CULTIVATING GREATER
Meaning and Purpose To Prevent Relapse

Welcome, your facilitator will be:
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Presented by
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Cultivating Greater Meaning and Purpose to Prevent Relapse

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NAADAC Webinar Presenter

Webinar Learning Objectives
Participants will be able to:

- Identify how meaning can reduce or eliminate suffering and how to leverage meaning to minimize negative effects of traumatic experiences.
- Identify activities that bring a natural sense of joy and excitement to one's life, develop a plan for enjoying greater joy in the next 30 days.
- Explain a process for identifying one's unique life purpose and will be able to lead others through this process.

Using GoToWebinar (Live Participants Only)

- Control Panel
- Asking Questions
- Audio (phone preferred)
- Polling Questions
Our Plan for Today...

Academic/Philosophical Look at Meaning & Addiction:
1. What is “Meaning” and “a will to meaning”?
2. Why Focus on Meaning in addiction work?
3. Relationship between meaning and addiction
4. Benefits of a Meaning-Centered Approach to Recovery

Practical Interventions for Meaning, Purpose, and Joy:
1. Develop a Sense of Meaning to Heal Past
2. Cultivate Meaning & Joy in the Present
3. Find a Sense of Meaning & Purpose for Future

Polling Question 1

How familiar are you with Logotherapy or a person’s Will to Meaning?

A. Not at all.
B. Somewhat. Sounds familiar.
C. Very familiar and something I am interested in.
D. I use Logotherapy or Meaning-Centered Approach professionally.

What is A Will to Meaning?

- A field of study pioneered by Viktor Frankl’s work: Man’s Search for Meaning, Will to Meaning, Creation of Logotherapy
- A person is motivated by a will to meaning – to find meaning in life.
- A lack of meaning creates an existential crisis that is the cause of emptiness, stress, and anxiety.
- Liberation from pain & suffering is not freedom from conditions but a freedom to take a stand on whatever conditions might confront them.
- Logotherapy’s aim is not to show clients what meaning is, but that there is a meaning.
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What is A Will to Meaning? (cont.)

Third Viennese school of psychotherapy
• 1st – Freud, A person is motivated by a will to pleasure.
• 2nd – Adler, A person is motivated by a will to power.
• 3rd – Frankl**, A person is motivated by a will to meaning.

**Frankl – The wills to pleasure and power are derivatives of the will to meaning;
If a person's will to meaning is frustrated, the wills to pleasure and/or power will substitute.

(Fromh, 2014, p. 20, 71)

What does a Will to Meaning mean for addiction?
1. If person lacks meaning, they experience existential frustration
   ➢ Boredom, apathy, confusion, emptiness, cravings
2. If a will to meaning is frustrated, a person's will to pleasure and will to power expand
   ➢ Avoid, escape, numb, cope, celebrate, synthesize joy

My hypothesis –
Will to Pleasure is mechanism to escape or numb
➢ meaning is that life is suffering
➢ Substance addictions to cope, numb, escape
Will to power is avoidance or vying for control
➢ meaning that life is suffering for those without control
➢ Behavioral addictions (sex, gambling, shopping, etc.)

Why Are Meaning and Purpose So Important?
➢ A lack of meaning creates an existential vacuum
➢ Addictive behaviors help to fill this void
➢ One's pursuit of substances and behaviors becomes their substitute meaning
➢ Strong sense of meaning & purpose bolsters a positive recovery by filling the void the addiction serves
➢ Addictions often stem from and promote suffering; suffering is no longer suffering once it has a meaning
[A person in active addiction] lives intensely as a substitute for living meaningfully.

- Geoffrey R. Thomas

How is One's Will to Meaning "Frustrated?"

- We live in a way where our basic needs are provided with an element of choice and leisure
- We have no instinct driving us toward what we must do beyond survival
- We are less guided today by strong tradition or conventions that dictate what we should do
- We tend to confirm to what others are doing or what others wish us to do.
- This causes a deviation from what our nature wants of us; this leaves an "internal void" or "existential vacuum." (Frankl, 2014, p. 61)

Frustrations of Meaning in my life...

1. Felt things had little/no Meaning
   Got Very Busy
2. Felt divergence from Meaning
   Need to Numb
3. Feeling of “too many Meanings”
   Confused, Anxious, Overwhelmed
Ways to Discover Meaning

1. “By creating work or doing a deed;” meaning of achievement or accomplishment
2. “By experiencing something or encountering someone;” meaning by appreciation or love
3. “By the attitude [taken] toward unavoidable suffering;” meaning from suffering.

