood-favorite cereal that's become a source of fear.

Yet for Zimmerman, the true strength of the program isn't its methods or its spaces—it's the people.

"When I first was offered the position to open this up, I was like, 'I hope there's people that actually want to work with adolescents.' And that has never been a problem," he said.

Zimmerman describes his team as one that genuinely enjoys working with teens. "I'll hear laughter in the hallway all the time," he said.



And when therapy dog Oakley comes trotting through—Zimmerman's own family pet turned unofficial team member—that community feeling only grows.

"I'm so proud of this team," Zimmerman said, "and I'm excited to see where we go as we keep growing."

For more information visit www.themeadows.com or call 866-683-1597

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Isolation

Isolation occurs when we do not want to be seen, usually because we are sinking in shame and fear facing the people we have hurt. There can be an element of, "I can do this on my own. No one has to know." The problem is that no one does life well alone, even in the best of circumstances. We are social beings and need connection. Also, isolation is breeding ground for secrets, and secrets fuel addiction.

Impatience

Impatience is another pitfall for those in recovery. We look for a quick fix – "Just tell me what to do." Or, we become exasperated when slips occur, which can, but don't have to be common, leading to "this will never work" mentality. Impatience can also be directed at the people who have been hurt – "When will you get over this?" Again, shame drives this because it is difficult sitting with our shadow parts (addiction), when, for many people, they have spent a lifetime avoiding difficult emotions.

"When we have humility we become patient.
We embrace the belief "I am a growing and developing person," and that takes a lifetime."

What intervention addresses these three roadblocks to recovery? Humility.

Humility is a skill that allows us to learn new tools and new ways of being. It says, "I don't know, but I am willing to learn." When we sit in humility we do not need to defend. We can sit with those we have hurt and be curious about their pain and their experience. We allow space for empathy which leads to healing.

When we sit with humility, we no longer need to isolate. We can be seen and learn that we are more than the addictive behavior. We can ask for help, and embrace a beginners mindset. "I don't have the answers, and no one has all the answers." We do life best together.

When we have humility we become patient. We embrace the belief "I am a growing and developing person," and that takes a lifetime — and, the people we've hurt, they are growing also. When I give others space and time to grow it also brings healing.





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Being humble recognizes our humanity— our shared humanity. It allows us to move towards acceptance of ourselves and others, working in community, and patience as we grow moment by moment, year by year. Work to stay humble in recovery it will pay a lifetime of dividends, long past the initial stages of sobriety.

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Wear Purple.

How tribal support programs help Indigenous communities overcome mental health disparities

By Lee Yaiva, CEO Scottsdale Recovery Center



Many people don't realize just how often untreated mental health issues lead to substance use, especially in communities hit hardest by poverty and systemic barriers.

July was National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month, and served as a reminder that mental health isn't one-size-fits-all. That's why programs like Reztoration Health and Healing, the Scottsdale Recovery Center's Tribal Healing Initiative, are so important. They're working to

meet people where they are, with support that's not just effective but culturally conscious.

A Wake Up Call

Liver disease has quietly become a crisis in Indian Country. Native Americans are four times more likely to die from it than non-Hispanic white people and for Indigenous men between the ages of 35 and 44, it's the second leading cause of death. That's not just a statistic, it's a wake-up call. The connection between substance use and long-term health damage like liver disease is real, and it's hitting Native communities especially hard.

What makes matters worse is access. Many people living on rural reservations don't have vehicles, and the nearest Indian Health Service clinic can be miles away. When your health depends on a ride that might not come, early intervention becomes nearly impossible. It's a harsh reality, and it's one reason why culturally grounded, accessible recovery programs are so urgently needed.

We understand the unique challenges Indigenous communities face, from limited access to transportation and housing to spiritual disconnection and historical trauma. We are mindful of how factors such as environment, opportunity and tradition shape someone's ability to heal. That's why culturally specific programming includes things like talking and healing circles, labyrinth walking, guided meditation and sweat lodge ceremonies.

It's all about treating the whole person mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually, and creating a path to recovery that's rooted in culture, identity and community.

