

# Survive the Pandemic & Build a New Life Beyond Addiction

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**SMART Recovery USA President**

**SMART Recovery International Board of Directors**

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# My Personal Journey



It's not what happens to you, but  
how you react to it that matters.

Epictetus

- My story is not uncommon
- Learned to ask for help—  
hard for men
- Found the motivation  
in my own reasons  
to recover
- I turned struggle  
into passion

# Self-Empowered Recovery & Life Management

## STOICISM

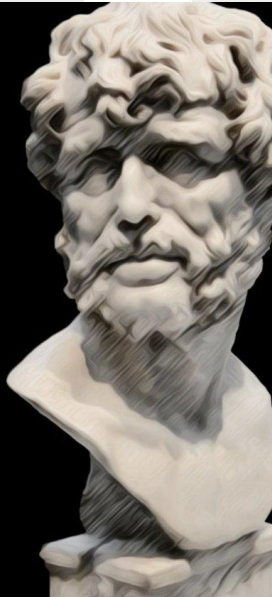
Recognise what you can and cannot control

You determine your reaction to a crisis

Ignore people dominated by their own negative emotions

Master yourself and aim to be virtuous

Learn to move on



Change what cannot be accepted and accept what cannot be changed.

Reinhold Niebuhr

quote fancy

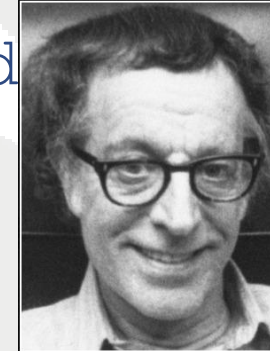
When we are no longer able to change a situation – we are challenged to change ourselves.

Viktor E. Frankl

quote fancy

# Serenity Prayer – SMART's View

- Serenity to accept what cannot be changed
  - Pandemic
  - What others think of us
  - Own imperfections
  - Unconditional, Life, Other, and Self Acceptance
- SMART focuses on courage to change what we can
  - How we think and feel about what we experience
  - What we can do today and tomorrow to grow and improve
- Wisdom to know the difference and act
  - Embrace individual responsibility



The attitude of unconditional self-acceptance is probably the most important variable in their long-term recovery.

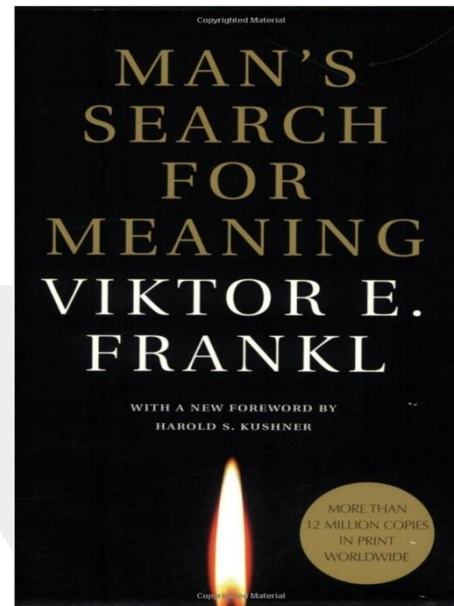
— Albert Ellis —

AZ QUOTES

# Viktor Frankl: Auschwitz Concentration Camp

## *Man's Search for Meaning*

- Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.
- This is the essence of SMART Recovery



# SMART Recovery 4-Point Program<sup>®</sup>

Works For Addiction and Other Life Challenges



All Needed to Overcome Any Addictive Behavior

# 4-Point Program and Pandemic

## ➤ ABC Model for Points 2 and 3

➤ **A** = Activating/Aggravating Event

➤ Isolation, boredom, quarantine

➤ **C** = Consequences

➤ Unmanageable anxiety - I-can't-stand-it "itis"

➤ Buy two-year supply of toilet paper and handwipes

➤ Relapse, overdose, die



# 4-Point Program and Pandemic

## ➤ AC B Model - Focus on the B

➤ **B** = Beliefs

➤ Govern what we feel and how we act

➤ Unfair, unbearable, never end, nothing to do, alone & unloved, stuck with family I can't stand

➤ Unhelpful, Irrational, Extreme Beliefs  
Lead to Bad Consequences

B ——— > C



# 4-Point Program and Pandemic

## ➤ Next Steps

- **D** = Dispute unhelpful beliefs
- **E** = Substitute Effective beliefs
  - Attend online meetings, talk with family and friends, take walks, exercise
  - I can stand this for a few more months
  - Complete long overdue house projects
- **F** = Family and friends must help their loved ones
  - Especially during epidemic-pandemic



# SMART = Self-Management and Resilience Training

- Knowing the beliefs that govern experience empowers us to control how we respond to adverse events
- We develop resilience
- Molehills don't become mountains
- We can endure life's most tragic events, such as the death of a loved one



