



Recovery Notes

Susan F. Walsh, Ph.D. LCSW

Scientific Recovery

COMPASSIONATE • PRIVATE • PERSONALIZED • PROVEN

For Problems with Alcohol

OUTPATIENT TREATMENT FOR HIGH-PROFILE WOMEN

2012 • ISSUE 2



Basic Principles of Recovery

Women who successfully recover from their problems with alcohol tend to do certain basic things. The value of following specified recovery principles has been demonstrated repeatedly. However, not every woman who recovers does exactly the same things. Once a woman understands herself and the basic principles of recovery and high-risk situation management, she can build an effective personal program for herself.

The principles of recovery are actually habits of healthy living. Any woman who wants to live a responsible, healthy, fulfilling life will

follow these principles. For women who want to recover from their drinking problems, practicing these principles each day is essential. A regular schedule of activities designed to match her unique profile of recovery needs is necessary for a woman to recover and to avoid relapse.

PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING

A successful recovery program calls for regular attendance at recovery education meetings, group therapy sessions, or individual therapy sessions. The literature on treatment effectiveness shows that the more time a woman invests in professional counseling and therapy during the first two years of her recovery, the greater her success.

Professional counseling focuses on identifying and analyzing the problems that are caused by alcohol use and deciding what to do. Both motivation and ambivalence are explored and addressed. High-risk situations are identified, management strategies are prepared, and relapse intervention plans are developed. The ongoing work with the professional helps to strengthen a woman's ability to break free of automatic self-defeating responses, to learn to live consciously and mindfully each day, being aware of and taking responsibility for what she is doing and the consequences of her behavior.

SELF-HELP PROGRAMS

There are several self-help programs that can support a woman in her efforts to live a sober life. The largest and best known is Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). These

Susan F. Walsh, Ph.D. LCSW

333 East Ontario Street Chicago, IL 60611 • (312)642-4333 • www.scientificrecovery.com

programs ask a woman: (1) to abstain from alcohol and drugs and to live a responsible life; (2) to regularly attend meetings so that she can meet and develop relationships with other people who are living sober and responsible lives; and, (3) to meet regularly with an estab-

The literature on treatment effectiveness shows that the more time a woman invests in professional counseling and therapy during the first two years of her recovery, the greater her success.

lished member of the group who will help her learn about the organization and help her get through the rough spots. These self-help organizations promote a program of recovery that centers on techniques for changing thinking, emotional management, urge management, and behavior. Research shows that, the more committed and actively involved a woman is in self-help groups during the first two years of recovery, the greater her ability to avoid relapse.

HEALTHY DIET

What a woman eats can affect how she thinks, feels, and acts. Many chemically dependent women find that they feel better if they eat a healthy, well-balanced diet, avoid eating sugar, and cut back on drinking beverages containing caffeine, such as coffee and colas. Consultation with a

nutritionist during the early months of recovery can assist a woman in learning about her own personal nutritional needs and support her to feel her best in recovery.

EXERCISE PROGRAM

Doing thirty minutes of aerobic exercise six days a week can promote overall health and wellbeing and help a woman to feel better about herself. Brisk walking, jogging, swimming, and classes with aerobic activities are all helpful. Strength building, flexibility exercises, and yoga also advance a woman's health.

STRESS MANAGEMENT

Stress is a major cause of relapse. Recovering women who learn how to manage stress without using self-defeating behaviors tend to have a more successful recovery. Those who don't tend to relapse. Stress management includes living in the present, learning relaxation techniques, and taking quiet personal time on a daily basis to rest and relax. It also involves avoiding long hours of working, taking time for recreation and relaxation, and developing supportive personal relationships.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Human beings have both a physical self (body and brain) and a non-physical self (values, ideals, beliefs.) Most women in recovery find that they need to invest in

developing the non-physical aspects of who they are. They need to consciously reflect on their spiritual selves, by paying attention to and working to live by their values and ideals. Values such as personal strength, commitment, gratitude, honesty, mindfulness, empathy, forgiveness, and kindness become more central. Twelve-step programs such as AA offer an excellent program for spiritual development, as do many communities of faith and fellowship.

Most women in recovery find that they need to invest in developing the non-physical aspects of who they are. They need to consciously reflect on their spiritual selves, by paying attention to and working to live by their values and ideals.

DAILY INVENTORIES

Women who successfully recover develop methods to stay consciously aware and mindful each day of what they are doing and the consequences of their behavior. They take time each morning to plan their day. And, they take time each evening to review their progress and their problems. They discuss what they have learned about themselves with their professional counselors and others who are involved in their recovery program.

In planning a program of recovery for herself, a woman is advised to think about her recovery as if she were hiking in the mountains and had to jump across a gorge that is three feet wide and 100 feet deep. It's better to jump two feet too far than to risk jumping one inch too short. The same is true of recovering from alcohol problems. It is better for a woman to plan to do more than she may need than to risk not doing enough.

– Susan Walsh, Ph.D. LCSW

Scientific Recovery

Scientific Recovery is an evidence-based treatment program for women seeking state-of-the-art, individual therapy for problem drinking. Our focus is on professional women who have recognized that alcohol is a problem they no longer want in their lives. Our goal is to assist women not only to eliminate their alcohol dependence, but also to be happy that they did.



Susan F. Walsh, Ph.D. LCSW

333 East Ontario Street
Chicago, Illinois 60611
(312) 642-4333

www.scientificrecovery.com