

SPOTLIGHT ON RECOVERY

MISSION STATEMENT:

Spotlight on Recovery is a grassroots alliance aimed at promoting the dignity of people in recovery from alcoholism and drug addiction. Our efforts are directed toward removing the stigma surrounding alcohol/drug addiction by putting a human face on recovery.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES:

Awareness

- Put a positive face on recovery
- Encourage people in recovery to stand up and be heard
- Remove stigma by providing real examples of individuals and families in recovery

Education

- Reduce fear and challenge misconceptions about addiction, treatment and recovery
- Further the understanding and appreciation of the path to recovery
- Convey to the public the positive economic and social impact of recovery

Advocacy

- Improve public and legislative understanding of substance abuse and recovery
- Strive to change legislation and allocation for recovery resources
- Achieve treatment parity for all persons currently in, or seeking recovery



REDUCTION
PROJECT

PUTTING A
POSITIVE FACE
ON
RECOVERY

SPOTLIGHT ON RECOVERY

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MORE COPIES OF THIS BROCHURE

OR FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT OUR
WEBSITE AT:

<http://spotlightonrecovery.adhl.org>

King County Mental Health, Chemical
Abuse & Dependency Services Division
& the Alcohol Drug Helpline

STIGMA

Stigma is a word that connotes many feelings to many people. It is a state of mind that singles out a member of society as “different” or “tainted” in some way. *Stigma* is also a powerful tool used in the creation of negative stereotypes.

The U.S. Department of Health and Social Services brings the focus of stigma into the realm of alcohol and drug addiction in its 2000 study entitled, “*Changing the Conversation: Improving Substance Abuse Treatment*”, by providing a five-point definition of *stigma*:

1. The Stigma of alcohol or other drug addiction is a powerful, shame faced mark of disgrace and reproach.
2. Prejudicial attitudes and beliefs generate and perpetuate stigma.
3. The result is discrimination directed at individuals at risk for, suffering from, or in recovery from addiction to alcohol or other drugs, and those associated with them.
4. People suffering from alcohol or other drug addiction and those in recovery are ostracized, discriminated against, and deprived of basic human rights.
5. Often, individuals who are stigmatized internalize such attitudes and practices, making them part of their identity.

It is clear that *stigma* is a damaging force that adversely affects those in recovery, or still struggling with alcohol/drug addiction, but *stigma* is equally damaging to families as well.

DISCRIMINATION

People in recovery from alcohol/drug addiction have fought and won a difficult battle, and are no more deserving of being singled out for *discrimination* and *stigma* than are those individuals who have recovered from cancer, or those living with chronic illnesses such as diabetes or hypertension.

The 2000 DHHS study addresses the long term affects of *stigma*:

Addiction stigmas subject individuals to various forms of discrimination in a variety of institutions such as:

1. Criminal/juvenile justice
2. Education
3. Employment
4. Housing
5. Health
6. Insurance
7. Human Services

Other survivors of debilitating diseases have successfully organized and united to combat the stigma that has led to discrimination and misunderstanding. Max A. Schneider writes in his 2000 article entitled, “*Stigma, Stigma, Stigma:*”

When I was a kid, people would never verbalize the words cancer or tuberculosis except by whispering. Today we understand those diseases and have risen above that ignorance. So must we with alcohol and drug dependence.

ANONYMITY

For many years, stigma and discrimination have caused the recovery community to hide their recovery status. Instead of celebrating, shame and fear have contributed to those in successful recovery disappearing back into society.

Also contributing to the continued silence of the recovery community is a misunderstanding of the 11th Tradition of well known Twelve Step Programs and their interpretation of *anonymity*.

Speaking out and demonstrating that recovery is real can go a long way in changing societal norms, without violating *anonymity*. The new recovery movements do not deem it important to reveal how one has achieved recovery status. No one needs to be more vocal about their personal history than their comfort zone allows. Yet as a combined group with one powerful voice, much can and will be accomplished to erase the stigma that has previously held back many from disclosing their recovery status.

Organizations such as *SPOTLIGHT ON RECOVERY* have sprung up across the nation as vehicles for those in stable recovery to speak out, demonstrate that recovery works, advocate for equal rights, and provide support for those still working on recovery or in need of treatment.

SOR is a local grassroots organization with roots in King County, which seeks to take its message statewide, and join the growing movement across the nation to:

PUT A POSITIVE FACE ON RECOVERY!