A key component of the tribal program is peer support services, where individuals in recovery are guided by fellow tribal members who've walked a similar path. These peer supporters use their own lived experiences to build trust, offer mentorship and strengthen the recovery community from within.

Scottsdale Recovery Center has secured funding to provide long-term care options, including supportive and transitional housing. This crucial resource ensures a stable foundation to sustain sobriety well beyond treatment, supporting lasting recovery and resilience.

I know the struggle firsthand. I overcame my own battle with alcoholism and addiction over a decade ago and today, I am the CEO of a recovery center that offers culturally informed inpatient programs specifically for tribal members.

While the Affordable Care Act requires insurance to cover addiction treatment, that doesn't mean all the costs are covered. Many Native Americans still struggle to afford sober housing and other essential care to stay on track. It's part of a larger issue, one in four Indigenous Americans lives in poverty, the highest rate of any racial group, according to census data.

Maintaining mental well-being is crucial for individuals in recovery from addiction to drugs and alcohol. By focusing on self-care, seeking support and using healthy coping strategies, these strategies can nurture one's mental health and improve overall quality of life.

"A key component of the tribal program is peer support services, where individuals in recovery are guided by fellow tribal members who've walked a similar path."

Therapy and counseling such as cognitive-behavioral therapy and dialectical behavior therapy provide essential support, helping individuals address underlying issues and develop healthier thought patterns.

Mindfulness and meditation promote relaxation, stress reduction and emotional regulation through techniques like deep breathing and guided meditation, which aid in managing cravings and triggers. Regular exercise benefits both physical and mental health, releasing endorphins and reducing stress, anxiety and depression.

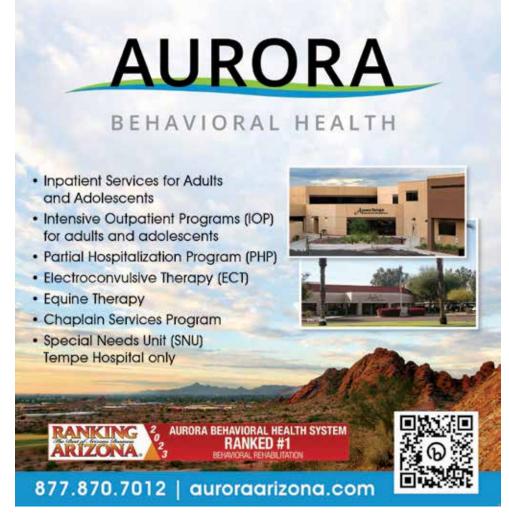
Building a supportive network of friends, family, peers and professionals is also key, fostering connections that offer encouragement and accountability. Practicing self-care through activities like reading, spending time in nature or pursuing hobbies can recharge the mind and body.

Finally, setting boundaries and managing stress with time management and assertive communication helps protect well-being and build resilience throughout the recovery journey.

Together, we can break the stigma surrounding mental illness, promote awareness and support each other on the path to healing and wholeness.

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Learn more at www.scottsdalerecovery.com For immediate help call 602-346-9142



The Power of Sound Healing

By Alexandra & Jacob Daffner

If you've ever felt goosebumps during your favorite song or a sense of calm from the sound of ocean waves, you've already experienced sound healing in action. Our bodies know what vibrations soothe us, energize us, and ground us. In a world that often feels noisy and overstimulating, sound healing offers a return to stillness.

Sound healing is an ancient practice that's been used in cultures all over the world—from Indigenous drumming to Tibetan singing bowls.



Submitted photo

Today, it's gaining momentum in modern wellness spaces, and for good reason. At its core, sound healing uses frequency, rhythm, and vibration to promote relaxation and restore balance to the nervous system.

