



The Legacy We Inherit *and* the One We Choose to Leave

How Pain and Healing Travel Through Generations, and Why Direction Matters More Than Perfection

By Tian Dayton, PhD, TEP

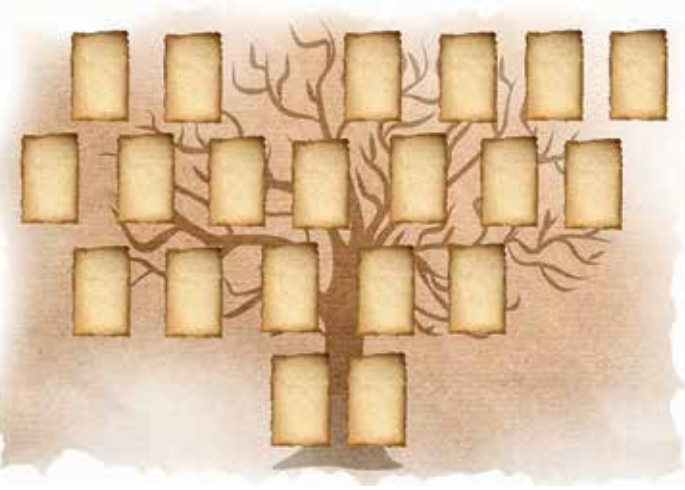
There comes a moment—often quietly, often without warning — when you realize you are standing in the middle of a long human line. Behind you are your parents, and behind them their parents, and behind them a chain of lives shaped by forces you may only partly understand. Ahead of you are the relationships you are living into right now: partners, children, friends, colleagues, communities. You are no longer only a recipient of a legacy. You are a carrier.

At that moment, a question begins to take shape, whether or not you have words for it:

What am I passing on? Not just in what you say, but in how you react. Not just in what you believe, but in how your body responds under stress. Not just in what you intend, but in what lives beneath intention.

Trauma does not usually pass down as a story. It passes down as a state.

Children do not need to know what happened to feel its impact. They absorb the emotional climate of the home: the tension, the unpredictability, the silence, the volatility, the absence, the hyper-vigilance. They learn what to expect not through explanation, but through experience.



iStock Credit: Liudmila Chernetska

What goes unprocessed in one generation often becomes the emotional atmosphere of the next.

This is not because parents intend harm. It is because human beings are wired for connection, and whatever shapes our internal world shapes how we relate. When pain is not metabolized, it seeks expression. When it cannot be spoken, it is enacted.

This is where the conversation about intergenerational trauma and recovery truly begins—not in blame, not in pathology, but in awareness. Because what moves through generations is rarely deliberate. It is transmitted through nervous systems, attachment patterns, unexamined beliefs, and ungrieved losses. And while we do not get to choose what we

inherited, we do get to choose what we work with. The choice is not between “clean” and “messy.” Life does not offer that option. Both passing on pain and choosing healing are messy. Both involve discomfort, vulnerability, and uncertainty. The difference lies in direction.

"Recovery is not a destination. It is a North Star."

You may never fully arrive, but you can aim. And aiming matters—because direction shapes outcome, not perfection.

Attachment Wounds: Where It All Begins

One of the primary ways pain travels through generations is through attachment. Attachment is not about love alone. It is about safety, consistency, and emotional attunement. It is about whether a child’s inner world is met with curiosity or dismissal, responsiveness or intrusion, stability or chaos. Whether being held in someone’s arms make you lean in for comfort and safety, brace for rupture... or both. And how each of those experiences live inside of you and shape who you are.

LEGACY continued page 3

INSIDE

Publisher's Note

- Deep Friendships
- Find Enjoyment at Conferences
- LOVE Starts with YOU
- Self Love is a Practice
- The "I Love You" I couldn't hear till now
- Resilience, Accountability and the Power of Community
- Set Yourself Up for Success
- Resources & Helplines



iStock credit: Maria Marganingsih

The Power of (Self) Love

By Ramsen Kasha, MBA, MS, LPC

As Valentine’s Day approaches, we can be reminded of the importance of love in our lives. However, love can be challenging, particularly when it comes to loving ourselves. While this season celebrates romantic relationships, the most significant and lasting love we can cultivate is within ourselves. This Valentine’s season, we can reflect on the importance of self-love, both as an act of healing and as an essential component of recovery.

Self-Love: The Foundation of Healing

Self-love isn’t merely treating ourselves with kindness or indulging in self-care. It’s a deep recognition of our worth and a commitment to nurturing our well-being.

In fact, self-love is crucial as it empowers us to face our “difficult truths” without shame and enables healing with strength.

SelfLove continued page 8



Publisher's Note

By Barbara Nicholson-Brown

Grateful for this Journey

In the throes of addiction, no road is smooth, it's jagged, rocky, and perilous. Life rarely follows a straight line — and when addiction takes the wheel, every curve becomes a potential cliff. Looking back at how I lived sends chills through me; surviving that chapter was nothing short of a miracle.

My danger didn't come from driving a vehicle — it came from attempting to navigate my life while impaired. I existed in a vicious cycle: drinking, coming to, drinking, and passing out. Alcohol was a poison I consumed relentlessly, regardless of the consequences. It was painful and heartbreaking, even when I wanted to stop, I couldn't — *and* I wouldn't ask for help.

In the grip of addiction, it was easy to blame the world for my pain. Beyond the physical toll of the hangovers, I was suffocated by resentment and a soul-crushing loneliness. I wasn't just broke; I was broken. Addiction hijacked my mind, leading to choices that cost me jobs, years with my family, and friendships. I lost myself entirely.

Today, I'm grateful, blessed, and forever humbled to be on this journey. Because of the strength of a 12-step program and a commitment to the work, I'm no longer wandering blindly. Sobriety has given me a roadmap for an amazing life — and to stay on this path I will continue to follow directions. Thank you for being part of my recovery.

Happy Love month! My deepest thanks to each and every one of our outstanding contributors for sharing your expertise and being such a vital resource for our community.

Barb

You Don't Have to Face This Alone

At Virtue Detox, we understand the challenges of overcoming addiction. Our compassionate team is here to support you every step of the way. From personalized detox plans to comprehensive therapy sessions, we offer a safe and nurturing environment where you can begin your journey to recovery.

Why Choose Virtue Detox?

- Personalized Detox Programs
- Experienced and Caring Staff
- Comfortable and Safe Environment
- Holistic Approach
- Strong Support Network

(866) 338-6977
virtuerecoveryuncitywest.com



Scan the QR code
or visit
detox.care/azad



Desert Star



Tucson's Trusted Treatment Provider

Substance Use & Mental Health Treatment



Struggling with substance use or mental health? You don't have to do this alone. Our experienced therapists help you build real skills and sustainable change—while you keep working, parenting, and living your life.

Program Highlights

We take commercial insurance!

In Person & Virtual treatment available

Day & Evening Groups Available

Evidence-Based Treatment

6 to 12 weeks

Individual, and Psychiatric Sessions

It's never too late to start!

Our outpatient programs let you get real help without losing your job, missing your kids' activities, or dropping out of life

Take the first step today



Call Us Today for a
FREE consultation!

+520-638-6000

OR

Book a FREE
consultation Now!



www.desertstararc.com

info@desertstararc.com

— BE SAFE —

Stop Exploitation

AZ Human
Trafficking
Hotline
1-877-4AZ-TIPS

TogetherAZ

Inspiring Success on the Road to Recovery
"Celebrating 35 Years"

FOUNDER

In gratitude and memory of
William B. Brown, Jr.

Publisher/Production

Barbara Nicholson-Brown

Contributors

Dr. Marlo Archer
Alexandra & Jacob Daffner
Dr. Tian Dayton
Jamie Humphrey
Kara Janssen
Aaron Johnson
Ramsen Kasha
Abby Rallo
Amy Tilley

Published Monthly Since 1991

Website: WISDIX Graphic images/photos/ iStock.com

The views and opinions presented in articles are those of the individual authors. Content is for informational purposes only. Seek professional help for addiction related issues.

