

# Discover the **P**ower of Choice

WELCOME  
to



DC, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia



Welcome to SMART Recovery®. You are here because you or a loved one suffers from an addictive behavior. You are not alone. Many people struggle with a serious addiction during their lifetime.

Experience and science show that people in recovery are more successful when supported by friends, family, mental health professionals and others striving to overcome addictions. This is what SMART Recovery provides: personal support.

SMART stands for Self-Management and Recovery Training. The name reflects the program's focus on helping people find the power, conviction and tools to abstain completely from harmful addictive behavior. SMART empowers you to develop a path to recovery that works for you — the power of choice.

People receive much of this support at free weekly meetings where they share their experiences with others in recovery, drawing upon SMART tools and principles.

Addiction psychologists founded SMART in 1994 after many patients could not recover using existing programs. They pioneered what is known today as SMART's 4-Point Program® based on their best treatment methods:

**Building and Maintaining Motivation** to abstain completely from any harmful addictive substance or behavior.

**Coping With Urges** to engage in addictive behavior.

**Managing Thoughts, Feelings, and Behaviors** effectively to avoid unnecessary anxiety and irrational decisions to relapse.

**Living a Balanced Life** as we learn to replace our addictive behavior with health, creative and fulfilling activities.

Over the past two decades, SMART has grown into the largest science-based addiction recovery program in the world. Each week, more than 1,800 SMART Recovery groups meet in the U.S. and 14 other countries.\* In addition, participants gather in 37 more meetings online at [www.smartrecovery.org](http://www.smartrecovery.org).

\*Australia, Canada, China, Denmark, India, Iran, Ireland, Kenya, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden, United Kingdom, Uzbekistan and Vietnam.

# The Guiding Principles of SMART Recovery®

**Recovery Through Self-Empowerment.** Our purpose is to help people gain independence from addictive behavior. They should be fully informed about all the therapy options and free to choose among them. Participants take full responsibility for their own recovery.

**Broad-Based.** SMART Recovery addresses addictive behavior associated with any substance or activity. Participants may choose to augment their SMART experience with professional therapy, medications, or other support groups.

**Diversity.** SMART Recovery encourages participation by persons of any race, color, religion, disability, gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity. We do not tolerate harassment of any kind.

**Science-Based.** SMART uses cognitive behavioral, rational emotive behavioral and motivational enhancement therapy techniques. The program evolves as the scientific knowledge of addiction and recovery grows.

**Dynamic Group Meetings.** SMART encourages dynamic interchange among participants during group meetings. This is based on the finding that people in recovery often benefit the most by sharing insights and experiences with each other.

**Volunteer Leadership.** The organization is led and operated almost exclusively by volunteers, including the Board of Directors, regional coordinators and trained meeting facilitators supported by expert clinicians in the field of addiction recovery.

## ***SMART Recovery Empowerment Themes***

*I am not powerless.*

*I can change my beliefs that contributed to my addiction, such as “musts,” and “shoulds.”*

*I can recognize that relapse, should it occur, is a learning opportunity.*

*I can manage my own thoughts and emotions using SMART Recovery tools.*

*I can put space between thought and action, allowing time for a better outcome.*

*I can recognize the difference between my thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.*

*I recognize that my feelings pass eventually; I can tolerate uncomfortable feelings, recognizing them as a normal part of everyday living.*

*I can tell myself that having shortcomings is a sign of being human.*

*I can acknowledge my mistakes and hold myself accountable for making them – but without berating myself for creating them.*

*I do not have to continue as before; change is possible.*

*I can become comfortable with my past.*

*I can see myself of value to others and I can share my experiences with them.*

*I can live a healthier, more satisfying life. I can learn to stop thoughts of helplessness, hopelessness, and low self-worth.*

## SMART 4-Point Program<sup>®</sup>

The 4-point program is at the core of SMART Recovery. Each point has tools, techniques, and strategies to help participants. Many of these can be used well into recovery and beyond to achieve more satisfaction and balance in your life. These points are not steps, but behavioral enhancement techniques. For some people they are sequential; for others they are not.

The tools, techniques, and strategies can be found in their entirety in the *SMART Recovery Handbook* and online at [www.smartrecovery.org](http://www.smartrecovery.org). Copies can be purchased at meetings and the SMART website.

