

Contact Numbers

Serenity Lane
Alumni Office
10920 SW Barbur Blvd,
Portland, OR 97219

Information:
Shely Rahimi
503-244-4500 ext 8103
alumni@serenitylane.org

Happenings on Page 3



National Websites:

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)
www.aa.org or
www.alcoholicsanonymous.org

Narcotics Anonymous (NA)
www.na.org

Cocaine Anonymous (CA)
www.ca.org

For Family & Friends:
Al-Anon & Alateen:
www.OregonAl-Anon.org

**Adult Children of
Alcoholics (ACA)**
www.adultchildren.org

Serenity Lane...
1-800-543-9905
www.serenitylane.org



Stepping Together

Serenity Lane's Alumni Newsletter

Summer 2012

Saving lives and helping put families back together since 1973

Happy Summer Everyone!

In this issue we are focusing on ways to help you stay happy and healthy. It's easy to get complacent about our recovery when there's so many distractions during the summer: vacations, family reunions, weddings and fun in the sun. And as you all know... addiction is a patient enemy, waiting in the wings for an opportunity to creep back into your life. So let's get started with the most obvious... Enemy #1.

Relapse - What Is It & How Can You Avoid It?

A relapse is a recovering addict's return to the substance of choice -- or, more broadly, to any other substance that comes between a person and their reality. A craving is not a relapse unless the addict gives in and consumes the substance.

Some people who enter recovery for alcohol or another drug may be able to maintain abstinence from the first attempt. Others may suffer multiple relapses. Addicts and those close to them may be tempted to see relapse as a sign of weakness or failure. Experts say relapse is a part of the disease of addiction, and point to it as a learning process that can eventually lead to recovery. At the same time, it is important to take steps to prevent relapse as far as possible. With each relapse, the addict runs the risk of physical damage, legal entanglements, and dangerous behavior.

The following tips will help you understand and avoid relapse.

1. Obtain a network of recovery support

One of the hallmark behaviors of people who relapse is failure to obtain a network of support. The addicts tendency is to isolate, withdraw and to be convinced that he/she "has this taken care of on my own." That is an automatic prescription for relapse, because the addict thought processes are constantly searching for a way to make you drink, drug, and ultimately die.

For this reason, it is crucial that you connect with both program members and non-program members (for example, a sister or friend who does not have a drinking problem, but whom is very supportive of your seeking help) so that you have healthy people (and healthy thoughts) surrounding you.

Be honest with the people you trust about your efforts and verbalize your need for their support. This practice will feel awkward at first, but you will be surprised how many people really care about you and want you to be well.

....continued on page 4

These Tips were created by Blythe Landry, frequent contributor to the Substance Abuse section of the website: Lifetips.com



Newsletter Team:

Shely Rahimi: Editor

Angie Delaplain: Graphic Designer

Mary Daniels: Director

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR & ALUMNI COORDINATOR

“Change is inevitable... Growth is intentional.”

We are all survivors. Coping with disease can be overwhelming, but in that devastation, there are also rewards. By confronting this difficult crisis, we discover just how strong and resilient we can be. Whether it's addiction or any other chronic physical or mental health condition, the effort to accept the struggles and embrace the potential for growth is a large part of the process of healing.

A life of recovery is full of beauty and substance. Some of us have had to endure more than our share of suffering, but these experiences have a profound impact on our priorities and perspectives. We begin to live an intentional life, consciously choosing how to move through the world. We value our support system, appreciate our blessings, seize our opportunities and cherish our experiences. We gain insight into our own shortcomings and recognize our own self-worth.

Unlike many diseases, for those battling addiction, the solution does not come from a pharmacy or in an operating room. It involves a holistic transformation, enhancing every facet of life. Treatment provides the tools not just to stay alive, but to really live.

When we sink as low as rock bottom, we don't just rise out of it, we soar.

Hope to see you at the picnic in Eugene. Have a wonderful summer.

Shely



Happenings

Roseburg Alumni Activities....

Meets the Second Saturday of the month at 11:30am
Location varies. Contact: Mike G - 541-672-3232

2nd Annual BBQ Potluck

August 11, 2:00 p.m. until sunset
Singleton Park, Roseburg
For more information contact:
Mike G - 541-672-3232

Please join us for....

The Annual Alumni Picnic in Eugene

- Sunday, September 9, 2012
- Alton Baker Park, Eugene
- Lunch will be catered by
Boss Hawgs Express
**Lunch will be served
from 1-3 pm**
- Entertainment, Prizes & Fun for the whole family!



Break the Cycle of ALCOHOLISM

Skills for Healthy Sobriety

Geoff Colvin | Bob Wiese | Tina Wells

Book Alert

Hot off the press this year comes a book that many staff members at Serenity Lane can recommend.