Recovery Together Enterprises, LLC

10105 E. Via Linda, Suite A103 #387 Scottsdale AZ 85258
www.togetheraz.com 602-684-1136 E: barb@togetheraz.com

LEGACY from page 1

When attachment is secure enough, a child learns:

I matter. | My feelings make sense. | I can depend on others and myself.

When attachment is disrupted—by addiction, trauma, mental illness, chronic stress, or emotional immaturity—the child adapts. These adaptations are brilliant. They keep the child connected to caregivers they cannot afford to lose. But they also come at a cost.

A child may learn to:

- *Stay small to avoid burdening others*
- *Stay alert to manage unpredictability*
- *Take responsibility for everyone else's feelings*
- *Shut down emotionally to manage overwhelm*

These patterns are not choices so much as survival strategies. But they do not dissolve with time. They mature into adult attachment styles that quietly shape relationships, parenting, leadership, and intimacy.

Cognitive Distortions: The Inner Narratives that Keep the Past Alive

Alongside attachment wounds travel cognitive distortions—deeply held beliefs formed in environments where reality was confusing or unsafe. And where our sincere questions to help us understand what was going on around us were met with truth or denial.

- “I’m too much.”
- “I’m not enough. I’d better try harder.”
- “If I relax, something bad will happen.”
- “Love always requires sacrifice.”
- “If I don’t stay in control, everything will fall apart.”

These beliefs are not crazy or stupid or even necessarily dysfunctional, rather they are conclusions drawn by a nervous system doing its best to survive. But when left unexamined, they become lenses through which we misread the present. And that’s where they dysfunction sets in, when we read our life and our relationships today through the distorted lens of these survival beliefs and strategies and respond today as if yesterday were happening all over again.

We respond to our partners with the emotional intensity that belonged to our parents. We interpret neutral cues as rejection or threat. We recreate old relational pain in new relationships, hoping—often unconsciously—for a different ending and equally unconsciously too often make that new end-

ing someone else’s responsibility to give us. Then we set up old problems in new situations, we self-sabotage and we get disappointed. But we don’t know we’re doing it.

This is how the past repeats itself. Not because we want it to, but because unresolved experiences remain active inside us, seeking completion.

When you grow up with addiction and denial, your mind does not distort reality because it is broken. It distorts reality because it is protecting you. These ways of thinking were formed in rooms where truth was unsafe, where feelings had consequences, and where naming what was happening could threaten connection. They are not signs of pathology. They are signs of adaptation.

- **Minimization**
It wasn’t that bad. — Pain is quietly reduced so attachment can be preserved. You learn to doubt your own suffering before anyone else has the chance to deny it.
- **Normalization of Dysfunction**
This is just how families are. — Chaos, absence, or volatility becomes familiar. Later, calm can feel foreign, even suspicious.
- **Self-Blame**
It must be my fault. — Blaming yourself feels safer than facing how little control you had. If it’s your fault, maybe you can fix it.
- **Hypervigilance**
Stay alert.— Your nervous system learns to scan constantly, listening for shifts in tone, mood, or danger. Rest feels irresponsible.
- **All-or-Nothing Thinking**
It’s either fine or it’s a disaster. — Nuance disappears in unpredictable environments. The middle ground never felt safe enough to trust.
- **Emotional Reasoning**
If I feel it, it must be true. — Feelings once carried important survival information. Later, they can echo the past while masquerading as the present.
- **Mind Reading**
I already know what they’re thinking. — When direct communication was risky or unreliable, you learned to infer—often assuming the worst to stay prepared.

LEGACY continued page 9



Lasting Recovery is *worth* the Journey.

At The Meadows, treatment goes beyond symptom relief. Our comprehensive approach facilitates deep healing and equips patients with lasting understanding, real-life coping skills, and the tools to achieve meaningful transformation, sustain that change, and create a better life.

Life Improvements Above Industry Norms

92% of patients reached report feeling excellent, good, or fair one-year post-treatment compared to 35% at intake.

92%

Residential | Outpatient | Virtual | Support Groups

Addiction | Trauma | Mental Health | Eating Disorders | Co-Occurring Conditions

TheMeadows.com | 866-352-2075

Learn More





FEBRUARY 2026 . . . Togetheraz.com 3

Deep Friendships:

The Benefits of Having Close Relationships

By Amy Tilley, PsyD

February is here. That means it is the month of Valentine's Day and love is in the air—but I want to focus on something different than love and intimate relationships. In the past few years, *Galentine's Day* has taken center stage, usually on February 13th, to celebrate all the important female friendships in our lives. It was first mentioned in 2010, on the TV show, *Parks and Recreation* and, has been a mainstay in culture ever since.

This celebration of close friends got me thinking about the significance of having a "tribe" of friends in your life. Who in your life are your deep friendships? Who can you count on at 3 am to pick up the phone? Whose house can you go to and sit on the couch and ugly cry for hours in sweatpants and a messy bun? If you have a few of these close friends in your life, you are blessed.

There are many mental health benefits of having a tribe of deep friendships (male or female). I'm talking about quality over quantity. You don't need 20 deep friendships to benefit. A handful of people you can count on, that know you to your core, who will hold you accountable and give you the shirt off their back.

- Here are some examples of the benefits of close-knit, deep friendships:
- **It can reduce isolation and loneliness, creating a sense of belonging and connection with others.** It allows for a safe space to be authentic and share your struggles, leading to increased emotional regulation and helping reduce symptoms of depression.
 - **These friendships provide different support than you get from your family members.** Many times, we can be more vulnerable with our close friends than with our family and get significant feedback and advice from these relationships. Friends also offer a different perspective than family.
 - **Being vulnerable with close friends can be scary, but it can also boost your confidence.** The more you share with your friend group, the better they know how to support you in good and challenging times. This goes both ways, allowing the other person to feel more comfortable sharing with you.
 - **Deep friendships reduce stress, lower your blood pressure, and provide humor in your life.** Is there anything better than having a group of friends over for a fun dinner and game night that turns into sharing stories and belly laughing all night long?



iStock credit:shuang paul wang

"Deep friendships can reduce isolation and loneliness, creating a sense of belonging and connection with others."

- **Provides belonging and community and acceptance.** The 12 Step program is a great example of this. There is no judgment in the rooms, all are welcome, and you can guarantee that someone will reach out to you before or after the meeting.
- **Provides an outlet for enjoying shared interests:** is there a hobby that you enjoy doing, but want to enjoy it with someone else? There is a club or meetup for almost anything these days...and if you go to a meeting, you are likely going to connect with someone there who also enjoys your hobby as much as you do. Take a cooking class, join a photography or gardening club. Like to knit or crochet? Enjoy archery or gaming? The possibilities are endless!

If you are an introvert (like me), stepping out of your comfort zone can be anxiety provoking. Joining a new group or club requires a bit of vulnerability, if you want to find people with like-minded interests. It also requires commitment and time but can be worth it in the end. You never know who will be there, and who you connect with could become a lifelong friend, part of your tribe and someone that you consider a deep friendship for years to come.

Deep friendships are wonderful and provide us with many good things. However, they do not take the place of a therapist. Friends are not your therapist. Friends have different boundaries than your therapist and can call you out more bluntly than a therapist will. Friends can be vulnerable and share their experiences with you. Therapists will disclose only when appropriate and not give you advice. Therapists will help guide you along and challenge you, while allowing you to come to your own conclusion about a situation that challenges you.

Think about your current friend group. Who is a deep friendship for you? Let that person know how important they are to you. Take this month to spend time with those close friends and share a meal or a walk together. Appreciate the fact that you have a quality group of friends you can count on in any situation and people that will make you laugh so hard that you hyperventilate. *Here's to deep friendship!*

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.