### POINT 1 BUILDING AND MAINTAINING MOTIVATION

Are you riding an emotional wave generated by a crisis in your life? What happens when the crisis subsides and life returns to “normal”? Will you still want to change your life?

How do you stay motivated to make the change you sincerely want?

Motivation is the key to recovery; it drives you to meet your goals. Without it, you are not likely to change very much. You may not even realize any difference. The fact that you attending your first meeting shows you are already motivated to change.

SMART Recovery is a self-empowerment program. You learn that you have power over the choices you make, how you behave, and the goals you set for the future. You learn how your addictive behavior affects your values. You learn to analyze the costs and benefits of continuing an addictive behavior versus choosing abstinence.

#### *Tools, Exercises, and Strategies*

*Hierarchy of Values ... (Three Questions)*

*Change-Plan Worksheet*

*Cost-Benefit Analysis (Of using and not using)*

## POINT 2

### COPING WITH URGES

Learning to cope with urges can be the difference between abstaining and using. They can be intense, and you're used to giving in to them. It takes strong mental and emotional commitment to change these patterns.

In recovery, urges are not the same as the withdrawal symptoms experienced when you first stop using. Resisting urges, however, may cause physical or emotional discomfort. The more you know about urges and why they happen, the better equipped you will be to cope with them.

You can learn to recognize triggers that lead to addictive behaviors. Triggers lead to cravings (*I want to*), which can lead to urges (*I need to*). An awareness and understanding of urges is crucial to recovery. Your brain can unlearn this thinking behavior. You will build up resistance to them. Rather than use an excuse to escape into addictive behavior, you will be able to use urges and the discipline to overcome them as a catalyst for emotional growth.

#### ***Tools, Exercises, and Strategies***

*Identifying Your Triggers*

*Urge Log*

*Identifying Distractions*

*Coping with Urges*

*Defeat Urges with DEADS:*

*D=Deny/Delay (Don't give into the urge)*

*E=Escape the trigger*

*A=Avoid the trigger and/or the urge  
or accept the urge*

*D=Distract yourself with an activity*

*S=Substitute for addictive thinking.*

*DISARM (Destructive Images and Self-talk  
Awareness and Refusal Method)*

*The ABCs of Rational Emotive Behavior  
Therapy*

#### ***Identifying Triggers***

<i>Sex</i>	<i>Provocative ads, perfume, certain hairstyles</i>
<i>Cocaine</i>	<i>White powder, tin foil</i>
<i>Alcohol</i>	<i>Ads, sound of a can opening, certain time of day</i>
<i>Marijuana</i>	<i>Certain music, skate parks, seeing rolling papers in a store</i>
<i>Smoking</i>	<i>Meals, smell of cigarette smoke, stress, coffee, alcohol</i>
<i>Unpleasant emotions: Anger, frustration, grief</i>	
<i>Pleasant emotions: Joy, peace, anticipation, celebration</i>	
<i>Stress: Peer pressure, work issues, general fear, financial concerns</i>	
<i>Physical place or time: Restaurant, park, with friends, work</i>	

## **POINT 3**

### **MANAGING THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, AND BEHAVIORS**

Habitual thoughts cause emotional discomfort, which can lead to addictive behavior to ease the pain. As you begin to think about the world differently, your emotions and behaviors will also change.

Adopting unconditional acceptance can be a key to overcoming emotional problems, particularly acceptance of personal actions. When you find yourself automatically thinking negative thoughts, or exaggerating and judging how bad you are, remind yourself of your humanity and of those traits that we all share. By identifying unhelpful thoughts and replacing them with more helpful thoughts of acceptance, you will feel better and act in healthier ways. After practicing this for a while, more realistic thinking will become automatic for you.

SMART Recovery advocates unconditional self-acceptance. This separates “you” – your character, traits, personality, strengths, and weaknesses – from your behaviors. Self-acceptance is necessary in recovery. SMART also suggests unconditional acceptance of other people.

Learn how to differentiate between rational and irrational beliefs. Negative feelings can fuel addictive behaviors. Take time to consider what you are thinking, and ask yourself, “Is this belief really true?”

