

Quaker Spirituality and Addiction:

A Retreat for Concerned Friends

Rita M. Willett

School of the Spirit – On Being a Spiritual Nurturer

January 31, 2011

Quaker Spirituality and Addiction

Thursday	
Registration	4:00 pm
Supper	5:30
Overview and Introductions	7:00
Session 1: What is Addiction?	8:00
Collection – Psalm 38	9:00
Friday	
Breakfast	8:00 am
Worship	8:45
Session 2: Addiction & Recovery	10:00
Lunch / Free Time	12:00 pm
Session 3: Pictures of Addiction & Recovery	2:00
Supper	5:00
Session 4: Twelve Step Spirituality	7:00
Collection – Psalm 25	9:00
Saturday	
Breakfast	8:00 am
Worship	8:45
Session 5: Friends and Family	10:00
Lunch / Free Time	12:00 pm
Session 6: Addiction and Community	2:00
Supper	5:00
Session 7: Pastoral Care	7:00
Collection – Psalm 116	9:00
Sunday	
Breakfast	8:00 am
Session 8: Stand Still in the Light	9:00
Evaluations	10:30
Worship	11:00
Lunch and departure	12:00 pm

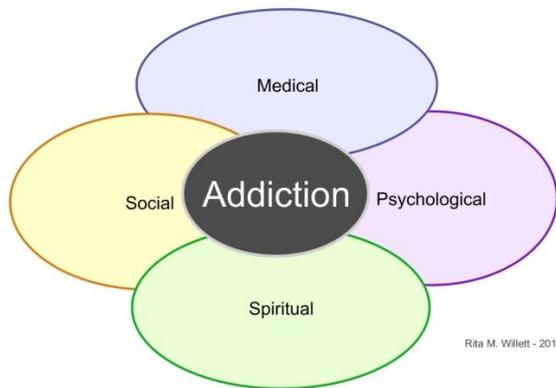
Session One: What is Addiction?

Goal:

Understand addiction as a complex problem with biologic, psychological, social and spiritual dimensions.

Objectives:

1. Participants will recall their own encounters with addiction and its consequences and will reflect on their current understanding of addiction.
2. Addiction will be considered along a continuum from the narrow context of substance abuse, the broader context of behavioral addictions such as gambling, and the broadest context of addiction as inherent to the human condition.
3. Descriptions and definitions of addiction will be viewed in medical, psychological, social and spiritual dimensions, using the “four lens” model.



Activities – one hour:

1. (Speaking out of the silence.) All of us have impressions, images, stories about addiction – perhaps from our own experience, from family or friends, from work, from a book, a movie or the news.
 - Bring a person or a situation to mind – what is the image?
 - What substance or behavior is the addiction about?
 - What are the consequences for this person? For others? For the community?
 - What do you imagine is driving this person to continued use?
 - Do you view the addictive behavior as compulsion or choice?
 - What are your feelings and reactions?
2. Based on your reflection, how would you describe or define addiction?
 - Record ideas on flip chart
 - Identify examples of chemical and behavioral addictions.
 - Discuss broader human context: i.e. attempt to control, willfulness, escape from pain, need for power/ security / affection.
 - Identify examples with medical, psychological, social and spiritual dimensions.
3. Handout – quotes and four-lens diagram – for reflection before Session Two.

Materials: flip chart, markers, tape for posting sheets, handouts

Quotes: What is Addiction?

... any repeated behavior, substance-related or not, in which a person feels compelled to persist, regardless of its negative impact on his life and the lives of others. The distinguishing features of any addiction are compulsion, preoccupation, impaired control, persistence, relapse and craving.

“Dependence” can also be understood as a powerful attachment to harmful substances or behaviors, and this definition gives us a clearer picture of addiction. The addict comes to depend on the substance or behavior in order to make himself feel momentarily calmer or more excited or less dissatisfied with his life.

Gabor Maté: *In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts: Close Encounters with Addiction* (2010)

Addiction also helps us understand voluntary behavior; it shines a light on its dark sides... it is unlikely that anyone chooses to be an addict, but... everyone, including those who are called addicts, stops using drugs when the costs of continuing become too great. This paradox is at the heart of the understanding of choice and also at the heart of understanding addiction.