Visit desertstarARC.com /call 520-638-6000





Da Vinci Consulting Services



Joint Commission Accreditation



Dept of Healthcare Licensing



Medicaid / Commercial Credentialing



Quality Assurance Surveys



480-606-8602



davinciconsultingservices.com



Brough Stewart, MC, LPC, NCC

15333 N. Pima Road, Suite 305
Scottsdale, AZ 85260

602-316-3197
brough@broughstewart.com
www.broughstewart.com



Stewart Counseling Services
HELPING YOU REACH YOUR POTENTIAL



SIERRA TUCSON®

Where Change Begins®

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
**AMERICA'S
BEST**
ADDICTION
TREATMENT
CENTERS
2025

Newsweek

statista 

*2025 is the 3rd consecutive year ranked
#1 in Newsweek's list of Best Addiction
Treatment Centers in Arizona!*

#1
IN ARIZONA

Ready to start your journey?

Contact us today to learn more about our programs and take the
first step toward lasting recovery.

520.624.4000
www.sierratucson.com

A Clinician’s Guide to Conference Enjoyment:

Why PIT is Different

By Aaron Johnson, Conference Director, *Partners In Treatment*

As the Conference Director for Partners In Treatment (PIT), I often hear clinicians say: “Aaron, I can get all my CEUs online—why should I spend the time and money to attend an in-person conference?” It’s a completely valid question. Online CEUs are incredibly convenient. You can knock them out from home, in short sessions, on your own schedule, without travel or hotel costs. Many clinicians rely on them to stay current and meet licensure requirements efficiently.

But here’s the truth: convenience is great for checking boxes, but it doesn’t always feed the deeper parts of what keeps us going in this work.

PIT isn’t just another conference. We designed it to be relational, welcoming, and restorative—the opposite of what many clinicians fear when they think about in-person events (stiff networking, high-pressure sales, feeling like an outsider).

We built this experience around the same principle we emphasize with our clients every day: community combats isolation. We tell clients that meaningful connection builds resilience, reduces loneliness, and supports lasting change. The same holds true for us as clinicians. Solo practice, remote work, and screen-heavy days can quietly erode our own sense of belonging and inspiration.

That’s why the **2026 Partners In Treatment Conference** (April 22–24 at We-Ko-Pa Resort in Fountain Hills/Scottsdale, AZ) is intentionally different. It’s a space where clinicians feel seen, supported, and genuinely welcomed. Not as attendees to be “sold,” but as colleagues to be celebrated.

Here’s your honest guide to what makes PIT special and how to get the most out of it.

Connecting in an Embracing Community

Many of us work independently or rarely get to connect with peers outside our immediate circle. PIT creates warm, intentional spaces for real conversation (and yes, fun).

From the Countdown Party and Opening Reception to the Poolside Moonlight Mingle, these aren’t forced networking sessions. They’re relaxed opportunities to meet colleagues from across the country who understand your daily realities.

My tip: Arrive early and come with a few open-ended questions. The best connections happen naturally.

One clinician shared: “PIT turned competitors into collaborators. I watched East Coast clinicians team up with Arizona leaders in an experiential workshop. It felt like true community supporting each other.”



Submitted photo

Enjoying Interesting CEU Opportunities

You’ll earn up to 12.5 CEUs from top-tier, evidence-based presenters hand-selected from leading facilities like Anew Treatment Center and Meadows Behavioral Healthcare, chosen for clinical depth and practical relevance.

My tip: Engage actively, ask questions, challenge ideas, and think about immediate applications. Live interaction deepens insight in ways screens can’t match.

A past attendee said: “The presenters are the real deal: knowledgeable, engaging, and focused on practical advances in treatment. I left with tools I could use the next week.”

Experiential Learning

Our hands-on workshops go beyond theory. You’ll explore personal growth while learning alongside peers at sessions that can be profoundly transformative.

My tip: Lean into the vulnerability. Many clinicians tell us these experiences were career-changing.

Branding the Best You

This session is for any clinician who wants to grow their practice or program authentically without feeling salesy.

My tip: Bring your real challenges. The discussion is interactive and grounded in clinical life.

One participant noted: “I finally understood how to authentically ‘brand’ my approach without feeling salesy. It’s about sharing value.”

Making Business Connections — Without the Fear

Our exhibit hall (with over 130 vendors) is collaborative, approachable, and never aggressive. Clinicians consistently tell us it feels safe and welcoming.

My tip: Bring business cards and marketing materials about your practice. Our exhibitors are eager to connect, learn about your work, and explore referral relationships. Use the Conference App to note contacts, conversations, and follow-ups.

A clinician reflected: “The exhibit hall felt welcoming... I made lots of meaningful contacts that have already led to new partnerships.”

Taking Needed Breaks

We know conferences can be intense. That’s why the Partner Lounge is open throughout the day, which is a quiet, comfortable space to recharge, catch up on work, or chat casually with colleagues.

The best part? Clinical passes are only \$99 (\$79 for clinical students), including all Thursday/Friday presentations, networking events, unlimited exhibit hall access, and chances to win prizes.

Online CEUs are fantastic for convenience, and many clinicians use them successfully. But if you’re ready for something more, (renewed energy, deeper inspiration, and the kind of peer connections that remind you why you chose this calling) PIT offers an experience you can’t get from a screen.

Spots are limited for **April 22–24, 2026**. If you’ve hesitated about in-person conferences in the past, consider this your gentle invitation to try something different. Just show up as you are and the community will meet you there.

Secure your \$99 clinical pass today at pitconferenceaz.com.

I look forward to meeting you and celebrating the important work you do. You don’t have to “perform” or network like a pro. Just come. The warmth and relational focus of PIT will do the rest. See you in Scottsdale!



2026 Conference on Mental Health

April 22 - 24, 2026 in Fountain Hills



- Earn up to 12.5 CEUs presented by top industry experts from Meadows, Embark, Menninger Clinic, Lindner Center, Anew Treatment Center, and others
- Several networking free/included networking events
- Experiential workshops for deeper learning
- Full, unlimited access to the Exhibit Hall

— Clinical Attendees come for only \$99! —

Register at pitconferenceaz.com

Love Starts With You: Why Self-Love is at the Heart of February

By Abby Rallo | BSN, RN & Program Fidelity Specialist

February—the month of love and romance. But beyond that, February is all about the heart. Known as American Heart Month, February honors self-love, heart health, and overall well-being. This makes it the perfect time to learn about heart-healthy lifestyles and how caring for yourself is one of the most meaningful acts of love you can practice.

The Facts:

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of adult deaths in the United States (NHLBI). For women, it takes first place for cause of death, and is responsible for 1 in 3 female deaths each year (Go Red). Growing research shows that heart disease can be prevented when emotional well-being and heart health are prioritized. But what does self-love really look like?

Heart health is shaped every day by how we move, how we manage stress, how we connect with others, and how we find meaning in our lives. When we reframe these choices as acts of self-care instead of chores, they become simple yet powerful tools for improving quality of life and lowering the risk of cardiovascular disease.

The Acts:

- **Physical:** Physically, self-love looks like movement, nutrition and consistency.
- **Get Regular Check-Ups:** Check your blood pressure regularly so you can quickly notice any changes or warning signs before they become a bigger issue.
- **Move Your Body:** Move your body regularly. Go for a walk. Take the stairs. Stretch your arms. Dance to your favorite song. All of these conscious efforts of movement not only elevate your mood, but they also strengthen your heart and improve circulation.
- **Fuel Your Body:** Ask your doctor if the DASH Diet (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) is appropriate for you. This nutritional plan is a flexible and well-balanced approach to eating, emphasizing vegetables, fruits, whole grains, fish and poultry while avoiding food with high levels of fat, sodium and sugar (NIH).

Nourishment is more than just balanced meals, it includes staying hydrated, getting enough sleep, and chasing consistency over perfection.

Emotional: Emotionally, self-care includes putting yourself first.

Manage Your Stress:

Deep breathing, mindfulness exercises and physical exercises are daily ways you can better manage your stress. Try this deep breathing exercise: Put both hands at your sides. Inhale slowly and deeply through your nose for 4 seconds. Hold the air in your lungs for 7 seconds. Gently exhale through your mouth for 8 seconds. Repeat at least 4 times, each time, bringing your attention closer to your breath and the sensations you feel in your body.