Successful managing of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors can mean working through problems, rather than around them. By stubbornly refusing to let your emotions take over, problem solving gets easier.

If you consider yourself recovered, watch out for complacency. Remember where you have been and what you have achieved – forever. You will need to think carefully and honestly about how vulnerable you may still be, and be appropriately vigilant. A relapse can happen without having an urge. SMART considers lapses and relapses as temporary setbacks in recovery.

#### ***Tools, Exercises, and Strategies***

*The ABCs*

*Disputing Irrational Beliefs (DIBS)*

*Change Your Vocabulary, Change Your Feelings*

*Word, Statement, Emotion Vocabulary Exchange*

*Coping Statements Urging a Crisis*

*Five Steps of Problem Solving*

*Relapse Prevention*

## **POINT 4**

### **LIVING A BALANCED LIFE**

Living a balanced life can be unsettling, exhilarating, and authentic. Yet regaining your health and creating a balanced lifestyle is an important part of recovery. Balance comes from finding and pursuing interests that you find absorbing and achieving your short- and long-term goals.

SMART Recovery can help you identify which parts of your life need attention: regaining your physical, mental, and emotional health; rediscovering lost passions and interests, and creating new ones. Now that you have freed up the time you used to spend engaging in addictive behavior, you have time to focus on your values and interests.

Eating right, getting enough sleep, relaxing, and meditating can help restore balance to your life.

Experiment with different aspects of your life to determine what adds value and balance. You have the power to create a new life.

#### ***Tools, Exercises, and Strategies***

*The ABCs*

*Creating Balance*

*Lifestyle Balance Pie*

*Vital Absorbing Creative Interest (VACI)*

*Values, Goals, and Planning*

*Goal Setting*

*Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR) Exercise*

*Visualization Exercise*

*Meditation Guide*

#### ***Visualization Exercise***

*Close your eyes and see yourself entering into a quiet, safe, and relaxing place alone.*

*Fill your place with details of what you hear and smell, what you are sitting or lying on.*

*Create in your mind the noises and smells that you find relaxing.*

*Fill this place with as much detail as you can about things that relax you.*

*Let your body relax and your shoulders and head fall gently.*

*Breathe slowly.*

## Smart Recovery Tools

SMART offers numerous tools drawn from psychotherapy to help people work through the 4-Point Program. These are listed in the boxes beside each point in the preceding pages, and they are accessible on the SMART website and in the SMART Handbook.

One of the most useful tools is a worksheet to help people gain motivation and direction in their efforts to overcome addictions. In the early stages of recovery, people create a change plan, which they can refine and revise as needed. The following worksheet was provided by psychologist Dr. Henry Steinberger.

### CHANGE PLAN WORKSHEET

1. The changes I want to make are:
  
2. The most important reasons I want to make these changes are:
  
3. The steps I plan to take in changing are:
  
4. The ways other people can help me are:  

<u>Person</u>	<u>Possible ways to help me</u>
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5. I will know that my plan is working if:
  
6. Some things that would interfere with my plans are:

7. How important is it that you make this change?

<u>Not at all Important</u>	<u>Most Important</u>
0	10
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	

8. How confident are you that you can make this change?



# The Science of Smart Recovery

No universal theory explains addiction. Instead, science offers many overlapping, competing, and evolving theories and models. The scientific consensus is that addiction can be explained on three levels — the “bio-psycho-social” model:

- Biochemical activities in the brain.
- Psychological beliefs and feelings that structure addictive behavior.
- Social relationships that affect addiction and recovery.

In practice, the tools and methods of SMART are drawn from many psychological understandings of addiction and therapies to change behavior. Chief among these are Motivational Enhancement Therapy, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy (REBT) — all of which are used widely by psychologists to treat anxiety, depression, addiction, and other debilitating conditions.

## Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy

REBT, generally recognized as the first form of Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT), was pioneered by Dr. Albert Ellis in the 1950s. He was inspired by philosophers going back 2,000 years.

‘People are disturbed not by things but by their view of things.’

— Epictetus, Greek philosopher, *The Enchiridion*, c. 125 A.D.