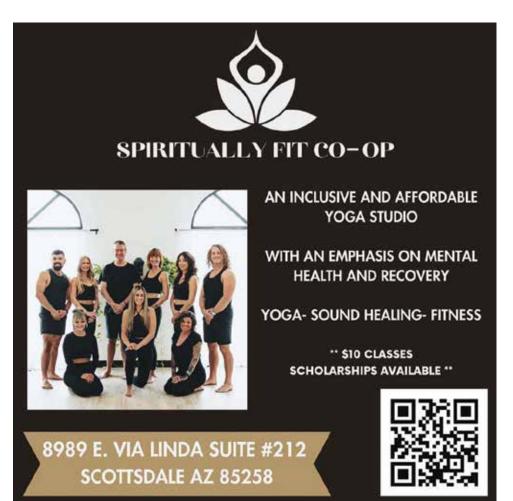
Scientifically, we know that sound can slow our brainwaves, lower heart rate, reduce cortisol (the stress hormone), and activate the parasympathetic nervous system—our "rest and digest" state. But what really makes this practice special is how it can support emotional healing. It bypasses the thinking mind and meets us in the felt sense of the body. It is a vibrational meditation which is exceedingly helpful for those who struggle to quiet their minds. The sound bowls offer something else to focus on instead. We dial up the sound of the bowls to dial down the volume of our thoughts.

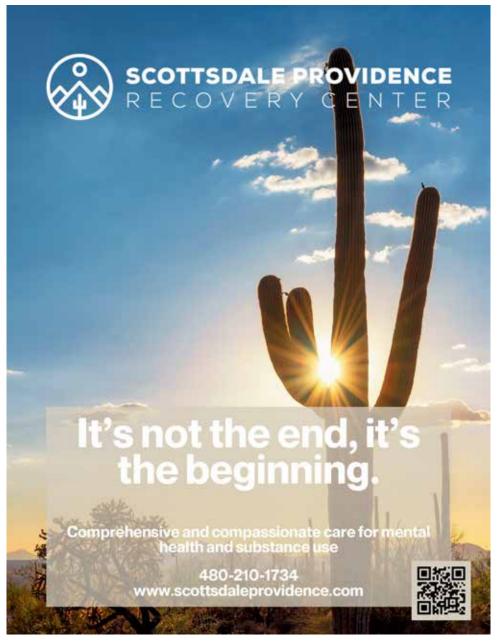
At Spiritually Fit, we integrate sound healing into many of our offerings—from restorative yoga classes with live instruments to immersive sound bath workshops where you simply lie down and receive. These aren't just trendy add-ons. They're tools for transformation, especially for those in recovery navigating high stress, trauma, or big life transitions.

One of our favorite things about sound healing is how inclusive it is. You don't have to be flexible. You don't have to "do it right." You don't even have to talk. You just show up. You get to rest. And in that rest, something powerful begins to shift.

So if you've been feeling overwhelmed, disconnected, or simply in need of some deep rest, let sound hold you for a while. It might just be the reset you didn't know you needed!

For class details and events visit https://spirituallyfitco-op.com/ Call (602)-809-0854





"Whatever the present moment contains, accept it as if you had chosen it."

— Eckhart Tolle

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What Goes Up Must Come Down A Way of Thinking About Trauma Dysregulation

By Sharon Youngblood Trauma-Informed Coach & Somatic Practitioner

Sir Isaac Newton taught us that what goes up must come down—a fundamental principle of gravity. In a similar way, trauma builds energy in the body that must eventually come down, be released, or discharged. Yet, for many people, it doesn't. It gets stuck. And that's where dysregulation begins.

We live in a trauma-saturated world. Just turn on the evening news and you'll see violence, disaster, and suffering. It's overwhelming. For some, like during the Vietnam War era—or even now—simply watching the news can be traumatic. Trauma isn't just something that happens on battlefields or in hospital emergency rooms. It's in our homes, our workplaces, and our everyday lives.

What's still sometimes misunderstood, is how trauma affects the body—and how healing must involve the body as well as the mind. While Western culture has often focused on trauma through a psychological lens, there's a growing understanding that unresolved trauma lives in the nervous system. And for healing to occur, the body must be part of the conversation.