Do More of What You Love:

Whether it's painting, playing piano, writing in a journal, or listening to your favorite album on repeat, doing what you love is a simple but powerful way to give your nervous system a break, improve emotional resilience, and create little moments of joy.



Via Linda staff is proud to support National Wear Red Day! Submitted photo

Social: Socially, self-love reminds us we are not alone, and we don't have to do life alone. Social connection supports both mental well-being and heart health by reducing stress and creating a sense of safety and belonging.

Prioritize Connection: Humans are hard-wired for connection. Spending intentional time with people who make you feel supported, understood, and valued is good for your heart. Having strong relationships with people you trust can reduce stress, improve your mood, and support heart health. As you read this, does someone come to mind? This is your sign to reach out to them!

Make Time for Laughter: Laugh hearty and often. Watch your favorite comedy, go see a local comedian with a friend, or laugh at shared stories over a meal. Laughter with others helps reduce stress and strengthen connection.

LOVE STARTS continued page 14

Supporting You Every Step of Your Journey

At Valley Hospital, we're here to help you heal and move forward. With a wide range of inpatient and outpatient programs, we offer personalized care to support you wherever you are on your journey to well-being.

- Crisis Stabilization
- Adult Mental Health (Specialized Programs for Men and Women)
- Detox
- Intensive Outpatient
- Partial Hospitalization
- Rehabilitation Program

Take the first step toward change.

Call us today: **602-957-4000** or visit **valleyhospital-phoenix.com**.

Scan the QR Code to learn more.



In case of a mental health crisis, **call 988** or seek the nearest emergency room.



Physicians are on the medical staff of Valley Hospital, but, with limited exceptions, are independent practitioners who are not employees or agents of Valley Hospital. The facility shall not be liable for actions or treatments provided by physicians. Model representations of real patients are shown. For language assistance, disability accommodations and the nondiscrimination notice, visit our website. 264992401-4991717 1/26

Self Love from page 1

During the emotional turmoil or battle with the weight of addiction, our internal narrative often becomes the harshest critic. We might tell ourselves we are unworthy of love or our past mistakes define us. This negative self-talk can create a barrier to healing and recovery. Yet, self-love challenges this mindset. It teaches us to replace self-criticism with self-compassion, to view ourselves through the lens of understanding, and believe we are deserving of a life filled with peace, connection, and growth.

Why Valentine’s Day is a Perfect Time to Focus on Self-Love

Valentine’s Day offers a chance to reframe the conversation around love. For those without a partner or healing from past relationships, this holiday can feel isolating. However, it serves as a reminder to focus on the relationship we have with ourselves.

This season can be an invitation to heal from past wounds and build a loving relationship with our inner selves. It is a reminder that love is not something we must look for externally but rather something we can give ourselves, freely and without conditions. In fact, cultivating self-love during this time can strengthen our resilience in our recovery process, offering the emotional fortitude to overcome challenges, setbacks, and temptations.

The Role of Self-Love in Recovery

Self-love is integral to rebuilding our self-worth. It helps us establish healthy boundaries, respect ourselves, and recognize our needs. It allows us to confront the emotional scars of addiction, trauma, and mental health struggles with courage and compassion.

When we practice self-love, we learn to treat ourselves with the same kindness, empathy, and understanding that we would offer to a loved one. This shift in how we view ourselves can dramatically impact the choices we make in our recovery journey. By committing to self-love, we are less likely to engage in self-destructive behaviors or to sabotage our own progress. Instead, we can make choices that reflect our worth and our desire to live a healthier, more fulfilling life.

Self-love helps us break free from patterns of codependency or unhealthy relationships. When we come from backgrounds where love was conditional or toxic, it can lead to a distorted understanding of what love should look like. Learning to love ourselves teaches us to recognize and engage in healthy relationships (whether romantic, platonic, or familial) that uplift rather than drag us down.

Practicing Self-Love

While self-love can seem like an abstract concept, it’s something we can actively practice each day.

Here are a few ways to cultivate self-love during the Valentine’s season and beyond:

1. Practice Positive Self-Talk:

Instead of allowing negative thoughts to define us, we can practice affirmations that remind us of our worth. Statements like “I am worthy of love,” “I am enough,” and “I am capable of healing” can counterbalance self-doubt and criticism that often arises during difficult moments in recovery.

2. Set Boundaries: Self-love means knowing when to say no, even when it’s uncomfortable. Setting healthy boundaries allows us to protect our energy, focus on our well-being, and maintain a sense of autonomy in relationships. Ironically, we often find the boundaries that are hardest and yet most important to set are with ourselves.

3. Engage in Self-Care: Taking time for ourselves, whether through exercise, creativity, meditation, or relaxing with a good book, is an act of love. Self-care does not have to be elaborate; it’s about nurturing our bodies and minds in ways that promote healing.

4. Forgive Yourself: One of the greatest gifts we can give ourselves is forgiveness. Often, there can be a tendency to hold on to guilt and shame. True self-love means accepting our past, making amends where possible, and giving ourselves permission to move forward with compassion.

5. Surround Yourself with Support: Engaging with a community of like-minded individuals, therapy/support groups or loved ones, can reinforce our journey of self-love. We are worthy of connection and support, and we don’t have to do this work alone.

The Healing Power of Self-Love

As we approach Valentine’s Day, let’s remember the most important love story is the one we write with ourselves. Self-love is not a luxury but a necessity. It is the foundation upon which we build lasting healing, resilience, and growth. So, this Valentine’s season, give yourself the gift of love. You are worth it.

Ramsen Kasha, MBA, MS, LPC is Chief Clinical Officer at Sahara Wellness Center. Learn more at <https://www.saharawc.com/>



The PCS Intensive Treatment Program offers a unique and powerful solution to those individuals, couples and families trying to break through the barriers holding them back from fully enjoying their lives. Clients who seek our program are generally experiencing crises in their lives, feel stuck in their current therapy, desire to move more quickly through their issues, or are simply unfulfilled with one or two hours a week of therapy.

One week, 69 hour multidisciplinary treatment program, including

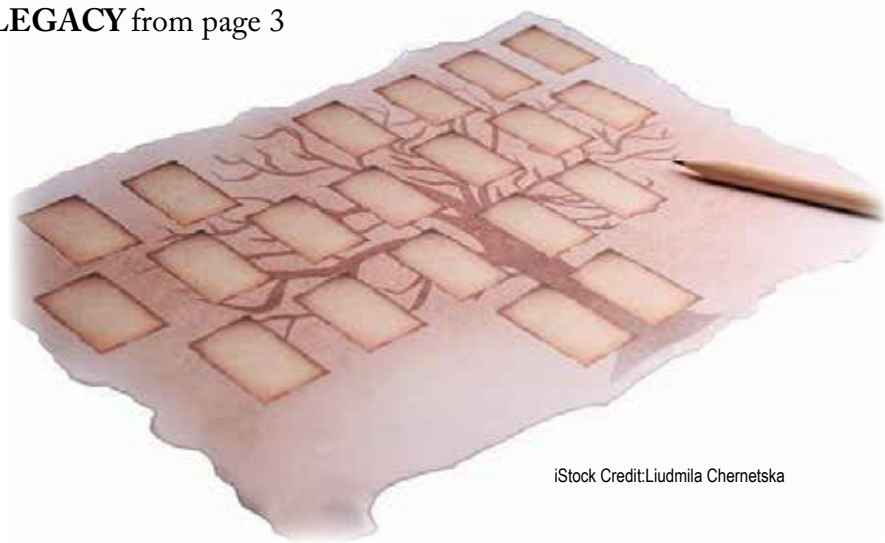
- 34 hours of individual, couples and/or family therapy
- 25 hours of group therapy to acquire vital tools for healing
- 10 hours of workshop

480.947.5739

www.pcsintensive.com – info@pcsintensive.com

When the choice you make now means EVERYTHING

We’re here when you’re ready.



iStock Credit:Liudmila Chernetska

"What goes unprocessed in one generation often becomes the emotional atmosphere of the next."