REBT recognizes that people sometimes exaggerate their thoughts about events in their lives. This erroneous thinking can influence how they feel. The connection forms the underlying principle of REBT:

**Rational** – How we *think*, which influences...

**Emotive** – How we *feel*, which influences...

**Behavior** – How we *act*.

**Therapy** – The training to help us learn how to change our thinking to feel and behave in healthier ways.

You might have used an addictive behavior to deal with irrational thoughts and extreme emotions, what SMART calls the “using strategy” for coping with discomfort. This involves adopting the unrealistic belief that life should be free from discomfort and pain. Such a belief can lead to further distress, which triggers the urge to engage in addictive behavior to escape the discomfort. Point 3 of SMART Recovery is designed to help you overcome this type of thinking.

## Motivational Enhancement Therapy

SMART draws from Motivational Enhancement Therapy the technique of helping people change through interviewing that is nonconfrontational. Rather than confronting people with a mandate to change, this technique encourages you to explore issues on your own, raise your consciousness, and then choose to adopt a healthier behavior. At meetings, participants often share tools and experiences that worked for them and let others decide whether to emulate these practices.

## [www.smartrecovery.org](http://www.smartrecovery.org) – Web Resources

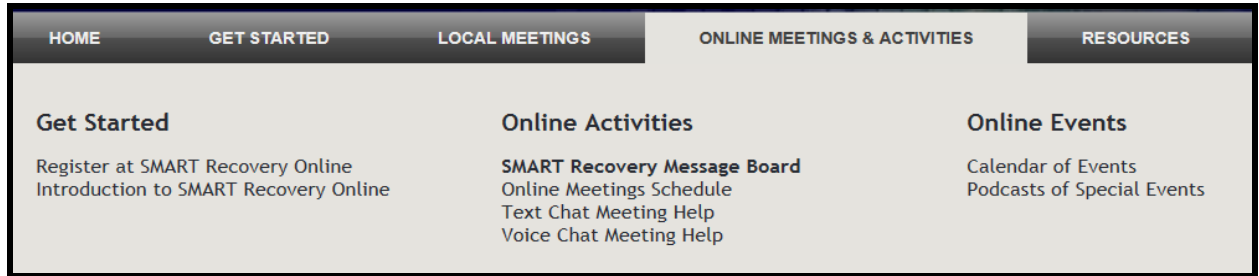


Click on **RESOURCES** to find the **Online Library** with articles and essays, along with tools you can use to help free yourself from addictive behavior. You can also find the SMART newsletter, which features tools, stories from members, and information about recovery and the organization.



Click on **BLOG** to see our information blog, updated weekly. It provides short articles on various tools and addiction topics.

Click on **PODCAST** to hear special events hosted by SMART Recovery covering topics such as changing your thinking, making the most out of life, how to stop procrastinating, and understanding your emotions.



Under **GET STARTED** you can register and create an *anonymous* profile. Click on “Introduction to SMART Recovery Online” to learn more; click on “Register at SMART Recovery Online” to create your profile.



The **MESSAGE BOARD** is extensive and interactive, allowing you to connect with other members. You can also browse discussion topics and find that you will increase your knowledge of addiction and recovery.

Two introductory sections, “Welcome to SMART” and “Discussions and Tools” are a great place to start for information on SMART.

**TEXT CHAT ROOM:** The **SMART Chat Room** is open **24/7**. Because our members are world-wide, there is almost always someone in the chat room. You can just hang out and chat casually but, if you or someone needs help, chat room members are willing to help – we’re all here to help each other! With our Chat Room you are always connected.

**ONLINE MEETINGS:** Online meetings offer the option of text and/or voice access. The meetings follow the same agenda as our face-to-face meetings. We have a very large and supportive online community, with approximately 29 meetings available each week.

Click on **FAMILY AND FRIENDS** to find resources for a loved one who is dealing with a person with an addictive behavior.



## Recommended Reading

***SMART Recovery Handbook: Tools and Strategies to Help You on Your Recovery Journey*** (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, SMART Recovery®, 2013).

