



THE EXPERIENCE



A Message from our CEO, Dot Dorman

Treatment, A Step Toward Recovery

What exactly is **RECOVERY**, anyway? 2013 was a year in which the word *recovery* took on a little different meaning here at Harmony, specifically, recovery from the devastating floods in September 2013. More about that in a moment. But let's start with an official treatment related definition: Samsha, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration, recently released their updated definition of recovery from addiction as:

A process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential.

Within the context of recovery in the substance abuse world, where does Harmony fit? As we learn more about the *process* of addiction and the *process* of recovery we clearly recognize that Harmony's 12-step program of detoxification and residential treatment is one small step on the road to recovery.

For many, it is the first step; detox, get the substances out of

your body, arrive at a physically better place, so that you can journey a little further into "treatment". Treatment, again, is just a step along the way. Our treatment program here at Harmony provides a starting point and as we often say, the tools necessary for long-term recovery.

Treatment is not passive, is it active. Treatment is not recovery; it is step along the journey. At Harmony, we do not "apply" treatment, we "engage" individuals in treatment. There is a very, very significant difference. This is the difference between a physician medicating a person's heart disease, and the person making lifestyle changes to correct or prevent heart disease. We sometimes find new clients expecting that we will "apply" treatment and that they will (* presto*) be in recovery. Sadly, this is not true. Remember some key words from the definition, "process" "individuals improve" "self-directed". Think of treatment as the helping hand that a parent provides to a young child learning to ride a bike. We can tell you how to balance, and gently hold on for a little while, until

you get the hang of it yourself, and off you go.

Here at Harmony, we have been challenged as a team to apply the principles we teach to the process of our recovery from the September floods. We were extremely blessed to sustain only minor damage, moderate inconvenience and major opportunities to help one another. The clients in treatment during the flood were understanding and flexible, staff members kept things going in treatment sometimes at great personal risk! For over three months, many staff stayed in Estes Park in motels in order to continue to do their jobs, because their access in and out of town was significantly limited.

We practiced surrender, acceptance, courage and occasionally wisdom during a very trying time. We began the journey to recovery, together, as a group of individuals facing a common challenge. Sound like any groups you know? And finally, we practice gratitude on a daily basis and we travel, hopefully, a little further each day on the journey known as "recovery."



Highlights

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Spiritual Renewal Retreat

Fall River Lodge, Estes Park May 2 - 4, 2014

All Inclusive prices (workshop, lodging, meals)

\$225 per person or \$375 per couple Limited to 20 participants

Call or Email Debra 970.577.3160 davezzano@harmonyfoundationinc.com



Recreational Marijuana Production and Sales Open in Colorado: What Will Be the Impact on Addiction and Treatment?

by Marvin Ventrell, JD

Director of Community & Alumni Relations at Harmony Foundation

On January 1, 2014, approximately 37 authorized stores opened in Colorado and began selling marijuana to anyone 21 years old and older who wanted it and was willing to pay for it. No other justification required. And so Colorado became the first state in the nation to approve the sale of marijuana for recreational use, following a period as one of several states that approved marijuana for medical use. The Colorado marijuana shops are, in fact, the first stores in the world licensed to sell marijuana legally (Amsterdam, Netherlands actually only tolerates the sale of marijuana).

The marijuana shops are authorized by Colorado legislation following the passage of Amendment 64 by the people of Colorado in November of 2012. In the months and years to come, it is anticipated that many more such stores will be licensed across the state and that marijuana shops and the selling of marijuana for recreational use will be commonplace. In addition to stores selling marijuana over the retail counter, retail marijuana growing is also authorized and controlled by the new legislation.

Harmony Foundation, Colorado's longest running residential addiction treatment center, opposed Amendment 64 as part of a consortium of legalization opponents through the organization, "Smart Approaches to Marijuana" (SAM). Harmony and SAM promoted other alternatives to the wholesale legalization movement. We recognized the need for alternatives to the status quo, given that Marijuana has been readily available illegally for many years, is in fact abundant, and that criminalizing substance abuse is a misguided approach.