• **Catastrophizing**

If this goes wrong, everything will collapse. — Small problems trigger big fear because breakdowns once came without warning.

• **Control as Safety**

If I manage everything, nothing will fall apart. — Control becomes a stand-in for trust, and overfunctioning becomes a way to keep chaos at bay.

• **Responsibility Confusion**

Other people's feelings are mine to manage. — Boundaries blur when adults cannot hold their own emotions. You step in, long before you are ready.

• **Denial of Needs**

I don't need much. — Needs are tucked away to avoid disappointment. Over time, what was buried becomes loneliness, resentment, or numbness.

• **Fear of Conflict**

Conflict means danger. — Disagreement once led to explosion or withdrawal, so even healthy conflict can feel like a threat to survival.

Think of these ways of thinking as **maps drawn in unsafe territory.**

Recovery does not rip them away. It introduces curiosity. We begin to notice when the past is borrowing our voice in the present. And in that noticing—gentle, patient, repeated—choice begins to widen. We learn how to pause before we react.

At the core of all of this is the nervous system.

Trauma Lives in the Nervous System

Trauma is not just what happened. **It is what did not get resolved.** A nervous system shaped by chronic stress learns to stay on guard. It becomes efficient at detecting danger, even when danger is no longer present. This is why insight alone does not heal trauma. You can understand your history perfectly and still react as though the past is happening now. Healing requires more than understanding—it requires *regulation*.

The nervous system needs to learn, again and again, that it is safe enough to settle.

This is why body-based practices are so profoundly healing. Practices like **yoga, tai chi, qigong**, and simple walking are not accessories to healing—they are central. And in therapy healing modalities like psychodrama and Relational Trauma Repair (RTR relationaltraumarepair.com) they provide encounters that feel real. They restore rhythm. They slow reactivity.

They teach the body how to move through activation and return to calm. They template a new resolution for an old pain even if the resolution is simply to open your mouth and speak the truth. When the nervous system settles, perception changes. Choice reappears. The space between stimulus and response widens. And in that space, something extraordinary becomes possible: a different response. A new choice.

Why Community Heals What Isolation Cannot

Trauma often teaches us to manage pain alone. Recovery teaches us something decidedly different: healing happens with others. Support communities—particularly 12-step programs such as Al-Anon, Alcoholics Anonymous, ACA, and CODA—have been quietly rewiring nervous systems for decades.

These rooms offer a rare combination:

- **Structure without coercion**
- **Honesty without punishment**
- **Listening without fixing**

Within this container, people learn to do what trauma once made threatening—to sit with emotion, speak honestly without being overwhelmed, listen

without rescuing or attacking, and stay present as feelings rise and fall. They learn that they can tolerate emotion without having to act it out.

Participants sit together, feel what arises, speak truthfully, and listen with restraint. This is not just emotional growth; it is nervous system retraining. The old saying, "Take the cotton out of your ears and put it in your mouth," is, at its core, a lesson in regulation. It teaches pause, humility, and attunement. It slows the system down enough for reflection to replace reaction. Over time, experience is digested rather than discharged, and meaning begins to replace impulsivity. This is one way recovery interrupts generational patterns.

For many people—especially those raised in dysfunctional systems—belonging once came with conditions: silence, compliance, emotional labor, or invisibility. Recovery communities offer something different. You belong because you show up. You belong because you tell the truth. You belong because you listen.

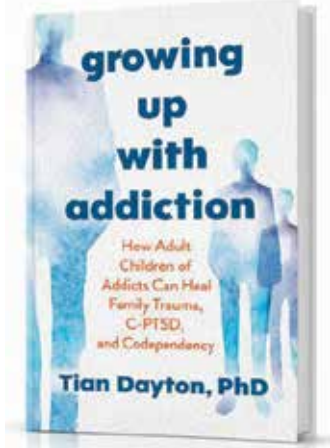
This is how attachment is rewired in relationship. The nervous system begins to learn that closeness does not require self-erasure, that boundaries need not create rupture, and that being heard does not depend on urgency or volume. Gentle guardrails—no cross-talk, shared time, taking turns—create a rhythm that makes safety possible. Within that rhythm, we practice speaking from what is true and listening without fixing or fleeing. Slowly, almost without noticing, new relational muscles grow, and connection begins to feel less like a risk and more like a home.

This is re-parenting in real time.

This is re-familizing through experience.

Dr. Tian Dayton is a clinical psychologist, certified trainer in psychodrama, sociometry, and group psychotherapy, and Senior Fellow at The Meadows. She is the creator of Relational Trauma Repair (RTR) and author of fifteen books, including *Growing Up with Addiction* and *Treating Adult Children of Relational Trauma*, and a former professor of psychodrama at NYU. A recipient of multiple national awards, she has appeared as a guest expert on major media outlets.

Learn more at tiandayton.com and relationaltraumarepair.com



Tian Dayton's latest book, *Growing Up with Addiction* will be released on March 3, 2026. Pre-order your copy now at Amazon. Visit <https://www.amazon.com/Growing-Up-Addiction-Children-Codependency/dp/1649634242>

Follow Tian Dayton

<https://tiandaytonphd.substack.com/>

AURORA

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

- Inpatient Services for Adults and Adolescents
- Intensive Outpatient Programs (IOP) for adults and adolescents
- Partial Hospitalization Program (PHP)
- Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT)
- Equine Therapy
- Chaplain Services Program
- Special Needs Unit (SNU) Tempe Hospital only

RANKING
2023
ARIZONA

AURORA BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SYSTEM
RANKED #1
BEHAVIORAL REHABILITATION

877.870.7012 | auroraarizona.com

From the Mat

Self-Love is a Practice:

What Yoga Can Teach Us About Recovery

By Alexandra Daffner

February often puts love on display — cards, flowers, grand gestures—but for those in recovery, love can feel complicated. Many of us are learning how to love ourselves for the very first time. And unlike the kind of love marketed this month, self-love isn't flashy or romantic. It's quiet. It's consistent. It's a practice.



In recovery, self-love doesn't mean always feeling good about ourselves. It means staying present with ourselves even when we don't want to. It means choosing care over criticism, curiosity over shame. This is where yoga becomes a powerful ally.

Yoga, at its core, is not about flexibility or perfect poses. It's about relationship — how we relate to our bodies, our breath, and our

inner world. For many people in recovery, the body has not always felt like a safe place to live. Yoga offers a way back home, slowly and on our own terms.

On the mat, self-love can look surprisingly simple. It's noticing when you're holding your breath and choosing to soften. It's resting when your nervous system says "enough." It's realizing you don't need to push, prove, or perform to be worthy of taking up space. In a culture that often celebrates extremes—work harder, go deeper, push through—yoga invites something radical: **listening**.

SCOTTSDALE PROVIDENCE
RECOVERY CENTER

It's not the end, it's the beginning.

Comprehensive and compassionate care for mental health and substance use

480-210-1734
www.scottsdaleprovidence.com

SPIRITUALLY FIT CO-OP

AN INCLUSIVE AND AFFORDABLE
YOGA STUDIO

WITH AN EMPHASIS ON MENTAL
HEALTH AND RECOVERY

YOGA- SOUND HEALING- FITNESS

" \$10 CLASSES
SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE "

8989 E. VIA LINDA SUITE #212
SCOTTSDALE AZ 85258

This kind of listening is especially meaningful in recovery. Addiction and mental health struggles often disconnect us from our internal signals. Yoga helps rebuild trust with the body, one breath at a time. When we learn to feel safe, we learn to care for ourselves differently. We start recognizing the early signs of stress before they turn into overwhelm. We begin responding instead of reacting.

February's theme of love offers a powerful reframe

What if love isn't something we earn after we "fix" ourselves? What if love is the way we show up for ourselves right now—imperfect, healing, and human?

