

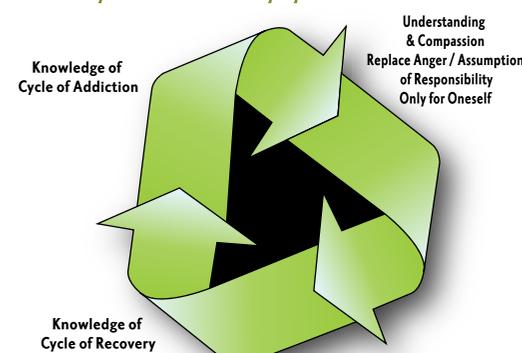
FAMILY AND FRIENDS RECOVERY

Many family members and friends of alcoholics and individuals addicted to other drugs come to a program of recovery reaching out for help in the way of answers to their questions and the difficulties in their relationships as their lives have been greatly affected by the addiction of someone they love.

Until these family members and friends learn about chemical dependency, their well-meaning actions may further alienate relationships; they may escalate conflict and violence with the chemically dependent person.

By coming to SOS, family members and friends can learn about the Cycle of Addiction. When they can perceive the phases of chemical need and denial of learned habits within the chemically dependent person, the Cycle of Sobriety will be understood as an individual journey for that person. It is then that supportive action by the family and friends can begin, improved relationships can begin, and family recovery can begin.

The Family & Friends Recovery Cycle



TO DO LIST FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS RECOVERY

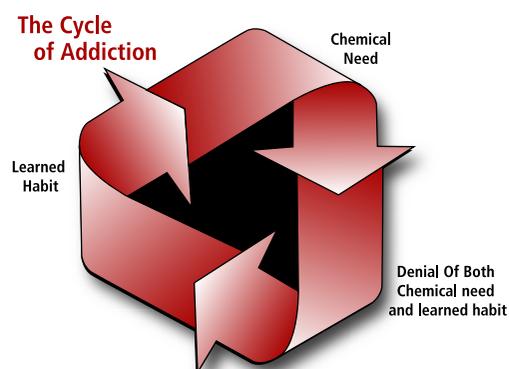
- ✓ Be gentle with yourself and the addicted person in your family. Remember, sobriety skills are not developed overnight, so give yourself credit for being understanding.
- ✓ Attend as many SOS meetings as you can. If you like, attend other family recovery group meetings. Take what you can use from these and leave the rest.
- ✓ Get names and phone numbers from sober individuals in recovery and their family members at meetings. Use these phone numbers. Practice calling people when you are feeling okay so that you will be able to call more easily when you are in need of help.
- ✓ Try putting some simplified structure into your life: get up and get dressed at a regular time, take a walk before or after dinner, etc.
- ✓ Do some reading on alcoholism and addiction from the books on the "Recommended Reading" list. Visit a local library or bookstore and see what others they may have to offer.

RATIONALE BEHIND "COGNITIVE SOBRIETY"

(adapted from *Unhooked: Staying Sober and Drug-Free* by James Christopher, founder of SOS)

"Cognitive" means knowing, learning, perceiving. Traditional therapies, usually based on AA's twelve step model, connect sobriety to God. Even those who are more rational often say, "If you get good, you can get sober," meaning if you make other positive changes in your life, sobriety will follow.

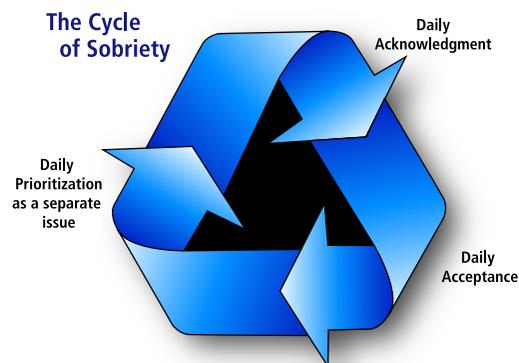
All these things may very well be valuable and important, but one should not lose sight of the priority - which is sobriety, not goodness, not cosmic unity, not obedience to the will of a so-called higher power. It's sobriety itself. Rather than turning one's life and will over to an outside force or higher power, recovering alcoholics and addicts credit themselves daily for achieving and maintaining sobriety, empowering themselves, rebuilding self-esteem, and building the best possible protection against relapse.



The cycle of addiction can be successfully replaced by the cycle of sobriety. This cycle contains three essential elements: acknowledgment of one's addiction to alcohol or drugs; acceptance of one's addiction; and prioritization of sobriety as the primary issue in one's life.