Jerry Gjesvold, Manager of Employer Services (who has over 30 years of recovery) says this *"I found the content*

to be exceptionally beneficial for anyone who is trying to gain insight into the complexities of addiction and how to overcome the pain and suffering that active addiction causes."

Nadine Powell, RN, former staff member says:
"This book is a clear, easy-to-read and incredibly helpful manual for both the professional and lay person"

The book is published by Behavior Associates
www.behaviorassociates.org

TESTIMONIAL

Colby H's letter of thanks

Dear Serenity Lane,

I wanted to personally thank you for the opportunity to enroll and successfully complete the residential portion of this program. I'm really looking forward to getting started with Intensive Outpatient in Portland this coming Monday.

The scholarship that was so generously offered does not go unappreciated. I have learned many valuable tools and applications to apply to my life and recovery. Learning the 12-Step program and especially relapse prevention will enable me to continue my recovery with confidence, once integrated with the real world. Values and honesty were put to the wayside during my sickness, and this program is teaching me to be honest at all cost and live my life with healthy values that were instilled in me as a child.

Educating me in continued support has encouraged me to live in an Oxford House after treatment. I have learned through this program that I must be fully healthy as a man before I can be a healthy member of my family and society.

Once again thank you very much for your generosity and support. It really is quite possibly the greatest gift I have ever received!

Kind Regards,

Colby H.

Address Changes/Deletions

Help us keep our mailing list current.
Send changes or deletions to:

Shely Rahimi
Serenity Lane Alumni Office
10920 SW Barbur Blvd
Portland, OR 97219

or email to: alumni@serenitylane.org
or call Shely at **503-244-4500 ext 8103**



Preventing Relapse: *continued...*

2. Have a Plan.

One of the inevitable aspects of lifelong recovery from alcohol/drug abuse is that you will have cravings from time-to-time. The average craving only lasts about 60 seconds. It is the indulgence in the thought or the possibility of use that makes a negative thought or craving last for days on end. It is important that you have a plan in place for such moments. Here are some ideas:

- Have several support people on speed dial. This way, if one isn't available when you call, you can call someone else, and you don't have to take the time to look up any numbers.
- Stand Still. If you are standing in the middle of the street, you can't do anything silly (like drink or use).
- Just start running. Even in place. Again, this may sound silly, but you can run this thought off by focusing on something else.
- Have a round the clock list of meetings on hand. Go to one immediately if you can.
- Do the dishes.
- Take out the garbage.
- BREATHE through the feelings.

3. Know the Signs of a Potential Relapse

According to AA, relapse involves the resuming of pre-recovery use/behaviors and the need to start again from the beginning of the recovery process. Even if you have 29 years sober, if you relapse, you are back at square one and step one. And sometimes, people who relapse never get another chance to recover.

A "dry" addict/alcoholic is someone who simply ceases use, but does not embark on any of the mental, physical and even spiritual changes that are suggested for an optimal life experience. A "recovering" addict is someone who not only ceases use, but who works hard to change his/her history of distorted thinking, negative repetitive (and self-destructive) behaviors, and seeks a network of support through which he/she can give and receive assistance.



It is strongly suggested that you be aware of the following sure signs of potential relapse during your recovery:

- Getting involved in other compulsive/impulsive behaviors or addictions (i.e. eating too much, sleeping around, shopping constantly, or even becoming obsessed with AA)
- Being unaware of your feelings/needs and/or not meeting your basic needs. It is important to eat, sleep, rest and have play time in-between work and recovery time.
- Closed mindedness or a refusal to try a new way of viewing the world.
- Continuing to hang around the same people and expect things to turn out differently

4. Recovery Choices Outside of the 12 Steps

Serenity Lane believes the most effective way for anyone to recover from addiction/alcoholism is through 12-step programs. But there are many excellent resources to couple with 12-step programs. Residential Treatment (especially for those with a history of relapse), sober Halfway House Living or Intensive Outpatient Treatment.

More information on these can be obtained both online and at any larger library. It is important for you to do the research yourself, talk to people with similar experiences, and decide what form of treatment can help you lead a happy, healthy and drug/alcohol free life!

5. Early Relapse Prevention: Avoiding Major Life Changes When Possible.

One of the common features of alcoholic/addict behavior is the tendency to seek impulsive and often self-defeating highs. This tendency can manifest itself in more than just drug/alcohol use. The first year of sobriety can often be more painful than the fun (or even painful) days of using, because the alcoholic/addict is so used to numbing and avoiding painful feelings. If a person is really focusing on his/her recovery, those painful feelings will soon come to the surface.