On a morning walk through the Arizona desert, it's common to spot a jackrabbit darting away from danger—whether it's a barking dog or a nearby coyote. When the rabbit finds safety, it freezes, motionless. It waits. And then, something fascinating happens: it trembles. Its body shakes out the tension, its ears flick, and then it hops off as though nothing happened. The rabbit completes the stress cycle. The danger has come and gone, and the energy it generated has discharged. Humans, however, don't typically do this.

Although we share the same ancient biological wiring—the autonomic nervous system and vagus nerve responses of fight, flight, or freeze—we don't usually complete the cycle. We may freeze in the face of trauma, but we rarely shake, move, or release the energy. Instead, we override our body's instincts with our rational mind.

This disconnect may have started with the influential philosopher René Descartes, who famously declared, "I think, therefore I am." That statement ushered in centuries of emphasis on thought over feeling—mind over body. In many ways, modern culture still lives in that duality.

Unlike animals, who instinctively discharge stress and move on, humans tend to store it. We talk about the trauma. We think about it. We go over

Istock credit: Kubkoo

it again and again. But the body, still holding the original activation, is left out of the healing process. And in many cases, the trauma worsens—not because of what happened, but because the body was never allowed to complete its natural resolution.

This article invites you to consider that trauma dysregulation is not just a psychological or emotional experience—it's a physiological one. Chronic trauma often arises because the energy that was activated never came down. It was never released. It stayed trapped in the body, creating patterns of hypervigilance, shutdown, anxiety, and emotional pain.

As trauma researcher and somatic pioneer Dr. Peter Levine explains in his book *Waking the Tiger*:

"In humans, trauma occurs as a result of an initiation of a physiological cycle that is not allowed to finish." (p. 155)

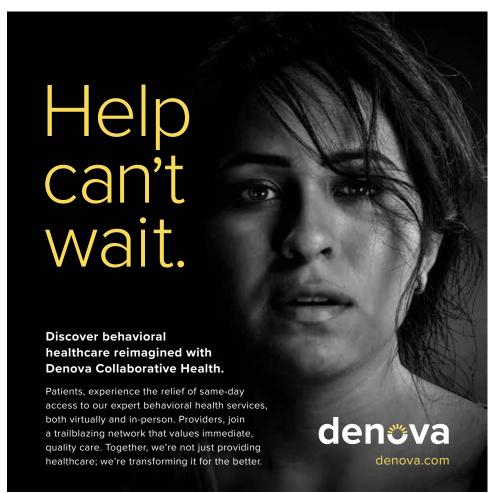
In other words, trauma isn't always about the event itself—it's about what didn't happen afterward.

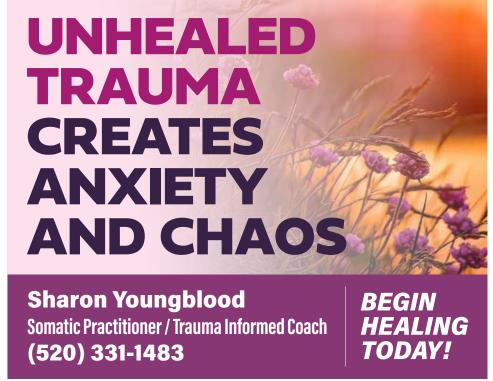
Across the world, many cultures have embodied ways of releasing trauma—through movement, ritual, breath, sound, or spiritual practices. In Western societies, we've largely lost these traditions. But they're making a comeback. More therapists, coaches, and healers are recognizing the importance of somatic (body-based) approaches to trauma healing. The vagus nerve, in particular, has become a focal point of research and intervention because of its key role in regulating our body's stress response.

This growing awareness is powerful. We're beginning to understand that what goes up—the surge of adrenaline, the freeze of fear, the tension of survival—must also come down. If we allow the body to complete its natural arc, we give ourselves a chance to heal.

You don't have to live trapped in a cycle of re-experiencing or emotional overwhelm. Healing is possible—not just by talking, but by tuning in. Your body holds the key.