The daily cognitive application of a new "Priority One," the Sobriety Priority, as a separate issue, arrests the cycle of addiction. It frees the sober alcoholic/addict to experience "everything else," by teaching him or her to associate "everything else" with sobriety, not with drinking or using behaviors.

The Sobriety Priority, applied daily, gradually weakens booze and drug associations, halting the cycle of addiction, allowing time for new associations to form as one experiences life without addictive chemicals.



SOS INTERNATIONAL

SOSGT is linked with the international SOS network through the Clearinghouse, a center for the dissemination of information for individuals who may be looking for a secular program of recovery.

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THE SOS INTERNATIONAL NEWSLETTER

The Secular Organizations for Sobriety (SOS) National Clearinghouse publishes a quarterly newsletter that is filled with items of interest to all recovering substance abusers, to professionals, and to the families and friends of alcoholics and addicts. The SOS International Newsletter serves as an information source for group conveners and as a forum for newsletter subscribers.

Contact Info/Join Our Support Group Secular Organizations for Sobriety Group of Toronto (SOSGT)

Headquartered at the Centre for Inquiry Ontario
216 Beverley St., Toronto, ON M5T 1Z3
Tel: 416-971-5978
E-mail: sos_gt@hotmail.com
<http://sostoronto.tripod.com>

LITERATURE

The following books are available through the SOS Clearinghouse



How To Stay Sober: Recovery without Religion
by James Christopher (Prometheus Books, 1988)
Christopher describes his own "recovery without religion." He focuses on the practical aspects of his triumph over alcoholism and includes guidelines for the formation of secular support groups.



SOS Sobriety: The Proven Alternative to 12-Step Programs
by James Christopher (Prometheus Books, 1992)
SOS Sobriety describes the proven methods of alcohol and drug abstinence advocated by Secular Organizations for Sobriety (or "Save Our Selves"), the world's largest non-12-Step addiction recovery program.



Unhooked: Staying Sober and Drug-Free
by James Christopher (Prometheus Books, 1989)
Christopher recounts the evolution of SOS, invites the reader to sit in on a fictionalized SOS meeting, and offers further strategies for achieving and maintaining sobriety and self-respect.



Escape from Nicotine Country: How To Stop Smoking Painlessly
by James Christopher (Prometheus Books, 1999)
Christopher's program addresses many different types of nicotine addiction, the hunger that haunts those trying to quit, and the need for a healthy routine of exercise. The latter half of the book is an encouraging diary, which allows the reader to record the progress that will lead to a healthier, smoke-free life.

Also Recommended:

Under the Influence

by Dr. James Milam and Katherine Ketcham (Bantam Books).

Feeling Good: The New Mood Therapy

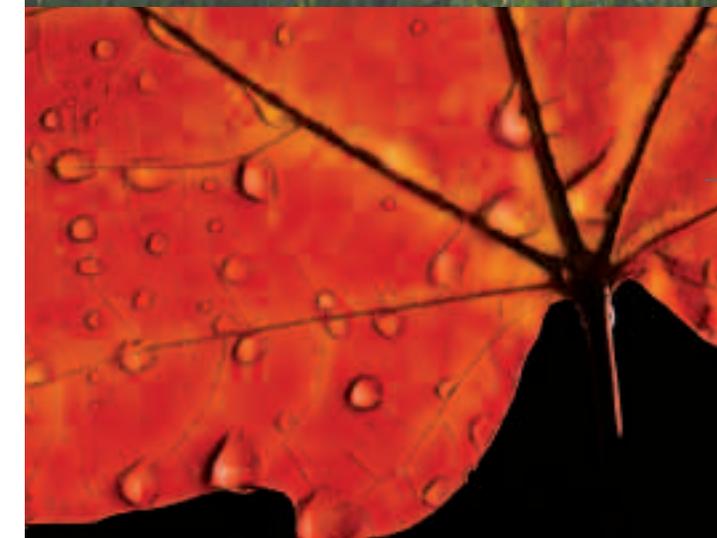
by David D. Burns, M.D. (Signet Books).

The Natural History of Alcoholism: Causes, Patterns and Paths to Recovery by Dr. George E. Vailland (Harvard University Press).