The tendency is for the person in early recovery to medicate these feelings by causing chaos or excitement in other areas of his/her life. Major geographic, job, relationship, financial, or lifestyle changes are highly discouraged in the first months and year of recovery. This suggestion is very hard for a person in early sobriety to grasp, as he/she is accustomed and even programmed to do something to escape feelings.

Note: For unavoidable changes, like getting fired, a partner leaving you, losing your home, death of a loved one, it is essential that you seek the support of other sober friends, a sponsor and possibly a mental health professional to cope with your situation and to avoid relapse.

6. Know your Triggers for Drug/Alcohol Use.

A "trigger" is something that prompts one to think about, crave, and ultimately relapse on drugs/alcohol. Triggers vary depending on the alcoholic/addict and his/her history and patterns of use. For example, some alcoholics cannot go to bars after they get sober (at least for a long time), because it makes them think about the "romantic" aspects of their use. Others are fine in bars, because they always drank alone in their apartments.

Other common triggers for use are sex (or unhealthy emotional entanglements), other addictions to things like shopping, food, and work, or being in touch with former using

continued on page 6

Waldorf Summer Salad is a great way to utilize seasonal fruit. Right now there are lots of luscious peaches, plums, cherries, berries and melons in the markets, so you probably wouldn't make it with the apples and bananas shown in the picture.

Don't make this salad too far ahead. If you need a few more servings, just add another fruit or two and a little more juice.

Waldorf Summer Salad

Ingredients

- 1 medium apple, diced*
- 1 banana, cut up
- ¼ cup raisins
- ¼ cup fruit juice (any kind)
- 1 cup miniature marshmallows
- Optional: ¼ cup coarsely chopped walnuts or peanuts

Instructions

Place apple, banana, and raisins in a bowl. Pour juice over and stir to coat. Stir in marshmallows and, if desired, chopped nuts. Serve.

*Invite your family to experiment with flavor combinations, such as pears, peaches, kiwi, canned pineapple, and other dried fruits.



Preventing Relapse: *continued...*

friends. While each addict has much in common, each addict has differing patterns of use. It is suggested that you make a list of your past use "triggers" and be sure to avoid them at all costs. If you need to be in a particular situation (and as the Big Book of AA says, "if you have a legitimate reason for being there") then check with sober friends and/or a sponsor to get suggestions for coping.

It is also recommended that those of you in your first year of sobriety read the book *Living Sober: Some Methods AA Members Have Used for Not Drinking*, as it has a lot of details and suggestions regarding common trigger situations and alternative coping skills (other than alcohol/drug abuse)

7. Maintenance

So, you've been sober for awhile. It seems like things are easier every day, and then, there it happens, you fall into a spiral of depression and the "poor me's." As the saying goes, "Poor me, poor me, pour me another drink..."

Addicts in recovery don't get the luxuries that others get... self-indulgence, self-pity, delusional thinking, you know... all the fun stuff! That being said, what is a "passerby" of emotions for the average Joe is a death wish for the recovering alcoholic or addict.

So, at first sight of these negative thoughts, make sure to take some positive actions BEFORE the relapse occurs. Increase meetings, call your sponsor, do something nice for someone else and by golly DO THE DISHES!

8. Don't Feed the Tiger

Recovery experts emphasize that it is important for alcoholics and addicts to establish lives away from the people and situations they associate with during their drinking and using. If you used amphetamines to help you stay awake for long hours at work, then you need to limit your work hours. If you spent a lot of time getting drunk in bars, you need to find chemical-free ways to enjoy your Saturday nights. If your favorite sister smokes a joint after dinner every night, try seeing her at breakfast or lunch. If your route home from work takes you past a place you used to use, try going home a different way.

Plan ahead for happy occasions as well as stressful ones. Holidays, birthdays, and weddings may trigger relapses. Addicts and supportive family members can plan to spend these days away from toxic people and old patterns. Above all, make good choices for yourself. ■

Apps! Apps! Apps!

Smart phones are a great resource for those in recovery and if you don't own one, you're behind the times. Hazelden has led the way creating apps for those in recovery. Here are a some that you can access through your phone. *Viva technology!*



Field Guide to Life



Morning Light/
Night Light



A Woman's Way
through the Twelve
Steps



The Gifts of
Imperfection



Codependent
No More



The Language of
Letting Go



More Recovery Apps

www.addictionrecoveryguide.org/resources

www.recoveryapp.com

www.ipromises.org

www.breakingthecycles.com

www.alcoholrehab.com/alcohol-rehab/android-addiction-recovery-apps

www.recoveryapp.com

www.thefix.com

Or search on Google for "Recovery Apps" you'll be amazed at the options you'll find there.