Gene Heyman in *Addiction: A Disorder of Choice* (2009)

It is true that a person may be responsible for having placed himself at risk for having developed an addiction by drinking or using drugs in the first place; however the use of drugs and alcohol is so widespread, so “normal” in our society, that it hardly seems fair to condemn anyone who actually does develop an addiction. Something else must be at work...

...addictions are diseases of automaticity – automatisms – developments in the central nervous system that cannot be eliminated but can be rendered dormant.

Richard Sandor in *Thinking Simply about Addiction* (2009)

Addiction represents the ultimate effort to control, the definitive demand for magic... and the final failure of spirituality... the desperate (and doomed) attempt to fill a spiritual void with a material reality – to make “magic” a substitute for miracle.

Kurtz and Ketcham, in *The Spirituality of Imperfection* (1992)

‘Addiction’ might be the best word to explain the lostness that so deeply permeates contemporary society. Our addictions make us cling to what the world proclaims as the keys to self-fulfillment: accumulation of wealth and power; attainment of status and admiration; lavish consumption of food and drink, and sexual gratification without distinguishing between lust and love. These addictions create expectations that cannot but fail to satisfy our deepest needs... The addicted life can aptly be designated a life lived in ‘a distant country.’ It is from there that our cry for deliverance rises up.

Henri Nouwen, in *The Return of the Prodigal Son* (1992)

The addiction metaphor – human beings passively enslaved in automaticity – suits our age perfectly. There is no “them,” the addicted, and “us,” the normal. To the extent any of us lives in ignorance of the spiritual dimension of our lives – acting automatically without any sense of obligation to something or someone beyond ourselves – then we too are addicted.

Richard Sandor in *Thinking Simply about Addiction* (2009)

All of us are addicted in some way – we are all trying to escape from some pain. Any of us could walk into a 12 step meeting any day and benefit. We could all say ‘my will isn’t working’ – and learn surrender. I don’t know why it is chemicals for some and for others different addictions. It’s part of the human condition... the need for control... the willfulness.

Anonymous Quaker in conversation (2010)

Friends, whatever ye are addicted to, the Tempter will come in that thing; and when he can trouble you, then he gets advantage over you, and then you are gone.

George Fox

I have come to view addiction as the sacred disease of the modern world. Addictions can be tragedies, but on occasion they can be gifts as well. Sooner or later in the terrible course of addiction one comes to what is called rock bottom. At this point one is forced either to reach out toward the wonderful mystery of life or to continue with a willfulness that will obviously end in death.