Sharon Youngblood is a Trauma Informed Coach and Somatic Practitioner. Her practice is focused on teenagers, young adults, adults, seniors, and LBGTQ persons to reduce and resolve anxiety, life chaos and trauma. Reach Sharon at sharonyoungblood7@gmail.com or 520-331-1483.





A Breathalyzer for Your Brain?

By Dr. Marlo Archer

How can you determine if someone is using substances?

The easiest way would be to choose a safe time when they are not obviously under the influence and just ask them. Anyone who admits to using drugs or alcohol can probably be believed — as it is rarely in someone's best interest to admit such a thing. What can you do if someone you generally trust denies use, but you want to know for sure? There are a variety of tests available that can scientifically measure a sample of something like urine, blood, saliva, hair, sweat, or fingernails. These tests can be sent to a lab for analysis, conducted in-office by a health professional or at home with kits anyone can buy at neighborhood drugstores, big box retailers or online.

Getting Cooperation

The main issue with drug testing can be getting the cooperation of the test-taker. Probation officers possibly have the strongest methods to gain compliance — either come in and take your drug test, or your probation may get revoked and you'll go back to jail.

Parents have some muscle to pressure a minor (or adult) child to produce a sample by the withholding of some privilege until a test is conducted. Some have made regular drug-testing a condition of continuing to get a driver's license, use the family car, socialize with friends, or even to live in the house past the age of 18.

Employers have a little leverage to require pre-hire, post-accident, or possibly even random drug tests for certain kinds of jobs, but unless carefully monitored, some of these can be circumvented by clever addicts invested in continued use and continued employment. You may not be able to force a roommate to take a drug test, but any roommate that is unacceptable can eventually be kicked out, or moved away from, sometimes without having to face any sort of confrontation. Having the least ability to influence each other to drug test might be people in domestic partnerships like marriage.

When you suspect your spouse is using, you can just go ahead and ask. If they admit to substance use, it would be prudent to believe them and act accordingly. However, once you ask, a variety of responses may ensue that eventually have you doubting yourself and regretting having asked. Your partner may express being deeply hurt by your lack of trust. They may become sullen, withdraw, or cry. Alternatively, they could express extreme anger about the accusation. They could yell, scream, curse, throw something, punch a wall, threaten violence, leave temporarily, or end the relationship.

Using humor as a response

The person might indicate, with laughter, they cannot even believe you would think such a thing. If they don't take it seriously, they might dismiss the request or just ignore it as if it never even happened.

They might respond with calm, polite diffusion of the situation, that doesn't ever actually result in them taking a test



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They could become more attentive and express their caring. They might use gentle physical touch, reassuring words, reminders of lots of good times, and statements about how much better things have been. They might accept blame for bad behaviors without admitting using substances. They can apologetically mention how tired they've been or how stressful it's been at work, and agree they have been intolerable lately and their partner doesn't deserve that. They may make promises to amend the behavior and embark upon that immediately by doing something useful around the house to distract from the request made to test them for substances.

What's to do in this really confusing situation?

If a partner won't submit to a drug test, then go get "tested" yourself. Obviously, I don't mean you should produce a urine sample and submit it to a lab, but I do suggest that you produce a sample of your thinking and submit it to some sort of independent analysis like a long-term, loving friend or family member, a psychotherapist, members of an Al-Anon or CODA group, heck, even ask Chat GPT!

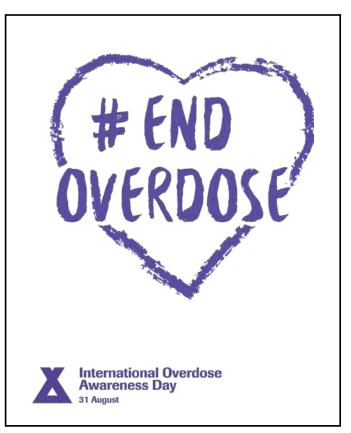
Eventually, all of these sources will bring you around to the same conclusion. Someone who is not using substances has no real reason to deny their partner's sincere request to take a drug test and further investigate why their partner is even thinking such a thing. Either there has been something very wrong with the behavior of the accused, there is something going wrong in the relationship, or there is something wrong with the accusing partner.