Alcohol and the Addictive Brain by Kenneth Blum, Ph. D. in collaboration with James E. Payne (Macmillan Publishing)

Many Roads, One Journey: Moving Beyond the 12-Steps by Charlotte Davis Kasl, Ph. D. (Harper Collins)

It should never be necessary
to compromise integrity
in the search for recovery



SECULAR ORGANIZATIONS
for SOBRIETY group of Toronto

A secular self-empowering
approach to addiction recovery

Secular Organizations for Sobriety Group of Toronto (SOSGT) is:

- 1. Secular:** SOSGT credits the individual for achieving and maintaining his or her own sobriety and is ideal for those uncomfortable with the spiritual content of 12-step programs. The group is secular and religiously neutral.
- 2. Sobriety focused:** Sobriety, defined as the priority of abstaining from alcohol and other mind-altering drugs, is the number-one priority. A recovering alcoholic must abstain from all drugs or alcohol. SOSGT is focused on the "Sobriety priority", maintaining that sobriety is a separate issue from all else.
- 3. Inquiry-minded:** SOSGT is free from dogma or the towing of any party line. SOSGT is not in competition with other groups and respects recovery in any form, regardless of the path by which it is achieved. SOSGT supports healthy skepticism and encourages the use of the scientific method to understand alcoholism.
- 4. All-welcoming:** All those who sincerely seek sobriety are welcome as members of SOSGT.
- 5. Support-group based:** Although sobriety is an individual responsibility, life does not have to be faced alone. The support of other alcoholics and addicts is vital to recovery. In SOSGT, members share experiences, insights, information, strength and encouragement in friendly, honest, anonymous and supportive group meetings
- 6. Autonomous:** SOSGT has no hidden agenda and is concerned with achieving and maintaining sobriety. SOSGT has no opinion on outside matters and does not wish to become entangled in outside controversy.
- 7. Communications-based:** Honest, clear, and direct communication of feelings, thoughts, and knowledge aids in recovery and in choosing nondestructive, nondelusional, and rational approaches to living sober and rewarding lives.
- 8. Voluntary-based:** SOSGT is run by a democratically elected steering committee of volunteers and all members are welcome to take part in its governance and direction.
- 9. Confidential:** As knowledge of addiction might cause a person harm or embarrassment in the outside world, SOS guards the anonymity of its membership and the contents of its discussions from those not within the group
- 10. Effective:** SOSGT is effective because it encourages the scientific study of all aspects of alcoholism and addiction, rather than limiting its outlook to one area of knowledge or theory of alcoholism and addiction.

SOBRIETY GUIDELINES

To break the cycle of denial and achieve sobriety,

- We first acknowledge that we are alcoholics or addicts
- We reaffirm this truth daily and acknowledge without reservation that, as clean and sober individuals, we cannot and do not drink or use, no matter what
- Since drinking or using is not an option for us, we take whatever steps are necessary to continue our Sobriety Priority lifelong
- A quality of life – "the good life" – can be achieved. However, life is also filled with uncertainties. Therefore, we do not drink or use regardless of feelings, circumstances or conflicts
- We share in confidence with each other our thoughts and feelings as sober, clean individuals
- Sobriety is our Priority, and we are each responsible for our lives and our sobriety

THINGS TO DO:

- ✓ Make sobriety your priority.
- ✓ Attend as many SOS meetings as you can. If you would like, attend other recovery group meetings. Take what you can use from these and leave the rest.
- ✓ Get names and phone numbers from other sober alcoholics/addicts at meetings.
- ✓ Use these phone numbers. Practice calling people when you're feeling okay so that you'll be able to call more easily when you're in need of help.
- ✓ Try putting some simple structure into your life: Get up and get dressed at a regular time, take a walk before or after dinner, etc.
- ✓ Do some reading on alcoholism and addiction from any of the books on the "Recommended Reading" list. Visit a local library or bookstore and see what others they may have to offer.
- ✓ Be gentle with yourself. Sobriety skills aren't developed overnight, so give yourself credit for just not drinking. It does get better.
- ✓ Choose to stay sober one day at a time. You can do for a 24-hour period what you could not conceive of doing for a lifetime.
- ✓ Keep plenty of mineral water, sodas, and/or fruit juices on hand.

GROUP AND MEETING STRUCTURE

SOSGT is a nonprofit, autonomous, nonprofessional self-help group. The typical meeting is held weekly for 1.5 hours, with a 10-15 minute break in the middle. Family or friends requiring support, and those with other addiction problems (ex: gambling, drug addiction, etc) are welcome

The typical meeting agenda is as follows:

- 1) Welcome and introductions from meeting leader
- 2) Announcements and policies
- 3) Anniversaries
- 4) Reading from the SOS guidebooks
- 5) Introductions from newcomers
- 6) Readings from literature on freethought, critical thinking and rational inquiry
- 7) Open discussion, often topical
- 8) Closing

HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE A PROBLEM REQUIRING A SUPPORT GROUP?