*Meaning is found in this moment.*

(Frankl, Lauch, Kushner, & Wnislade, 2015, p. 111)

Assumptions of Meaning Theory...

- Humans are meaning seeking and meaning making creatures.
- Humans have 2 primary motivations: to survive and to find the meaning and reason of survival.
- Meaning is complex and multi-dimensional; it involves situational and existential meanings that can be subjectively or objectively defined.
- The responsibility for navigating through life, and for defining and fulfilling meaning, rests with the individual.

(Wong, Thompson, Wong, 2013, p. 165)

Principles of a Meaning-Centered Recovery Approach

- One’s pursuit in recovery should extend far beyond the healing of brokenness or recovery from one’s addiction; it should seek a restoration of full functioning and passion for living that allows for the holistic wellbeing and positive integration in society.
- A Meaning-Centered Approach to recovery complements mainstream treatments and addresses the existential and spiritual needs of a person.
- If we help restore a person’s passion and purpose for living, it will reinforce their motivation to make the necessary changes required for a lasting recovery.
- The goal of Meaning-Centered Approach is restoration of the whole person to wholeness, not complete abstinence (though complete abstinence is the likely outcome).

(Wong, Thompson, Wong, 2013, p. 184-185)
Benefits of Greater Sense of Meaning...
1. Promotes Eudemonic Happiness
2. Benefit from Natural Sources of Joy
3. Experience Direction and Clarity
4. Improves Ability to Suffer
5. Reduces Adverse Effects of Trauma

How do we get there?
Interventions for Meaning & Purpose
(WORKSHEETS)

Suffering ceases to be suffering at the moment it finds meaning, such as the meaning of a sacrifice.
- Viktor E. Frankl
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Meaning and Suffering

A person will find a meaning: Positive or Negative

A Negative Meaning:

- I deserved this suffering → self-destructive behavior
- Life is cruel and unfair → why not numb, escape
- Moves Locus of Control outside of self

If "life is something to suffer"

1. Choose my suffering – the devil you know
2. Numb the reality that life is suffering for me

Meaning and Suffering

Seeking a Positive Meaning:

- Story: Man whose wife had passed
- Trauma survivors can find meaning & inspiration from pain
- People in recovery can find meaning in their addiction

**"It is person's own responsibility to find the meaning**

Meaning Interventions - Past

1. A Redemptive Narrative: Seek Pos. Meaning
   - How have you grown as a result of the experience?
   - Did any of your relationships strengthen? How?
   - What things in life do you now appreciate/value more?
   - What do you now know that you didn't before?
   - What strengths do you now have that you didn't before?
   - What opportunities are now available that were not before?
   - What advice would you give to someone else in a similar situation?

2. Write a Fairytale Version in 3rd Person.
Polling Question 2

Would this intervention be helpful in your work?

A. Yes. I have used this and found it effective.
B. Yes. I have not used this yet but believe it will be beneficial.
C. I have used this; No it wasn't beneficial.
D. No I have not used it. I don't think it would be beneficial.

Natural Joy in Life

- Correlation between Joy and Meaning
- Eudemonic Happiness from engaging in something that is meaningful
- Joy can point toward meaning
- Ability to cultivate natural joy atrophies in addiction (Substance/behavior becomes substitute)
- Busyness in life gets in the way of us doing things just for the sake of enjoyment
- Guilt & Responsibility can keep us from joy

Polling Question 3

Does a sense of guilt get in the way of you intentionally doing things that bring you joy?

A. Yes. I don't do anything for my own joy because of guilt.
B. Yes. I would do more if I didn't feel guilty about it.
C. No. I don't do much but wouldn't feel guilty if I did.
D. No. I often do things for my joy with no sense of guilt.
Meaning Interventions - Present

20 Things I enjoy...

1. Make a list of 20+ things that you personally enjoy:
   (*) New since recovery? (**) Not since recovery?

2. Post it where you can see it! Share with someone.
   CHALLENGE: Pick at least 5 plug into calendar NOW

Meaning Interventions - Future

My Strengths

- Can't build a better future from weaknesses or defects
- Perception biases and humility can hide our strengths
- Must recognize our strengths to leverage them
  - Mindset: “Compensate for Defects” or “Leverage Strengths”
  - Moves Locus of Control back to one’s self.
- VIA Character Strengths (www.viacharacter.org), or...