Self-love in recovery might look like choosing rest instead of numbing. It might look like setting boundaries that feel uncomfortable but necessary. It might look like returning to your yoga mat after a hard day and letting that be enough. Yoga doesn't promise to remove discomfort, but it teaches us how to be with it skillfully. Over time, that skill builds resilience. And resilience builds freedom.

This month, instead of asking "*How do I love myself better?*" we might ask, "*How can I practice kindness toward myself today?*" The answer doesn't need to be big. It might be a five-minute breathing practice. It might be a gentle stretch. It might simply be placing a hand on your heart and acknowledging that you are trying. In recovery, that willingness—to stay, to feel, to care—is love in action. And that kind of love is worth practicing all year long.

Join us on the mat for some self love this month at The Spiritually Fit Co-Op- where self love is practiced every month out of the year- not just in February.

For class schedules and more info visit <https://spirituallyfitco-op.com/>

**DETOX SUPPORT
IS AVAILABLE**

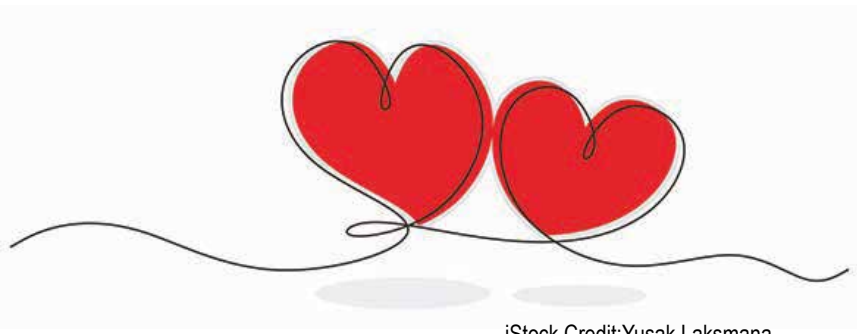
CONFIDENTIAL • PRIVATE ROOMS • 24 HOUR CARE

**SCOTTSDALE
RECOVERY**

SAME DAY ADMISSIONS

602-346-9143

DETOX IN A SAFE, MEDICALLY SUPERVISED ENVIRONMENT
WHERE YOUR COMFORT COMES FIRST.



iStock Credit:Yusak Laksmana

The "I Love You" I Couldn't Hear Until Now

By Jamie Humphrey

I've always been someone who loves people deeply, but it took recovery to teach me how to love myself, too.

If you know me, have met me, or have listened to me interact with another human for more than ten minutes, there is one thing I hope and pray everyone feels when they walk away from me they were seen, and that they were loved.

Whoever they are. Wherever they come from. I never want to leave an interaction with another soul on this earth having offered anything less than presence, compassion, and care.

I've been told I have a "bleeding heart." That I'm an empath. I feel too much. And I can see it in my conversations, in the way I listen, and in the work I've been called to do. Loving people has never been optional for me; it's woven into who I am.

But here's the paradox I've been learning — not just about surviving, but about truly thriving as someone who is deeply love-driven.

For a long time, I believed the more overcommitted, exhausted, and spread thin I was, the more I served others. The more I put everyone else's needs above my own, the more worthy I would become. Somewhere along the way, I bought into the myth that hustling for love would produce love. That running myself into the ground for others would somehow fill the empty places inside me.

What I've learned instead is this: the more exhausted, overextended, and depleted I became, the less able I was to show up for anyone, including myself. That sneaky ego crept in. Service turned into validation-seeking. Love turned into people-pleasing. And suddenly, it wasn't about connection anymore, it was about approval. Eww.

The shift didn't come when life got easier. It came when I finally decided I deserved recovery, not just abstinence, not just survival, but healing. It came when my sponsor loved me while I learned how to love myself. When I stood in front of a mirror and, regardless of whether I believed the words yet, I chose to say them anyway. *"Hey girl. I love you."*

Not because I felt it. But because recovery taught me that sometimes love is a decision long before it becomes a feeling.

As I began to offer myself the same grace, encouragement, and non-judgmental empathy I had so freely given to everyone else, something changed. I started showing up differently- not depleted, not desperate for affirmation- but grounded. Whole. Present.

And from that place of wholeness, life began to grow in ways I never could have orchestrated.

One of those gifts was marrying the love of my life— something I truly never saw coming. We met in the very place where we had both found healing. A place where we were no longer just surviving but learning how to live. A place where we were working to offer hope to others walking the same road we once had. He is in recovery too. Our love was born not out of chaos, but out of honesty, stability, and shared healing. That kind of love doesn't happen without the work.

If I truly care about showing up for others-about genuinely and authentically serving hurting hearts— I have to show up for myself first. I have to give Jamie the same compassion I give the CEO and the homeless addict alike. The same cheers. The same belief. The same grace.

Because if I don't love the woman I fought so hard to



DRUG & ALCOHOL ADDICTION
Care Through Compassion

Available 24-hours
Quick Transportation
602-782-9500



become with the same reckless abandon I hope to love the world with, I will always wonder why my car keeps running on empty.

Of all the souls I long to fully show up for in this life, she has to be first in line.

And here's the beautiful truth: the love I give to Jamie, first doesn't stay there. It spills outward. It strengthens my marriage. It deepens my friendships. It makes my service sustainable instead of sacrificial.

Selfless service doesn't begin with self-neglect.

It begins with self-respect.

It's not about me. But it does start with me.

And today, when I look myself in the mirror and say, "I love you," I finally believe it.

Jamie Humphrey is a woman in recovery who believes healing is possible for anyone. She lives in Phoenix Arizona with her husband, whom she met while both were doing the work of recovery and helping others find hope. Jamie walks alongside adolescents and their families seeking healing and hope at Horizon Recovery.



HORIZON RECOVERY
Supporting Teens & Families Through Mental Health & Co-Occurring Challenges

- Mental health & co-occurring care for teens 12-17
- Residential, PHP, IOP, therapy & medication management in Arizona
- Family, group, individual therapy, education support & experiential programs

Phone: 480-219-7098
Email: kflack@horizonrecovery.com

Questions or want to collaborate? Contact Kenny Flack:



Resilience, Accountability, and Power of Community

By Kara Janssen

I grew up believing that strength meant surviving everything on my own. For years, I carried trauma, addiction, and hardship in silence, convinced that asking for help was weakness. That belief eventually led me down a path that ended in incarceration—an experience that broke me open, stripped me down, and ultimately rebuilt me into the woman I am today. My story is not one of perfection or easy redemption. It is a story of resilience, accountability, and the power of community. It is a story of how lived experience can become leadership, and how one voice can spark a movement.

When I entered prison, I felt like the world had given up on me. I had given up on myself too. Addiction had taken so much from me—my stability, my relationships, my sense of worth. But inside those walls, I met women whose stories mirrored my own. Women who had survived violence, poverty, trauma, and systems that punished them for the very conditions they were born into. Women who were brilliant, compassionate, and capable, yet treated as disposable. Their stories lit a fire in me. I realized that the system wasn't broken—it was functioning exactly as designed. And if anything was going to change, it would have to start with us.

During my incarceration, I made a commitment to myself: when I got out, I would not stay silent. I would use my voice to fight for the women I left behind. I would work to change the policies that kept families apart, that criminalized addiction and mental health, and ignored the humanity of the people inside. I didn't know how I would do it yet, but I knew I had to try.

Navigating the Reentry Maze

When I came home, rebuilding my life wasn't easy. Reentry is a maze of barriers—housing, employment, stigma, and the constant pressure to prove your worthiness. But I stayed sober, stayed focused, and stayed connected to the community that had held me up when I couldn't hold myself. I found purpose in advocacy, and advocacy found purpose in me.

My journey led me to the ACLU of Arizona, where I eventually led the organizing department. There, I learned how to build campaigns, mobilize communities, and speak truth to power. I learned how to turn lived experience into strategy, and how to help others do the same. I testified at the State Capitol, trained directly impacted people to share their stories, and built coalitions that centered the voices of those most affected by the criminal legal system.



iStock Credit:Urupong

"When I came home, rebuilding my life wasn't easy. Reentry is a maze of barriers—housing, employment, stigma, and the constant pressure to prove your worthiness. But I stayed sober, focused, and connected."

