

StepByStep, Recovery Newsletter



From our Directors...

We would like to wish everyone a very happy and safe holiday. The Holiday's are often very tough for us and we need to be very vigilant with our program to keep us clean and sober. If we take it one step, one day, at a time, we can do it!

Christmas gift suggestions: To your enemy, forgiveness. To an opponent, tolerance. To a friend, your heart. To a customer, service. To all, charity. To every child, a good example. To yourself, respect. (quote from Oren Arnold)

With Much Love & Gratitude,
Bridget & Veronica

Holiday Stressors

Holidays present an increased risk of relapse for people in recovery from addiction and alcoholism. Learning to recognize stressors related to holidays and ways to cope with these stressors can help prevent a relapse during the holidays. Your risk for relapse is determined by how well you cope with increased stress. In early recovery, your ability to cope with stress without using can be very limited. This is partly because your use has been your only coping mechanism. You haven't learned or practiced other ways to cope without using. Also, in early recovery you are still experiencing some chemical, biological and psychological changes as a result of stopping your use, and your body has not yet adjusted. This adjustment is stressful in itself!

As you put more time and effort into your recovery, your coping skills and ability to cope improve. As you practice new coping skills and experience success with them, your confidence increases. As your confidence increases, your ability to cope also increases. The experience of successfully coping without relapsing increases the likelihood of continued successful coping and continued sobriety. Minimizing or denying the existence of stress, or exaggerating your ability to cope with stress can lead to relapse. An accurate assessment of stressors and a clear plan for coping with stressors will increase your chances for coping successfully.

Ways to Cope with Stressors

- Keep doing what you are already doing that has kept you clean and sober so far!
- Make a daily schedule and stick with it.
- If traveling, schedule phone meetings with your sponsor and find local meetings.
- Keep your phone list with you.
- Avoid stressors if possible and attend a meeting immediately after a stressor.
- Schedule sober activities that you enjoy.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Increase meetings.
- Write in your journal.
- Read meditations, literature or the Basic Text or the Big Book.
- Use breathing, relaxation and mindfulness skills.
- Think of urges and cravings as waves that will pass in time.
- Think of the benefits of staying clean and sober and the cost of a relapse.
- Identify and correct any irrational or addictive thoughts.
- Offer to help someone.
- Look at things from someone else's point of view.
- Memorize an affirmation and repeat it throughout the day. Use AA/NA slogans: A Day at a Time, Easy Does It, Progress Not Perfection, Let Go Let God, etc.
- Prepare and rehearse a positive way to respond to a particular stressor.
- Remember it is ok to make mistakes. That's what people do.
- Be able to laugh at yourself.
- Smile.
- Do something fun, go for a walk, to a movie, exercise, meditate, etc.
- Avoid negative self talk and practice positive self talk.
- Accept yourself as you are.
- Accept your feelings as normal, understandable and manageable.
- When people bring up past, using behavior let them know you are trying to change.
- When people say things that are hurtful, politely let them know that you don't appreciate it.
- Prepare a "no" response when someone asks you to use.
- If you're uncomfortable, leave.
- Avoid big scenes or drama.
- Make a deck of index cards with these coping skills. When triggered, pick a card and DO it!

Have a Happy Holiday!

From our hearts...

Why Am I Here?
Sometimes it's hard to remember why we are here, That's why I cannot forget that our Lord is near. Even if I feel like giving up – His word remains true – He will pick me up and always carry me through. At times I even feel like my life doesn't matter, And, I get lost in my problems and the world's endless chatter. But I do try my best and go to Him each day, And rely on Him to help me and show me the way. I get scared at times when everything gets tough It helps me to know He is there and can trust – For Him to watch over me and be by my side, As my Lord, my friend, and especially my guide So, when I get to feeling like no one here cares I take it to my Lord and with Him I share – Everything I'm feeling; the good and the bad, That always helps me not feel so much that is sad. So even though life is tough and I remember I'm blessed – And, just keep on keeping on and doing my best His blessings are plenty and for that I give him praise, And He will just keep sending them so don't be amazed. He makes miracles happen every second of each day And I watch for them as He sends them my way. I thank Him each time He helps me and others – Like for my daughter, my friends, and of course my mother. My Dad has gone on to live with Him up above – And, I know I will see him again with such love. So, after I think about why I am truly here... It is to share with others about Him being near.
Robin

Quote of the Month

The distance is nothing; it's only the first step that is difficult.
Marquise du Deffand

In the news...Drinking & Driving Facts / Myths

FACT: You are more likely to be in a drinking and driving accident **during the holidays**. Drinking and driving accidents occur with more frequency during holidays due to 'acceptable' drinking at parties and family functions. If at all possible, avoid the roads during major holidays such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, and the 4th of July.

MYTH: Coffee will help an impaired driver get home safely. Nothing could be further from the truth. While coffee can keep you awake from the caffeine, it in no way restores vision and other senses affected by alcohol.

FACT: Teenage drivers are at a higher risk to be involved in a drinking and driving accident. If you have teenage drivers, do whatever you can to ensure that they observe safe driving practices when they are on the road.

MYTH: Bigger people can drink more before driving because it won't have the same affect on them. Wrong again. While having food in your system will absorb more alcohol, just being big will not have the same effect. An overweight person who has not eaten recently will get just as drunk as anyone else when they have a few drinks.

Gwinnett County Detention Center Arrest Report for Nov 2011 (unofficial)

| Total Arrested | 2674 | Percentage |
|----------------------|------|------------|
| Drug/Alcohol Related | 620 | 23.19% |
| Males | 494 | 79.68% |
| Females | 126 | 20.32% |

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Up Coming Events: Seasons Greetings!

- December 25th— Christmas Day
- December 31st—New Year's Eve

Have a safe and happy holiday season!



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