Nonetheless, the "people have spoken" and the lawmakers have implemented the new law. Now that legalization is a reality, we at Harmony are faced with the following questions:

1. What will be the impact of legalization on addiction treatment at Harmony?
2. How will legalization affect the continued sobriety of people already

in recovery?

3. How will legalization affect addiction rates society wide?
4. What will be the impact of legalization on public health in general?

These are not simple questions and they do not have simple answers. While it is logical to assume that legalization increases availability, and increased availability increases use, and increased use increases addiction and other health problems, we do not know all of that for sure or to what extent it may be true. Legalization proponents, for example, argue that legalization does not increase availability of a substance that was already widely available illegally, as was marijuana, and as was alcohol during prohibition. Proponents further argue that legalization will result in better control over the substance and a more treatment-based rather than punitive criminalized response to abusers.

As these issues play out, Harmony will be observing the outcomes of legalization, analyzing the data, and responding in a measured and professional manner. We are committed to providing the best possible treatment services for people struggling with marijuana addiction using the best possible evidence-based methods. We are also committed to providing accurate and helpful public education on the issue of marijuana use.

While it is true that there is much about the impact of marijuana legalization that we do not know, we do know a great deal about the drug. We know:

1. Marijuana is a dangerous and addictive drug. Marijuana addiction results in the withdrawal and craving symptoms that are at the root of addictive disorders.
2. Marijuana use causes bronchitis and lung complications. Marijuana smoke contains 50 - 70% more carcinogenic hydrocarbons than tobacco smoke.
3. Marijuana is particularly harmful to the still developing brains of young people. It is connected to changes in adolescent brain development resulting in learning, memory problems, and IQ loss.
4. Marijuana use increases the risk of psychosis.
5. Marijuana serves as a gateway drug to even more harmful and more addictive drugs.
6. Marijuana's potency has increased dramatically over the years with significantly higher THC content than ever before.
7. Marijuana's medical efficacy is limited and frequently overstated, particularly when the drug is taken in its commercial retail form which has high THC (its intoxicating element) compared to the largely bred out CBD (it's potentially medically beneficial element).
8. Marijuana is particularly dangerous for recovering alcoholics and addicts and can lead to relapse into one's primary addictive substance.

Harmony believes that as the process of growing and selling recreational marijuana unfolds, we have an obligation to keep a watchful eye, treat our clients with care, and collect and disseminate accurate and useful data. We also call upon the addiction profession at large, through its professional associations and policy voices, to form a cohesive and instructive industry response to this critically important societal issue.

Sources:

Smart Approaches to Marijuana, SAM
www.learnaboutsam.com; Hall W. and Degenhard L. (2009) Adverse Health Effects of Non-Medical Cannabis Use, *Lancet*, 374:1383-1391; NIDA, Research Report Series: Cannabis Abuse, 2010; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration SAM-HSA <http://www.samhsa.gov/recovery/>; Giedd. J. N. (2004), Structural Magnetic Resonance Imaging of the Adolescent Brain, *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1021, 77-85; American Society of Addiction Medicine www.asam.org/research-treatment; National Institute on Drug Abuse www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/marijuana

Nursing Students at Harmony Foundation: Exposing Nurses to the Disease of Addiction

Submitted by: Kay Rosenthal PhD, RN, Director of Nursing

As a nurse I have worked with alcoholics and addicts from the beginning. However, there was no formal training in my nursing program related to their care. We learn about diabetes, heart attacks, gall stones, pneumonia... but not addiction. Unfortunately, that has led to a lack of understanding within my profession. This needs to change.

This summer, I was able to connect with the Dean of the School of Nursing at the University of Northern Colorado (UNC). We were talking about how we could collaborate on a research project. At the end of the conversation she shared that they would like to place nursing students in Estes Park at the hospital. The hospital is a small critical access hospital so their census is not always large enough to support nursing students.