Adapted from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health literature

If you think your substance use may be causing problems in your life, try the following questionnaire:

- 1) Have you ever tried to decrease your drinking or other drug use?
- 2) Have you ever used alcohol or other drugs immediately upon waking up?
- 3) Have you ever felt guilty about your drinking or other drug use?
- 4) Have you ever felt irritated or annoyed by another person's comments regarding your drinking or other drug use?

If you answer yes to two or more of these questions, you may have a substance abuse problem. A "yes" to even one question might be a cause for concern and worth looking into.

IF YOU FEEL YOU WOULD LIKE TO JOIN OUR SUPPORT GROUP SKIP TO CONTACT INFO ON THE BACK OF THIS BROCHURE

THE REST OF THIS BROCHURE CONTAINS ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND ON SOS AND SOBRIETY FOR THOSE INTERESTED

WHAT MAKES A HEAVY DRINKER?

Heavy drinking can be an indicator of a problem requiring support

A standard drink contains 13.6 grams of alcohol.

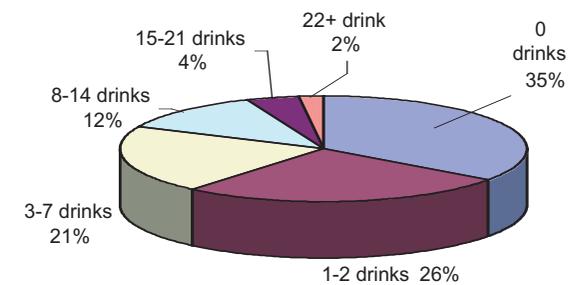
How many standard drinks do you consume a week?

One Standard drink is:



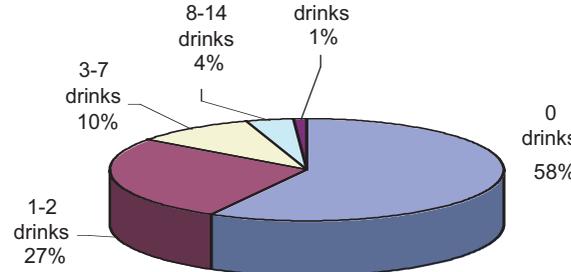
Where heavy drinking is defined as consuming 5 or more standard drinks on a single occasion for men and 4 or more standard drinks on a single occasion for women, **33.9% of men and 17.0% of women fall under the category of monthly heavy drinkers.**

Drinks per week (men)



Source: Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, 2000

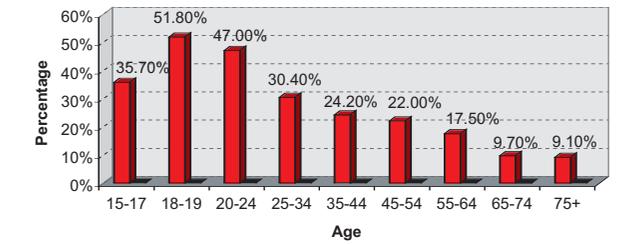
Drinks per week (women)



Source: Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, 2000

The following chart displays the prevalence of monthly heavy drinking among past-year drinkers of age 15 or higher in 2004:

Prevaence of monthly heavy drinking among past-year drinkers, age 15+, 2004



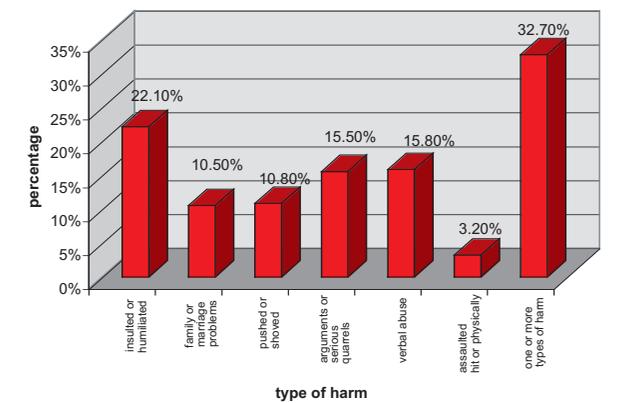
Source: Detailed Report, Canadian Addiction Survey, Canadian Executive Council on Addictions, Health Canada, March 2005.

The consequences of alcohol use can affect every aspect of your life. Some examples, from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, include:

- injuries sustained under the influence
- anxiety, irritability or depression
- trouble focusing
- spending money on substances rather than on food, rent or other essentials
- blackouts
- relationship troubles

The consequences can affect family, friends, co-workers and strangers (e.g. driving under the influence of alcohol), as shown in the following graph:

Types of Harm experienced in past year resulting from drinking by others, age 18+, 2004



Source: Detailed Report, Canadian Addiction Survey, Canadian Executive Council on Addictions, Health Canada, March 2005.