

# Joe Gerstein, MD, FACP

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## *Presenting*

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**A history, an academic perspective, and an  
overview of the SMART Recovery<sup>®</sup>  
program**

# SMART Recovery<sup>®</sup>

Self-

Management

And

Recovery

Training

SMART Recovery is a **SELF-EMPOWERMENT** Program.  
Discover the Power of Choice!

## Concepts

- Human beings have capacity within themselves to overcome even severe addictions and go on to lead a meaningful life.
- Lifelong attendance at SMART Recovery meetings is not required nor is it encouraged.
- Different Strokes for Different Folks!

Humans have a variety of personality types, temperaments, belief systems, and attitudes. Ideally, an individual should be matched to the program that is most consistent with his or her life-stance and thinking style.

Objection to a given program does not necessarily mean “denial.” There is an ethical and scientific imperative to try to refer the client to the most appropriate program or to allow him or her trial and choice.

## Purpose

To support individuals who have chosen to abstain, or are considering abstinence from any type of addictive behaviors (substances or activities) by helping them change self-defeating thinking, emotions and actions...and to work towards enduring satisfactions and quality of life.

**NOTE:** a SMART Recovery meeting is not a therapy group; rather, it is an educational, self-help and support group.

## Background

Program is SCIENCE-BASED: We change and expand based on scientific evidence and accumulated experience on "what works" from meetings

- Provided a network of Face-to-Face meetings for over 18 years (Over 60,000 meetings in the U.S. since then)
- SMART Recovery has spread to communities and prisons around the world: Canada, UK, Australia, New Zealand, Sweden, Estonia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Vietnam, Iran and China
- The SMART Recovery Handbook has been translated from English into German, Spanish, Russian, Portuguese, Swedish, Farsi and Mandarin Chinese<sup>6</sup>

## Background (Continued)

- SMART Recovery is a VOLUNTEER-DRIVEN organization. Volunteer Board of Directors (professionals and recovered participants) direct the operation of 2 full-time employees in Mentor OH.
- International Advisory Council: 16 Eminent scientists in the addiction field (e.g., Aaron Beck, Nick Heather & Bill White).
- SMART Recovery incorporated as a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation in 1994. Exists on donations and a modest income from sale of materials. Other support from Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, SAMHSA Grants. NIAAA granted \$1,000,000 to a licensee of SMART Recovery for development of a Corrections-oriented SMART Recovery program: InsideOut.<sup>®</sup>

# The US SMART Partnership Model

SMART Recovery - - -

- Is a partnership between professionals and participants
- Includes professionals and scientists in order to evolve as scientific findings evolve
- Board of Directors currently includes 50% membership by individuals with a recovery history
- Recognizes the expertise of individuals in recovery, but has also encouraged individuals not in recovery to volunteer as meeting facilitators

## Partnership Model (continued)

SMART Recovery - - -

- Encourages professionals to establish and facilitate meetings, but to turn over the meeting facilitation to a qualified participant as soon as possible
- Is working on how to transition professionals out of the facilitator role, and how to empower participants to take on the facilitator role
- Provides distance training for anyone desiring to start a SMART Recovery meeting

## Partnership Model (continued)

SMART Recovery - - -

- Promotes the ideal scenario of volunteers and professionals working together for the good of SMART Recovery - - our desire is to increase the availability of SMART Recovery meetings for everyone, and to use all reasonable means to do so
- Is presently learning how partnerships might best function in the United Kingdom and Australia

**NOTE:** SMART Recovery has no reluctance concerning use of appropriate, medically-prescribed medication for treatment of addiction or ancillary psychiatric conditions by participants.

More specifically we believe the following:

- It is sensible for individuals to seek medical and/or psychological help for emotional disorders and for depression disorders in accordance with the best research findings
- We have no objection to medications prescribed by professionals who may legally prescribe psychotropic medications
- Non-addictive and addictive disorders often co-occur and interact

## **My experience**

Facilitated almost 2,000 SMART Recovery meetings, 700 in prisons (some of our volunteers in Massachusetts have been facilitating meetings for over 15 years).



## **SMART Recovery Therapy: Individual and Group**

For use by professionals on a fee-for-service basis (SMART Recovery meetings are always free). *SMART Recovery Therapy Manual* recently developed. Allows use of SMART Recovery principles, tools and techniques independently or to facilitate and supplement attendance at SMART Recovery community or online meetings.