On the drive home I thought ...this is my chance! We have a consistent number of clients. We would be able to support nursing students. I called the Dean and shared my thoughts. We worked together with the Harmony counseling department and the faculty at UNC and agreed it was a good match. After a few meetings we created a plan.

Within the plan the students attend the Family Program so they get an overview of the disease concept. They are oriented to Harmony confidentiality and are given an overview of the medical treatment provided at Harmony. Students work in the morning with the Nurse Practitioner, the Liaison Nurse and one of the staff nurses as they administer medications. Then the students go to group with the primary counselor and sit in sessions as approved by the counselor and clients.

The feedback from the students has been very positive. We believe that our goals and the student's goals are being met- fu-

ture nurses are being educated on the disease of addiction. I invite you to read one student's reflection, used with permission, so you can see the impact of the program on one future nurse.

Harmony Reflection by Kenny Maurer:

The four days that I spent at Harmony were really motivating and the knowledge that I gained will go an incredibly long way in influencing my career as nurse. Prior to this experience I had never been exposed to exactly how far reaching the disease of addiction is. Of course I had read all about it in text books, but never actually saw it firsthand. As one can imagine this limited experience reduced my ability to actually understand the disease. In other words, I have had experience with diseases like diabetes, cancer, renal failure, etc., and because of this experience these diseases have always been easier for me to acknowledge and also easier for me to talk about with the actual patients who have them. However, after the Harmony experience I have been able to put many faces with addiction, gain insight into the psychological and physiological impacts of substance abuse, and eliminate any existing personal biases that I never really knew existed.

In regards to putting faces to the disease of addiction, this was important for me to do because it helps me understand who I am caring for. With addiction we are helping care for fathers, sons, husbands, wives, daughters, grandparents, etc., and by caring for these individuals you are essentially caring for all of their loved ones who have been impacted. This is important to me and really any future nurse in the sense that our care can be extremely influential and far reaching as to how many individuals are impacted by

our appropriate care and understanding.

As for an increase in my psychological and physiological understanding of addiction, Harmony has allowed me to make great strides here as well. I have now seen firsthand just how tangled up emotionally addicts can become. More importantly I have gained a very good understanding of how to implement therapeutic communication and develop a therapeutic relationship. In addition to this I have been able to observe the physiologic manifestations of withdrawal which has allowed me to further empathize with individuals going through this stage of recovery.

Finally, and really most significantly, this Harmony experience has uncovered a personal bias that I really never knew existed. This is to say that I expected alcoholics and addicts to be someone else. I'm not sure who I expected them to be, but I can say that I did not expect them to be as smart, insightful, thoughtful, caring, well put together, interested in me as I was in them, etc. Honestly, I'm not proud of myself for having these pre-existing thoughts and I really don't know how they even came to be. What I can say I am proud of is that they are gone and I now realize that those with substance abuse problems are just like me, my friends, and my family... The only difference is that they are hindered by the disease of addiction instead of one of the diseases we deem as more palatable.

Harmony was a great experience for me and has given me knowledge regarding addiction that I will carry with me through my entire career in healthcare. In addition, I feel extremely lucky to have been accepted by the Harmony community that existed while I was there.

Patrick C. posted on Harmony Foundation's FaceBook Timeline

"I want to take this opportunity to say thank you to Harmony Foundation and the staff working there. You all have given my partner, Mark, a new lease on life. He just completed your 30 day inpatient program and he is a completely different, much happier person. I had the opportunity to partic-

ipate in your Family Weekend, it was truly life changing for me. Just sharing my story and seeing that there are other families out there that are facing the same struggles that we are was tremendously helpful!! Just as he made strong bonds with the guys he was there with, I bonded

strongly with the other family members there. These are friendships that I know I will have for a long time! I'm looking forward to our future with him being clean and sober!! This is all possible because of your program, so, from the bottom of my heart, thank you!!"

To speak at Harmony on a Saturday night, call or email Duke. 303.888.9019 drumely@harmonystation.org

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HARMONY MISSION

Our mission is to provide the foundation for sustained recovery from the diseases of drug and alcohol addiction.