In any case, refusing or ignoring the request is never an appropriate complete and final response in a mature, intimate, committed relationship worth continuing.

Dr. Marlo Archer is a fellow of the American Society of Group Psychotherapy & Psychodrama and a Certified Supervisor with the International Deliberate Practice Society, actively engaged in training the next generation of experiential healers.







Dual Diagnosis:

When Mental Health and Addiction Collide

nderstanding the complex relationship between mental health and substance use is essential, particularly when these issues occur simultaneously. This situation, often referred to as "dual diagnosis," presents unique challenges and requires a comprehensive approach for effective treatment.

What is Dual Diagnosis?

Dual diagnosis, also known as co-occurring disorders, refers to the presence of both a mental health disorder and a substance use disorder in an individual. This means that someone is dealing with two different problems at the same time, which can complicate treatment and recovery efforts. For example, an individual may have depression and an addiction to alcohol, or anxiety coupled with opioid misuse.

Dual Diagnosis examples include:

- Depression and alcoholism
- Anxiety disorders and prescription drug addiction
- Bipolar disorder and cocaine addiction
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and opioid misuse

Understanding these combinations is crucial because each disorder can intensify the symptoms of the other, making it harder for individuals to manage their lives and recover.

The Importance of Dual Diagnosis Treatment

Treating dual diagnosis effectively requires addressing both the mental health disorder and the substance use disorder simultaneously. Failure to do so can result in an incomplete recovery, as untreated mental health issues can trigger relapse into substance abuse, and vice versa.

Integrated treatment approach

An integrated treatment approach is the most effective strategy for dealing with dual diagnosis. This means that both disorders are treated concurrently, often by the same healthcare team or through closely coordinated efforts between mental health professionals and addiction specialists. The goal is to provide comprehensive care that addresses all aspects of the individual's health and wellbeing.

Benefits of integrated treatment

- **Holistic Care:** By treating both disorders simultaneously, healthcare providers can offer a more holistic approach, helping to treat all aspects of the individual's health.
- Reduced Relapse Rates: Addressing both issues at once can reduce the likelihood of relapse, as the root causes of each disorder are being managed.
- Improved Mental Health Outcomes: Individuals often experience better mental health outcomes when both disorders are treated together.

How to Support a Loved One with Dual Diagnosis

Supporting a loved one with a dual diagnosis can be challenging, but your role is crucial to their recovery journey. Some practical steps to take are:

Educate yourself

Start by learning as much as you can about dual diagnosis, mental health disorders and substance use. Understanding what your loved one is going through can help you provide more empathetic and effective support.

Encourage professional help

Encourage your loved one to seek professional help. This may include finding a therapist, psychiatrist or a specialized dual diagnosis treatment program. Treatment is more effective when it is willingly accepted, so support them in taking this critical step.

Communicate openly and honestly

Maintain open and honest communication with your loved one. Let them know you are there for them and willing to listen without judgment. Honest conversations can help build trust and encourage them to open up about their struggles.

Set boundaries

While it's important to be supportive, it's also crucial to set healthy boundaries. This means being clear about what you can and cannot do and ensuring that you take care of your own mental health while supporting your loved one.

Be patient

Recovery is a journey, and it often involves setbacks. Be patient and understanding, and encourage your loved one to keep moving forward, even when things get tough.



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Seeking Help: Resources and Treatment Options

Finding the right resources and treatment options is vital for someone with a dual diagnosis. Here are some options to consider:

Therapy and counseling

Individual therapy, group therapy and family therapy can all be beneficial for individuals with dual diagnosis. Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) is particularly effective in helping individuals develop coping strategies for both mental health and substance use disorders.

Medication

In some cases, medication may be prescribed to manage symptoms of mental health disorders. It's essential that these medications are carefully monitored by a healthcare professional, especially when combined with substances that the individual may be using.

Support groups

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) or Narcotics Anonymous (NA), can provide a sense of community and shared experience, which is invaluable during recovery. There are groups specifically for individuals with dual diagnosis, such as Dual Recovery Anonymous.