# Origins and History

## Why SMART?

- **Millions More Need Something Else**
  - Many Paths to Recovery
  - Self-Empowerment / Power to Choose
- **Science-Based Addiction Recovery**
  - Behavioral Change / Psychosocial Support
  - Medications (MAT)

# Origins and History

## ➤ **SMART Recovery (1994)**

- Nonprofit Formed in Split from Rational Recovery
- Rational Recovery Became For-Profit Online Program, No Groups

## ➤ **Addiction Treatment Professionals created SMART based on science**

- Cognitive Therapies to Change Behavior
- Motivational Therapies to Find Power to Change

## ➤ **Integrated Science into Support Group Meetings Led by Experienced Peers**

- Helped Family Members or Friends Recover
- Recovered from Addiction
- Trained to use Science Tools

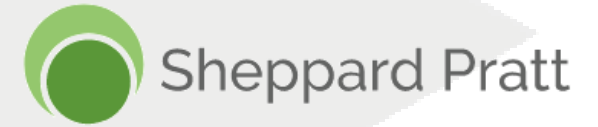
## ➤ **SMART Is Only Professional-Peer Partnership**



# Endorsed By

- National Institute on Drug Abuse
- National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
- Federal Bureau of Prisons
- National Institute of Drug Court Professionals
- American Society of Addiction Medicine
- National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (UK)
- Government Health Agencies in Australia, Denmark, Ireland

# Best Hospitals for Psychiatry Host SMART Recovery Meetings



# SMART Today

- **Largest Community of Support Groups Based on**
  - Self-Empowerment
  - Science (CBT, Motivational Interviewing)
- **3,400 Groups Meet Weekly, 27 Countries**
  - Most in U.S., 2,000+
  - Large Numbers in UK, Australia, Canada

# SMART Recovery Online Community

- National Meetings – [www.smartrecovery.org/community](http://www.smartrecovery.org/community)
- Growing international community for over 20 years
- Starting using the Zoom platform in 2018
- Converted 500+ local meetings online during COVID-19
- 57 online meetings in US a week
- Individual
- Family & Friends
- Teens
- Spanish
- Veterans





# How to Find Local Online Meetings

- Local Online Meetings – [www.smartrecoverytest.org/local](http://www.smartrecoverytest.org/local)
- Search by zip code to find a meeting in your area



The screenshot shows the SMART Recovery Local Meetings website. The header is dark blue with the SMART Recovery logo (25th anniversary 1994-2019) and the text 'SMART Recovery Local Meetings'. Navigation links include Home, Meetings, Shop, Donate, Contact, and For Facilitators. The main content area features a large image of four people in a meeting. Overlaid on the image is the text 'Search SMART Recovery Meetings in Your Area' and a red banner with a note about COVID-19. Below the banner is a search box with a location input field, a location icon, and a search button.

**Search SMART Recovery Meetings in Your Area**

**Note:** Many of our local meetings have been temporarily moved online due to COVID-19. You may find online Zoom meeting details in place of local meeting information in your search results. Read more about our response to COVID-19.

Type your location (any of: address/city/state/zip) in the search box (or click the  icon to automatically enter your location), then click the search button!

Location  Search

# SMART Recovery

## Online Meetings Provide

- Experienced facilitators
- Convenience
- Security
- Privacy
- Opportunity for additional communication with participants outside of scheduled meeting



# Why Building a Life Beyond Addiction Is Important

- Stopping the addictive behavior is just the beginning of recovery
- A high percentage of people relapse within the first year of recovery
- Can't fully stop until you build a new life

# Build a New Life Beyond Addiction

- **Recovery Is Possible and Achievable**
  - 22 Million in US Alone
  - Addiction is not cancer, heart disease, or kidney failure
    - Numerous interventions to treat it
      - Evidence-based therapies, medications, ever-growing diversity of support groups

# Build a New Life Beyond Addiction

- Using Tools to Build a New Lifestyle
- **VACI – Vital Absorbing Creative Interest**
  - Can help bring back the simple pleasure of living a life free of substances and unhelpful behaviors. When we get overly involved in any one activity, be it helpful or not so helpful, we cut a lot out of our lives that we used to enjoy. Finding a balance can restore the fun and enjoyment that life has to offer. So how can we get back to those simple pleasures of life?