This is a great way to use the latest technology to benefit your recovery. Enjoy!



Qigong for Sustainable Recovery Part 1: The Philosophy of Qigong

Sustaining long-term recovery from chemical dependency entails continual change and renewal. Addictions impact all aspects of our lives—our bodies, minds, emotions, relationships, and spiritual connection. Yet the change inherent in recovery adds new forms of stress. What can we do to cope with the stress of life and recovery?

There is an ancient Chinese self-healing practice called Qigong (chee gung) that may provide some valuable insights into building and maintaining recovery. Qigong has been developed and practiced for over 4,000 years and—along with acupuncture, herbs and massage—is one of the cornerstones of traditional Chinese medicine.

Qigong combines meditation, breath work, and relaxation to enhance and balance the body's flow of qi. Qi is vital life energy—or the universal animating force that flows through all living things. The abundant, balanced flow of qi results in physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health. Whenever the flow of qi is disrupted or diminished, we experience a sense of discomfort or dis-ease. It flows most abundantly and naturally when we are relaxed and aware.

There are numerous styles and techniques of Qigong that can be divided into two general categories: dynamic or active qigong and tranquil or passive qigong. In dynamic qigong there is external movement of the body (yang) while internally embracing a quiet, peaceful mind (yin). Tranquil qigong is externally still (yin) and internally active (yang); the body is still while the mind is alert and aware. Both techniques help us learn to balance yin and yang in daily life—finding quiet relaxation and awareness when we are active and attentiveness when we are quiet.

The philosophy of Qigong is represented by the Daoist symbol of yin/yang—a circle that is half dark and half light. Yin and yang are complementary opposites in a dynamic state of balance and harmony. Yin is dark/yang is light, yin is inward/yang is outward, yin is quiet/yang is active, yin is invisible/yang is visible. We live in a very yang-oriented culture. We receive praise for being active, outward, and accomplishing tangible results. Yet it is equally important to have time for reflection, restoration, and rest. Part of a sustainable recovery is finding our own balance between these two aspects of life.

You will notice within the dark there is a spot of light and within the light there is a spot of dark—everything changes and everything is integral to life unfolding. Imagine saying you only like the left side of your body but not the right. Then you try to eliminate the right side of your body. It

can't be done! The same is true of wanting only certain experiences or emotions in life. If we are happy and things are going well for us, we do not deny the possibility of difficulty returning. When we are in the “dark” and things are difficult, we remember that there is still a spark of “light” that will lead to easier circumstances. One experience informs the other—we cannot understand the nature of happiness if we have not experienced suffering. We do not appreciate rest if we have not experienced activity.

We often identify stress with outside circumstances that are beyond our control. Why is a situation more stressful to one person than to another? Could it be our reaction to the situation rather than the situation itself? We may not be able to change jobs, relationships, or life circumstances but we can change our perspective and responses to them.

The meditative aspect of qigong heightens our awareness of the present moment. The mind wants to wander to the past and future but we have no power to change the past or the future. We can make amends for the past but we can't change what happened; we can plan for the future but we can't guarantee things will turn out the way we planned. The present moment is the only point in time where we can make choices and changes—and receive spiritual guidance. Unfortunately, we are almost never here! As we learn to live in the present moment, we reduce the stress of trying to control past and future events and open ourselves to wiser choices.

Since our breath is the gateway of qi, when our breathing is inhibited so is our qi—and thus our adaptability and vitality. Working with our breath can help us recognize and alter our habitual responses. Stress and emotional responses have a direct and immediate impact on our breathing; we tend to either hold our breath or breathe more rapidly and shallowly. The reverse is also true—our breath has an impact on our emotional responses and levels of stress. If we can notice and adjust our breathing, we can influence our emotions and reactions.

Relaxation is key to meditation, breath work, and the flow of qi through the body. On a physical level, enhanced qi flow increases blood flow, cleanses toxins from the body, and restores internal balance and harmony. As we learn to relax, the body can heal more quickly.

by Julie Porter
Certified Healing Qigong Instructor
Oregon College of Oriental Medicine
jporter@ocom.edu
julieporterqigong.com



2133 Centennial Plaza
Eugene, OR 97401

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Eugene, OR
Permit No 17

Inside:

- Prevention Measures
- Editor/Happenings
- Recipe: Waldorf Salad
- Apps & More Apps
- Qigong: Part 1

 Find us on
Facebook

*Optimism is a strategy for making a better future.
Because unless you believe that the future can be
better, you are unlikely to step up and take
responsibility for making it so.*

*~Noam Chomsky
American Philosopher,
Author and Activist.*