## Website & Online Activities

- On the Worldwide Web since 1998:  
[www.smartrecovery.org](http://www.smartrecovery.org)
- Over 12,000 registered participants from all over the world in *Message Board Forums*, *Chat Rooms* and participate in 14 weekly *Online Meetings*
- 600+ new registrants per month, about 10% international
- Aside from a part-time webmaster and administrator, the entire operation is run and supervised by trained volunteers

## Science-Based Precepts

- Stages of Change
- Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) / Rational-Emotive Behavioral Therapy (REBT)
- Motivational Interviewing Technique
- Urge-Coping Skills - Behavioral and Cognitive
- Solution-focused Therapy

## Meeting Outline

Welcome and Opening Statement	5 Mins
Check In (Personal Update)	5 – 20 Mins
Agenda Setting	5 Mins
Work Time	30 – 45 Mins
Pass the Hat	5 Mins
Check out (Meeting Review)	10 Mins
Total Time	90 Mins

## Meeting Concepts

- Meetings are interactive and not didactic
- Groups often contain participants with a variety of substance and behavioral problems
- Prefer use of the terms “person with an alcohol problem” to “addict” or “alcoholic”



## **SMART Recovery 4-Point Program<sup>®</sup>**

### **Point #1: Enhancing & Maintaining Motivation to Abstain**

- A. Cost-Benefit Exercises
- B. Hierarchy of Values
- C. Match approach to participant's Stage of Change
- D. Explaining the importance and potency of Self-empowerment and the possibility of recovery by exposure to the reality of Natural Recovery
- E. Motivational Interviewing Approach

# SMART Recovery 4-Point Program<sup>®</sup>

## Point #2: Coping With Urges

- A. Behavioral Techniques
  - 1. Urge Log
  - 2. Distractive approaches
  - 3. Biting off small chunks
  - 4. Surfing the urge



# SMART Recovery 4-Point Program<sup>®</sup>

## Point #2: Coping With Urges (Continued)

### B. Cognitive Approaches

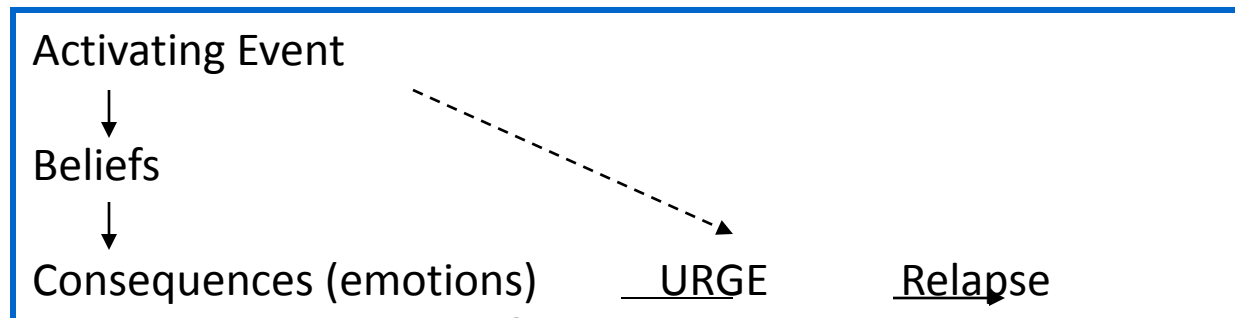
1. DISARM (**D**estructive **I**mage and **S**elf-talk **A**wareness and **R**efusal **M**ethod)
2. Naming and Targeting the Destructive Self-talk voice
3. Comma technique
4. Role playing
5. Searching predecessor thoughts for relapse-provocative ideas and images

## SMART Recovery 4-Point Program<sup>®</sup>

### **Point #3: Managing Thoughts, Feelings & Behaviors** (Dealing rationally with the problems of everyday life)

#### A. ABC's of REBT

1. Intense emotions produce intemperate actions and urges



# SMART Recovery 4-Point Program<sup>®</sup>

## Point #4: Lifestyle Balance

- A. Balancing momentary and enduring satisfactions
- B. Filling the void
- C. Change Plan Worksheet
- D. Rehearsals

# SMART Recovery<sup>®</sup>

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