Dual diagnosis treatment centers

Specialized treatment centers that focus on dual diagnosis offer comprehensive care tailored to the unique needs of individuals dealing with cooccurring disorders. These centers provide integrated treatment plans that address both mental health and substance use issues.

Dual diagnosis presents a complex challenge, but with the right treatment and support, recovery is entirely possible. By understanding what dual diagnosis is, recognizing its examples and knowing how to support a loved one, you can play a vital role in helping someone navigate their recovery journey. Remember, seeking professional help and utilizing available resources are key steps in overcoming the challenges of dual diagnosis.

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Song Realization Falling in Love as a Glimpse of Higher Consciousness

Love songs from Broadway and Hollywood musicals speak of the intoxicating freshness of falling in love in language that transports its characters to glimpses of a higher life. In certain exalted states of consciousness, the world glows with light.

Tony and Maria in West Side Story glimpsed that glow through their dazzling love. Stephen Sondheim's lyrics depict this heightened perception, as we hear in "**Tonight.**"

"Tonight, tonight

The world is full of light

With suns and moons all over the place."

Life is no longer ho hum; it's exalted:

"Today, the world was just an address

A place for me to live in

No better than all right

But here you are

And what was just a world is a star Tonight."

It's not only sight that's affected; sometimes sound is too. In "Maria," Tony sings of the mantra-like power of his beloved's name. Maria is like OM to yogic chanters, a name he speaks repeatedly.

"All the beautiful sounds of the world in a single word, *Maria, Maria, Maria, Maria.*"

Sometimes the dawning of transformative love sharpens intuition before the beloved is met. Tony sings "Something's Coming:"

"It's only just out of reach

Down the block, on a beach

Under a tree

I got a feelin' there's a miracle due

Gonna come true

Comin' to me!

When love in musicals becomes extraordinarily deep, it can make two lovers into one, a state often written about by Rumi. Yogis call it Unity Consciousness, in which seeker and Creator merge into One. Maria sings of this in "I Have a Love."

"I love him, we're one;

There's nothing to be done,"

Rodgers & Hammerstein, Cole Porter, and Tin Pan Alley immortals penned anthems about awakening to a life lived with the gods. Alan Jay Lerner gives Freddy glimpses into higher consciousness, captivated by Eliza's beauty in My Fair Lady. In "On the Street Where You Live," he's almost lifted off the ground:



"I have often walked down this street before But the pavement always stayed beneath my feet before All at once am I several stories high Knowing I'm on the street where you live."

The glory of fresh new love transforms the perception of Marian, the librarian in The Music Man.

In "Till There was You," Meredith Wilson has her sing:

"There were bells on the hill

But I never heard them ringing

No, I never heard them at all

Till there was you."

It inspired her to see in ways she never saw before, as well:

"There were birds in the sky But I never saw them winging No, I never saw them at all Till there was you."

Her sense of smell is also enlivened:

"And there were wonderful roses

They tell me

In sweet fragrant meadows of dawn, and dew."

The mantra-like power to glimpse higher worlds, through repeating the beloved's name is echoed by Don Quixote in The Man of La Mancha's gorgeous love song, "Dulcinea."

"I see heaven when I see thee, Dulcinea,

And thy name is like a prayer

An angel whispers... Dulcinea... Dulcinea!"

The sense of Oneness echoes lyrics found in "And I'm Telling You I'm

Not Going" from Dreamgirls.

"We both share the same blood

We both have the same mind."

The nearness of the beloved lifts one to the highest places.

In Irving Berlin's "Dancing Cheek to Cheek," the singer senses Heaven.

"I'm in heaven

And the cares that hang around me through the week

Seem to vanish like a gambler's lucky streak

When we're out together dancing cheek to cheek.

In Kismet's "And This is my Beloved" we see more Heaven.

"And when he speaks and when he talks to me

Music! Mystery!

And when he moves and when he walks with me

Paradise comes suddenly near."

The touch of the beloved is like electrifying darshan, a spiritual jolt gurus give disciples. "He Touched Me" echoes this.