Affirm Your Strengths

1. Determine your top 5 strengths.
2. I am _______.
3. One time I demonstrated my (strength) was when _____.
With Greater Meaning...

Cultivate Natural Joy

Redemptive Narrative
Greater Meaning & Purpose

Meaning & Purpose in Life & Recovery

Meaning & Purpose are strongly correlated

Meaning is subjective experience that life has significance
Purpose is overall sense of direction in life

A sense of purpose Increases:
- Positive Affect, Physical Health, Resiliency & Optimism
- Commitment to Goals, Self-Esteem, Expanded Longevity

A sense of purpose decreases:
- Depression & Anxiety, Psychological Distress, Purpose Anxiety

Research conducted by George & Park (2013)

[A person] who has a why to live can bear almost any how.
- Frederick Nietzsche
## Meaning Interventions - Future

### My Life's Purpose...

1. Your top character strengths are __________ and ___________.
2. List one or two ways you like expressing those strengths when interacting with or serving other people: __________, __________.
3. Assume the world is perfect. What does it look and feel like? What are people doing? How are they behaving?
   
   In an ideal world, _____________________________________.
4. My purpose is to (combine the elements of 1, 2, and 3 to make a statement about your life’s purpose).

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(Canfield & Switzer, 2015, p. 24 - 28)

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### Life's Purpose... (Other Examples)

- To use my humor and creativity to inspire, uplift, and empower people in recovery to stay sober. (A recovery coach and author)
- To raise healthy, prosperous children who make a difference in the world. (A devoted mother)
- To use my vast knowledge of integrative medicine to educate, inspire, and empower people to live longer, happier lives. (A holistic medical doctor)
- To live my life with integrity and compassion while serving others, and to always be prepared for the unexpected. (A fireman)
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With Greater Meaning:
1. Reduce/Eliminate Adverse Effects of Trauma
2. Improve Ability to Suffer
3. Benefit from Natural Sources of Joy
4. Experience Sense of Direction and Clarity
5. Promote Eudemonic Happiness (Opposite of Hedonic)

- Bolsters One’s Potential for Success in Recovery

What we discussed...

Academic/Philosophical Look at Meaning & Addiction:
1. “Meaning” and “a Will to Meaning”
2. Why focus on Meaning in addiction work.
3. Meaning-Centered Approach to Recovery

Practical Interventions for Meaning, Purpose, and Joy:
1. Finding Meaning in Past Events
2. Cultivating Natural Joy
3. Identifying and Leveraging Strengths
4. Identifying Individual Purpose

QUESTIONS?
- What is one thing you heard that you can use in your work?
- What would help you to apply what you have learned?
- What is something new that you never heard or thought about before?
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References/Suggested Reading:


Web-based Training & Programs

Convenient. Affordable options that provide 24/7 access.

Experiential-learning style for clients and for staff.

Curriculum developed for specific needs of audience. PHP & SAIOP programs.

In-person or virtual.

LET'S CONNECT!

Ways I can serve

Workshops & Presentations*

* Follow-up Training & Implementation Support After Workshops

Individual & Group Coaching

In-person or virtual.

My Passions

- Applied Positive Psychology
- Human Potential Development
- Self-Esteem & Emotional Resilience

Meaning and Purpose

Meaning in suffering: cultivation of joy, finding purpose in life and recovery

Principles for Success in Recovery

Preparing for the journey; Taking responsibility; Finding the resources one needs; Creating a positive vision for recovery

Tools for Thriving in Recovery

Greater engagement; Plans for achievement; Evidence-based interventions for high-level wellbeing

RIM™ Facilitation

Trauma-informed intervention for promoting long-term recovery

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THANK YOU

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UPCOMING WEBINARS

March 11th, 2020
"The Wide World of Sports..." Wagering
By: Dan Trolaro, MS

March 17th, 2020
Peer Recovery Support Series, Section I: Building a Successful Culture in Your Organization
By: Kris Kelly, BS, Jenna Neasbitt, MS, LCCD, MAT-R, and Philander E. Moore, Sr., MA, LCDC

March 25th, 2020
The Progress Note: Where Law & Ethics Meet Efficiency
By: Elizabeth "Beth" Reas, MS, LMFT

April 8th, 2020
Connecting the Continuum: How Prevention & Recovery Models Fit Together
By: Jane Goble-Clark, MPA, CPS

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CONFERENCES

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Thank you for joining!

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