I knew there was more work to do—work that needed to be led by people who had lived it. That's why I founded **We Stand AZ**, a nonprofit dedicated to empowering justice-impacted individuals through storytelling, advocacy, and community organizing. Our mission is simple: to ensure that the people closest to the problem are leading the solutions.

At **We Stand AZ**, we train people to tell their stories using Marshall Ganz's public narrative framework—teaching them how to connect their personal experiences to systemic issues and policy change. We help them speak at the Capitol, meet with lawmakers, and advocate for reforms that will bring people home sooner, expand reentry support, and treat addiction and mental health as public health issues—not crimes.

One of the policies I'm fighting for today is a bill that would allow people to earn release after serving 65% of their sentence through good behavior and participation in programming. This bill isn't just about numbers—it's about families. It's about mothers returning to their children, fathers rebuilding their lives, and individuals who have proven their growth being given a real chance to come home. I'm working with multiple legislators to educate the public and other lawmakers about why this matters. And I'm carrying the stories of the women at Perryville with me every step of the way.

As **We Stand AZ** grows, so does our movement. We are building a community where justice-impacted people, loved ones, and allies can come together to create real change. "Anyone who wants to be part of this work can get involved in meaningful ways."

Justice-impacted individuals can participate in our storytelling workshops, learn to share their experiences with power and purpose, and use their voices to influence policy at the Capitol. Loved ones and community members can join us at events, volunteer, support advocacy efforts, and stand alongside directly impacted people as we push for sentencing reform, reentry support, and public health-centered approaches to addiction and mental health. People can also help by attending trainings, assisting with outreach, or supporting our campaigns. Every voice strengthens the movement, and every story helps shift the system. At **We Stand AZ**, there is a place for anyone who believes in healing, accountability, and the power of community to transform lives.

Today, I lead **We Stand AZ** with a vision rooted in healing, dignity, and systemic change. I run workshops for women returning from prison, build partnerships with organizations across the state, and organize events like the **Day of Empathy** with Dream.org—where justice-impacted people meet directly with lawmakers to share their stories and advocate for reform.

My story is not just my own. It belongs to every woman who has been told she is too broken to rise. It belongs to every person who has survived addiction, incarceration, and stigma. It belongs to the community that lifted me up and the movement we are building together.

I stand today not despite my past, but because of it. And I will continue to fight until every person impacted by the criminal legal system has the opportunity to heal, return home, and thrive.

Reach Kara by email at kjconsultingcommunity@gmail.com



ARIZONA WOMEN'S RECOVERY CENTER

Outpatient Substance Use Treatment for Women

Supportive Housing | Education & Career Services | Family Support



AWRC has programs available for **women seeking recovery**, including women who are **parenting or co-parenting, pregnant or postpartum, single, homeless, and/or justice-involved.**



Recovery Brings Joy!

602-264-6214

azwomensrecoverycenter.org

12

FEBRUARY 2026 . . . Togetheraz.com

Freedom in Five Short Chapters

by Marlo Archer
(A Pastiche of "Autobiography in Five Short Chapters" by Portia Nelson*)



iStock Credit:Paper Trident

- I.
- I check my notifications.
A friend has invited me to an event.
That friend just went on a cruise.
Cruise ships have lots of art.
I share some of the art with a cousin.
- II.
- I check my notifications.
An artist has released a new song.
An extravagant dance show appears.
Followed by my friend’s dog in an airport.
I wish her well on her journey.
- III.
- I check my notifications.
Ladies my age are dancing together.
I click to learn more.
This costs too much.
I close the app.
- IV.
- I check my notifications,
Then put down my phone.
- V.
- I turn off notifications.

Having crawled out from under several oppressive substances and problematic behavior patterns, I find myself, as a sober addict, routinely losing hours staring at my phone, looking at one carefully cultivated offering after another, having once again failed to get to “the end of the internet.”

At least with drugs or alcohol, or even with food, sooner or later, I would run out of whatever it was. I’d have to leave where I was to get more. Even then, I would eventually run out of money to buy more. I’d have to stop and sell something or go to work at a job. Finally, there was a limit to what I could consume. I would ultimately pass out, dead to the world for half a day or longer.

Amusing content, on the other hand, seems to be absolutely limitless and costs me only what I would already pay to use my telephone and household electricity. I need not approach any unsavory characters to purchase illegal items. I need not drive into seedy neighborhoods under the cover of night. I don’t even need to stop some of the things I’m doing to keep the entertainment flowing.

Teen Challenge of Arizona
Helping Youth, Adults, and Families

HOME OF HOPE Women & Children 520-252-3523	PHOENIX MEN’S CENTER For Men 18 and up 602-708-9475	SPRINGBOARD Home for Girls (12-17) 520-730-4269

“My addiction had grown into something I could no longer control. Then I found Teen Challenge. Now I have a new life, free from drugs!”

TCAZ.ORG
The faith-based solution to the drug epidemic.

**Serenity House,
Goodyear, AZ**
HERJourney: Empowered Women,
Empowered Lives Program

Prioritize Your Wellness & Recovery, Starting Today
call 623-748-7633 or email
serenityhouse828@gmail.com

Community Living Environment
A safe, sober home where women can focus on reentry and their healing journey.

Designed for Women
Women must be 25+ years of age or older, referred from a treatment program or justice-impacted status and sober for 60 days.

Empowered Women: Wellness & Success
Women are encouraged to engage with 12-step and wellness/recovery programs to build community and accountability.

Be Invested - Stay Engaged
Designed to support women in their journey, helping them take the critical steps toward a healthy and self-sufficient life.

Commit to work a personalized recovery wellness plan through the HERJourney: Empowered Women Program.

- We are recovery centered.
- We live victoriously.
- We live according to the visions of the future and are not stuck in the past.
- We Decree It!

Website: www.decreconsult.com/serenity-house
Email: serenityhouse828@gmail.com

Program Fees:
The HERJourney program at the Serenity House offers a private room (when available) at \$225 per week and shared rooms at \$200 per week. These fees cover housing, Wi-Fi, utilities, and access to on-site laundry amenities.

"I invite you now to join me in turning off your notifications wherever and whenever you can. The living, breathing world needs you."

So much content is actually uplifting, educational, useful, clever, pleasant, friendly, cooperative, neighborly, organized, delightful, cheerful, innovative, enlightening, good-natured, festive, revealing, advisory, edifying, and lovely; that I hardly remember to feel guilty for the hours I pour into the small black box in my hand.

Surely I must be enhanced by reading quotes by Ghandi and poems by Rumi; by listening to guided meditations by Tara Brach and Jack Kornfield; and by watching self-help videos by Gabor Mate, Brene Brown, and Jon Kabat-Zinn. If watching 5 videos is good, watching 10 must be better, right? Well, it turns out 1 video might be too many because 1000 won’t be enough and I have outrageously easy access to that thousand and a thousand thousand more.

I invite you now to join me in turning off your notifications wherever and whenever you can. The living, breathing world needs you.

*Nelson, P. (1993). "Autobiography in Five Short Chapters" from There's a hole in my sidewalk: The romance of self-discovery. New World Library.

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.



Setting Yourself Up for Success

By Caitlin Alfonso, LMSW

Whether you are kick-starting off a new year with some new goals and intentions or deciding it's time for a random reset and refresh, there are certain steps you can take to better set yourself up for success. It's important to build a strong foundation support you as you try new things, increase your confidence, or create better habits. Here are three questions to consider prior to deep diving into your goals.



iStock Credit: peshkov

Ask yourself:

Are your intentions clearly defined?

Think about it, you wouldn't build a house without blueprints. Do you know exactly what you hope to achieve? Are you building a log cabin or a mansion – very different vibes, right? The same should apply to your goals. Think of it as your own personal blueprint. What specifically are you trying to do? When do you want to achieve this goal?