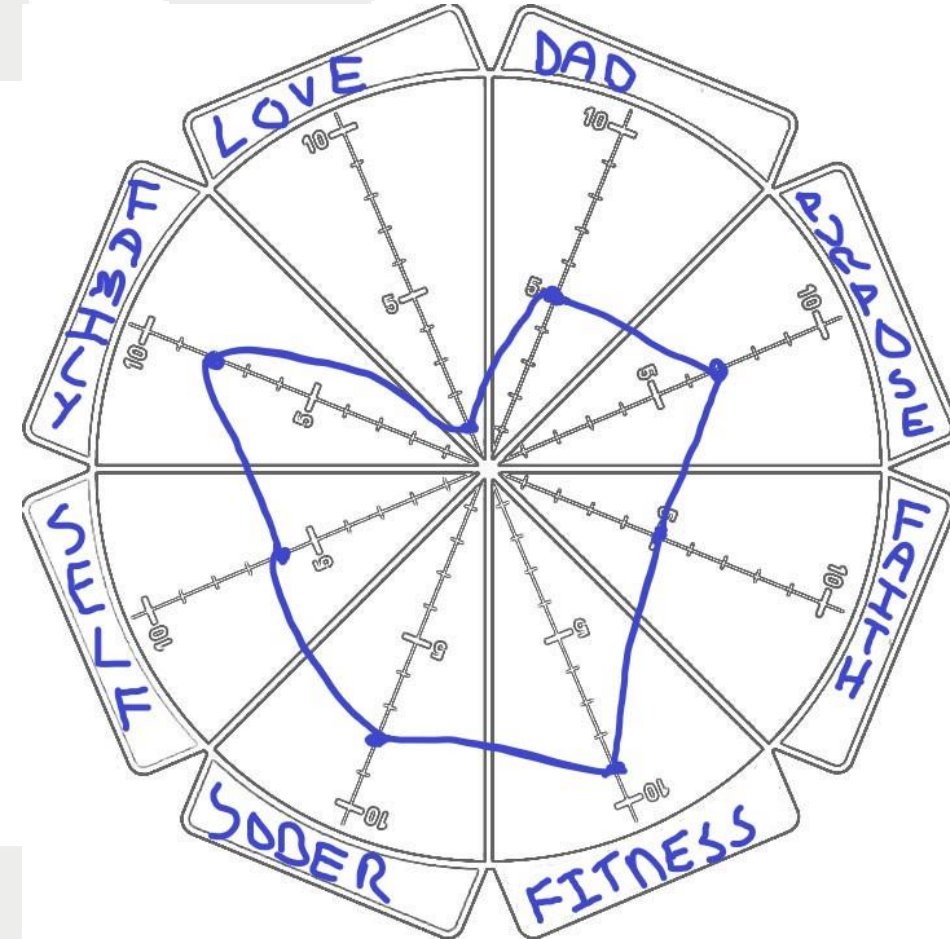
Chores & Tasks	Exercise	Food Activities	Games	Graphic Arts	Handicraft Activities	Humorous Activities	Martial Arts	Outdoor Activities
Personal Growth	Reading	Scientific Activities	Socializing Activities	Spectating	Sports	Studying Academic Subjects	Trades & Crafts	Venting Feelings

# Build a New Life Beyond Addiction

➤ Using Tools to Build a New Lifestyle

➤ **Lifestyle Balance Pie**

- Two main actions lead to a balanced lifestyle. First, understand and respect each important areas of your life. Second, change your perspective in areas where you are stuck.
- The exercise helps how how you're dividing your time and effort and any changes needed—perfect balance not required.



# Recovery for a Higher Purpose

“The greatest danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high, and we miss it, but that it is too low, and we reach it.” ~ Michelangelo

It is one of the most beguiling qualities of the experience of addiction: it sucks up everything of importance in your life and casts those cherished assets into the remotest reaches of one's heart, leaving nothing but itself. This all occurs an inch at a time and second by second—in increments so small they escape the category of decisions.

It is at the end of such a process that one cluster of fears stands greater than the full awareness of what has been lost. That is the terror of one's own emptiness and the gaping nothingness of one's future. Those latter breakthroughs of consciousness can fuel unending cycles of oblivion and sickness and take damaged souls to, or beyond, the brink of suicide.

These same fears pose a significant obstacle to recovery initiation. That's why the promise of recovery must offer more than the removal of alcohol and other drugs from one's life. For the person staring into the abyss, the promise of recovery to a life of meaning and purpose may be far more potent than the promise of recovery from addiction. ~ Bill White

# Hero's Journey

- **Must get rid of the stigma. People in recovery cannot be anonymous.**
  - Extraordinary people who've rebuilt their lives, amplified recovery
  - Find these people, celebrate them
  - SMART Recovery volunteers incredibly compassionate, empathic, passionate
  - Support them more, help them with compassion fatigue, burnout
  - Need to recruit a lot more volunteers to support our growth worldwide
    - Especially in the U.S. during this epidemic-pandemic



# Help Us, Help Others

## ➤ Join SMART Recovery

➤ Volunteer, facilitate, fundraise, donate



# Thank You

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## **Cigna Behavioral Health Awareness**

If you are a Cigna customer and have questions about Substance Use treatment or about your benefits and how to use them, please contact:

Stephanie Gissal - 800.274.7603 x398516

Alex Turner - 800.274.7603 x513597

Wanda Russell – 800.274.7603 x342063