***Alcohol: How to Give It Up and Be Glad You Did: A Sensible Approach.*** Philip Tate, Ph.D. (Sharp Press, 1997).

***Alcoholism: The Facts.*** Donald Goodwin (4<sup>th</sup> Edition, Oxford University Press, 2008).

***Authoritative Guide to Self-Help Resources in Mental Health*** (revised edition, Guilford Press, 2003).

***Changing for Good.*** James Prochaska, Ph.D. John Norcross, Ph.D., and Carlo DiClemente, Ph.D. (William Morrow & Co., 1994).

***Get Your Loved One Sober: Alternatives to Nagging, Pleading, and Threatening.*** Robert J. Meyers, Ph.D., and Brenda L. Wolfe, Ph.D. (Hazelden Publishing and Educational Services, 2004).

***Overcoming Crystal Meth Addiction: An Essential Guide to Getting Clean.*** Steven J. Lee (Da Capo Press, 2006)

***Powerless No Longer: Reprogramming Your Addictive Behavior.*** Peter W. Soderman (self-published, 2013).

***Recovery Options: The Complete Guide.*** Volpicelli & Szalavitz. (John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2000-2002).

***Resisting 12-Step Coercion.*** Stanton Peel, Charles Bufe, Archie Brodsky (Sharp Press, 2000).

***Sex, Drugs, Gambling & Chocolate: A Workbook for Overcoming Addictions.*** Thomas Horvath, Ph.D. (Impact Publishers, Inc., 1998).

***The Small Book.*** Jack Trimpey, LCSW (Delacort Press, 1992).

***Sober for Good: New Solutions for Drinking Problems: Advice from Those Who Have Succeeded.*** Anne Fletcher (Houghton Mifflin Co., 2001).

***Three Minute Therapy: Change Your Thinking, Change Your Life.*** Michael R. Edelstein, David Ramsay Steele (Glenbridge Pub. Ltd., 1997-1903).

***The Truth about Addiction and Recovery.*** Stanton Peele, Ph.D., and Archy Brodsky with Mary Arnold (Simon & Schuster, 1989).

***Under the Influence: A Guide to the Myths and Realities of Alcoholism.*** James Robert Milam and Katherine Ketcham (Reissue edition, Bantam, 1984).

***When AA Doesn't Work for You: Rational Steps to Quitting Alcohol.*** Albert Ellis, Ph.D., and Emmett Velten, Ph.D. (Barricade Books, Inc., 1992).

# Meeting Ground Rules

**Maintain confidentiality.** Participants agree not tell anyone outside the group who attended a meeting or provide information that might reveal who was there. You may share what you learned, including issues discussed and recovery tools.

**Show respect.** The discourse should be flexible and nonjudgmental. Do not use labels or language that is offensive, such as sexist, racist or homophobic statements. If your behavior is disruptive, it will be pointed out and you might be asked to leave if it continues.

**Participate actively.** Feel free to ask questions and share ideas that have helped your own recovery. Cross talk among participants is the most useful dynamic at SMART meetings. So that others can speak, be careful not to monopolize the meeting with extended stories of your recovery journey, sometimes known as drunk-o-logues.

**Listen and learn.** If you are just starting to attend SMART meetings, do not feel pressured to speak. Do know that whatever you say will be welcomed — typically with caring and helpful responses from others, who can relate their own challenging first steps in recovery.

**Focus on how to abstain.** SMART's overriding goal is to teach you how to abstain from harmful addictive behavior. If you have not yet adopted this goal or seek to moderate this behavior, that is your choice; but recognize that the meeting will focus on abstention.

**Donate what you can afford.** As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, SMART depends heavily on contributions from meeting participants and volunteers. Give generously if this program is making a difference in your life and if you can afford it, thinking perhaps of all the money saved through your freedom from an expensive substance abuse habit.

## Friends & Family Meetings

A person with an addictive behavior is not the only one affected by it. Friends and family are affected too. Deeply. It can be a difficult journey for all.

SMART relies on a science-based program called Community Reinforcement Approach and Family Training (CRAFT) that recommends new ways for friends and family to interact with their loved ones to enhance their ability to influence positive change.

CRAFT teaches positive, nonconfrontational strategies, such as rewarding positive behaviors instead of engaging in emotionally charged confrontations that may actually push a loved one to use or act out. Friends and family can also learn how to deal with a loved one compassionately rather than with hostility, frustration, or avoidance.



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