Who is your support system?

Another important consideration is who you turn to on the days you feel discouraged? Who can give you that pep-talk when you are feeling deflated? Our support system is important and can be diverse. Perhaps you thought of some family or friends? Perhaps if your goal is related to a sport, you might think of your coaches as part of your support system. However, you might think of teachers, neighbors, mentors, and therapists, who you can also turn to for support. People don't have to be related to us to be impactful on our journeys. The key is to simply identify trustworthy people who can hold space for you when you feel down.

Why is this important to you?

This final question is important, perhaps the most important question of all. Why is this important to you? Spoiler alert – if it's not important to you, then you won't likely put the work in to achieve it. Also, if it's only important to you for a superficial reason, like your friends are doing it, then that may not be a strong enough why.



Caitlin Alfonso is a creative thinker who has a passion for seeing potential in people and places and taking small ideas to new levels. She is a lover of coffee, travel, and books. She enjoys time with family, friends, and her dog.

By degree, Caitlin is a Licensed Master Social Worker in the state of Arizona. Her passion is with youth and has more than 15 years of experience working in various settings, including juvenile detention and probation, non-profit sector, parks and recreation, public schools, community, and hospital behavioral health. In addition to currently working as a medical social worker, Caitlin operates her own consulting business, teaches at Arizona State University, and serves on the Board of Directors for **I Am Teen Strong**, a local non-profit.

practical tips for Relieving Stress

- Pay attention to your **physical self**
- Use known **cop**ing skills
- Take **deep** breaths
- Body **movement**
- Talk with **others**
- Listen to **music**

LOVE STARTS from page 7

Spiritual: Spiritually, self-love supports inner calm and resilience by helping you find your center, feel grounded and connect to something larger than yourself.

Be Mindful: Practicing gratitude, prayer, meditation, and/or mindfulness are all simple ways you can create a sense of peace and inner balance each day.

Get Outside: Connecting with nature can help quiet your mind and promote time for self-reflection and self-discovery. If you live in Arizona and going outside is not an option in the summer months to come, go outside in your mind. Try this visualization exercise: Close your eyes. Take a slow breath, and imagine yourself in a peaceful place out in nature. Feel the warmth of the sun on your face. Listen to the gentle sound of birds around you. Feel the light breeze of wind on your skin. Notice your body slowly relaxing with each breath you take.

The Recap:

This February, let's redefine love. Caring for your physical, emotional, social and spiritual well-being isn't selfish, it's preventative, empowering and necessary. When you love your heart through daily acts of self-care, you're not only improving the quality of your life today, you're protecting your heart and your health for the years to come. **Remember: Love starts with you.**

Did you know? Friday, February 6 is National Wear Red Day®. Wear red to raise awareness of heart health.

About the author:

As a purpose-driven optimist, Abby Rallo pairs her experience as an educator with her duty to serve as a registered nurse to provide hope to humans. She is a firm believer that 'giving makes you richer' and even on her worst day, she aims to spread joy and kindness to others. Learn more about how Abby combines her values with innovative, evidence-based therapeutic programming at vialindabehavioral.com



Resources

- Go Red for Women. (n.d.). The facts about women and heart disease. American Heart Association. <https://www.goredforwomen.org/en/about-heart-disease-in-women/facts>
- National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute [NHLBI]. (n.d.). National Wear Red Day® & American Heart Month. <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/education/american-heart-month>
- National Institute of Health [NIH]. (2025). DASH Eating Plan. National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/education/dash-eating-plan>

JOB FAIR

STEPS TO RECOVERY HOMES CONNECTION ROOM

637 N MAIN ST, STE. 2E
COTTONWOOD, AZ 86326

DATE
FEBRUARY 12, 2026

TIME
3:30 PM – 6:30 PM

**Early Admission at 3:00 pm for
Veterans, Seniors 55+ and
Disabled Job Seekers**

INQUIRIES
575.704.0069
Quinton@StepsToRecoveryHomes.org

Follow QR To Learn More!

Sponsored by:

TGAZ Recovery Partners

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
Axiom Care	602-782-9500	axiomcareofaz.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	
Horizon Recovery Center	480-219-7098	
Hushabye Nursery	480-628-7500	hushabyenursery.org
The Meadows Behavioral Health	800-632-3697	meadowsBH.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
NorthSight Recovery	833-787-9718	northsightrecovery.com
Psychological Counseling Services (PCS)	480-947-5739	pcsintensive.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
Spiritually Fit- Co-op	602-809-0854	spirituallyfitco-op.com
Brough Stewart, MC, LPC, NCC	602-316-3197	
Steps to Recovery/Konnect	928-649-0077	konnctwellness.org
Valley Hospital	602-952-3939	valleyhospital-phoenix.com
Via Linda Behavioral Hospital	480-476-7210	vialindabehavioral.com
Virtue Recovery Center	866-338-6977	virtuerecoverycitywest.com
Teen Challenge AZ	602-708-9475	tcaz.org

Additional Resources

AZ. Dept. of Health	602-364-2086
AZ Holistic Approach Counseling	602-529-1967
Arizona Opioid Assistance Helpline	888-688-4222
Ericks House	855-894-5658
Desert Drug Dog	602-908-2042
Hunkapi Programs	480-393-0870
Kid in the Corner	kidinthecorner.org
EMPACT/La Frontera	800-273-8255
I Am Teen Strong	480-396-2409
Mental Health Center of America	602-704-2345
PAL Parents of Addicted Loved Ones	palgroup.org
Recovery Café	480-530-7090
TERROS Health	602-685-6000

<u>TUCSON</u>	
ACA	aca-arizona.org
AA	520-624-4183
Al-Anon Info Service	520-323-2229
Anger Management	520-887-7079
Behavioral Awareness Center	520 629 9126
Co-Anon Family Groups	520-513-5028
Cocaine Anonymous	520-326-2211
Cornerstone Behavioral Health	520-222-8268
Cottonwood Tucson	800-877-4520
Crisis Intervention	520-323-9373
Narcotics Anonymous	520-881-8381
Nicotine Anonymous	520-299-7057
Overeaters Anonymous	520-733-0880
Recovery in Motion	520-975-2141
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

EDA Meetings

Sat. 10:30 am New Freedom Meeting —
Pigeon Coop .4415 S Rural Rd, Ste 8, Tempe
AZ. Step and big book study.

Thur. 7:00 P.M.
New Happiness Meeting
Crossroads
2103 E Southern, Tempe. Rotating format-
Step, Topic, Big Book, Speaker.

Refuge Recovery
Wednesday, 6:00-7:00 pm, Red Tree
Meditation Center, 1234 E 16th St. Tucson
Saturday, 5:00- 6:30 pm,*Palo Verde room*
Saint Philip's in the Hills Episcopal Church.
4440 N Campbell Ave., Tucson

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
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	520-338-9307
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

Arizona’s Original 12 Step Bookstore



480-483-6006

The Valley’s largest collection of gifts, medallions and
selection of books to enhance your recovery journey.

Open Monday through Saturday

10427 N. Scottsdale Road (SE corner of Shea & Scottsdale Rd)



SCOTTSDALE RECOVERY®

📍 8149 N 87th Place, Scottsdale, AZ 85258

888-NODRUGS or (602) 346-9142

SRC® C.A.R.E Academy

SRC® Whole Person Care to Achieve Health Equity: Providing Our Community with Detoxification, Inpatient, Residential, Outpatient Services.

Stop by Our Outpatient Facility and Visit the New SRC® C.A.R.E. Academy.

LEARN MORE →



WHAT IS WHOLE PERSON CARE?

Our patient-centered approach leverages a wide range of resources through our social determinants of health resource center to provide physical, behavioral, and social support. The goal is to achieve better care coordination, well-being, and health outcomes, all while incorporating the patient's preferences, choices and ultimately achieving health equity.



CALL 888-NO-DRUGS

SOCIOECONOMIC FACTORS



PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT



HEALTH BEHAVIORS



HEALTH CARE