"He touched me

....I felt a sudden tingle when he touched me. A sparkle, a glow

"...He's real, and the world is alive and shining."

These musicals glimpse a higher world.



In an Emergency

:Resources & Support:

Suicide Crisis

Recovery Partners — Contributors

ACT Counseling & Education	602-569-4328	actcounseling.com
AZ Women's Recovery Center (AWRC)	602-264-6214	azwomensrecoverycenter.org
Aurora Behavioral Health	877-870-7012	auroraarizona.com
Birches Health	833-483-3838	bircheshealth.com
CBI, Inc.	877-931-9142	communitybridgesinc.org
Copper Springs	480-418-4367	coppersprings.com
The Crossroads	602-263-5242	thecrossroadsinc.org
DaVinci Consulting Services	480-606-8602	davinciconsultingservices.com
Denova	602-230-7373	denova.com
Desert Star Addiction Recovery Center	520-638-6000	desertstarARC.com
Dr. Marlo Archer	480-705-5007	DrMarlo.com
Gifts Anon	480-483-6006	
Hushabye Nursery	480-628-7500	hushabyenursery.org
The Meadows Behavioral Health	800-632-3697	meadowsBH.com
Mental Health Center of America	602-704-2345	mentalhealthcenter.com
Mens Teen Challenge	520-792-1790	tcaz.org
Mercy Care 800-631-1314	602-222-9444	mercycareaz.org
NotMYKid	602-652-0163	notmykid.org
Psychological Counseling Services (PCS)	480-947-5739	pcsintensive.com
Revive Recovery Center	480-405-5396	reviverecoverycenters.com
Scottsdale Providence	480-210-1734	scottsdaleprovidence.com
Scottsdale Recovery Center	888-663-7847	scottsdalerecovery.com
Sharon Youngblood	520-331-1483	
Sierra Tucson	800-842-4487	sierratucson.com
Brough Stewart, MC, LPC, NCC	602-316-3197	
Valley Hospital	602-952-3939	valleyhospital-phoenix.com
Via Linda Behavioral Hospital	480-476-7210	vialindabehavioral.com
Virtue Recovery Center	866-338-6977	virtuerecoverysuncitywest.com
Teen Challenge AZ	602-708-9475	tcaz.org

Additional Resources

AZ. Dept. of Health	602-364-2086	
Arizona Opioid Assistance Helpline	888-688-4222	
Erics House	855-894-5658	
Desert Drug Dog	602-908-2042	
Hunkapi Programs	480-393-0870	
Kid in the Corner	kidinthecorner.d	org
EMPACT/La Frontera	800-273-8255	
I Am Teen Strong	480-396-2409	EDA Meetings
Recovery Café	480-530-7090	Sat. 10:30 am New Freedom Meeting —
Spiritually Fit Co-op	602-809-0854	Pigeon Coop .4415 S Rural Rd, Ste 8, Tempe
TERROS Health	602-685-6000	AZ. Step and big book study.

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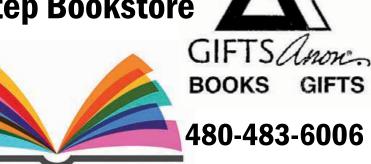
520-975-2141 **Recovery in Motion Sex Addicts Anonymous** 520-745-0775 Sierra Tucson 800-842-4487 **Suicide Prevention** 520-323-9372 **Teen Challenge** 888-352-4940 The Mark Youth and Family Care 520-326-6182 **Workaholics Anonymous** 520-403-3559

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Helplines

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)	602-264-1341
Al-Anon	602-249-1257
Tucson Al-Anon Information	520-323-2229
Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACA)	aca-arizona.org
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
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
Fentanyl Anonymous	623-280-1048
Food Addicts food addicts.org	435-764-1461
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 Tucson	520-792-6450
Sex Addicts Anonymous	602-735-1681
S-ANON	480-545-0520
Teen Life Line	800-248-8336

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Ave., Tucson.Refuge recovery is a non-theistic alternative to 12 step programs.



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