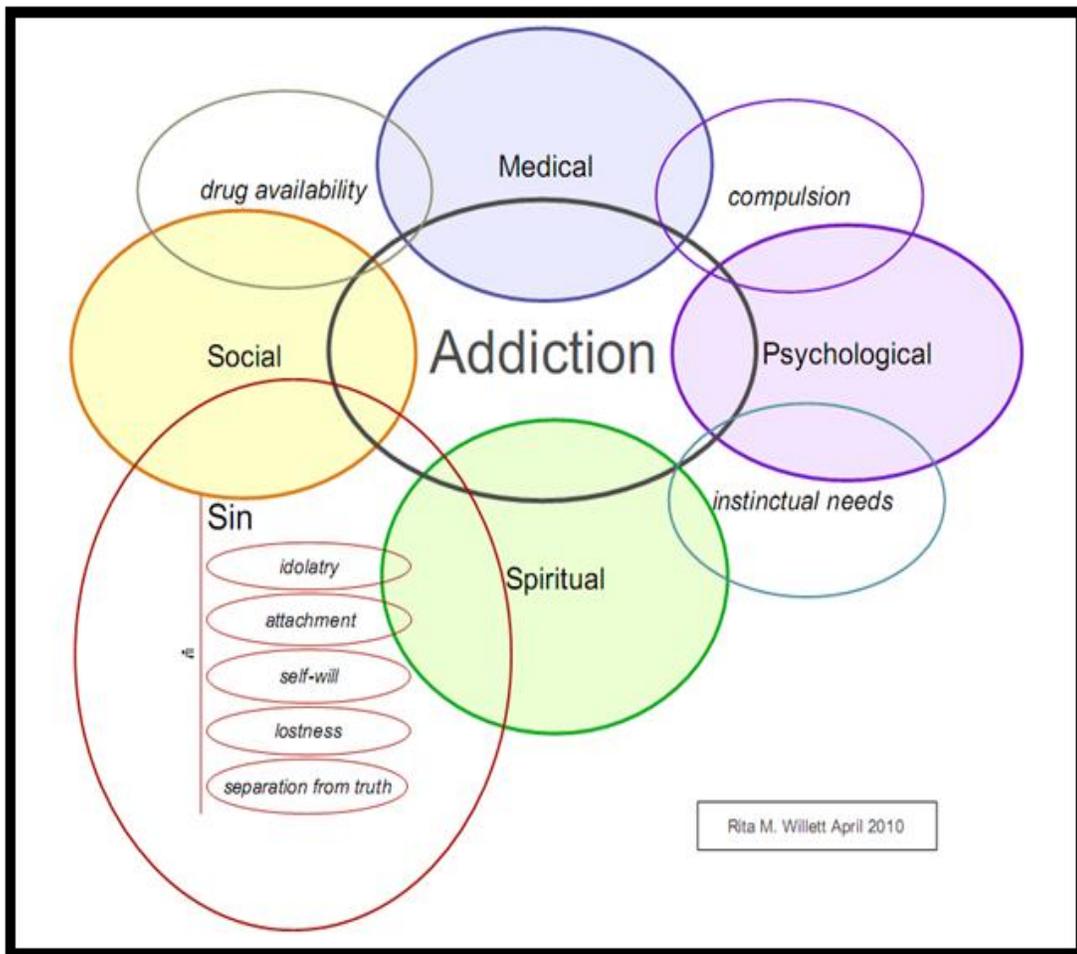
Gerald May in *Will and Spirit* (1982)

It is the obsessive quest for control rather than the compulsive use of a specific substance or behavior that defines an addict... most of us are addicts seeking to play God by trying to control our lives and the lives of those who touch us.

Rami Shapiro in *Recovery: The Twelve Steps as Spiritual Practice* (2009)

Addiction has biological, chemical, neurological, psychological, medical, emotional, social, political, economic, and spiritual underpinnings... To get anywhere near a complete picture we must keep shaking the kaleidoscope to see what other patterns emerge.

Gabor Maté: *In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts: Close Encounters with Addiction* (2010)



O Beloved, in your mercy, forgive me,
in your compassion raise me up!
For arrows of fear pierce my heart,
and guilt weighs heavy upon me.

I live in confusion, fear and despair
because of my illusions;
My body responds with illness
because of my stubbornness.
Ignorance casts me into darkness;
I grope in every direction,
searching in vain.

Because of foolishness, my heart has
turned to stone,
I am utterly bowed down, overcome
with remorse;
I spend my days in mourning,
and pray for mercy throughout
the night.

I acknowledge my weakness,
O Loving Presence,
illness has overtaken me.
My energy is depleted, my spirit
crushed;
I groan under the tumult of
my heart.

Beloved, all my longing is known to You,
my sighing is not hidden
from You.
My heart throbs endlessly, my
strength fails me;
even the light of my eyes –
it also has disappeared.
My friends and companions have
no time for me,
my family stays at a distance.

Psalm 38

*Psalms for Praying:
An Invitation to Wholeness*

by Nan C. Merrill

The tempter knows well my weakness
and lays a snare in my path,
Those who choose the darkness are
ever at my door,
seeking my company.

Like someone who is deaf,
I do not hear,
like one who is dumb,
I do not speak.
Yes, I pretend not to hear, because
I am afraid to rebuke those
who lead me astray.

For You alone, Beloved, do I wait;
You alone, O Gracious One,
will answer my cry.
I pray, "Be my strength!
Uphold me when I am weak
and paralyzed with fear!"

For I seem ready to fall,
my pain is always with me.
I confess my shortcomings,
I am sorry for my transgression.
No longer will I listen and follow
the ego's wily ways;
they lead only to despair and
separate me from Love.
I feel like a child again, ready
to learn life's lessons of peace;
I choose to walk in the Light.

I no longer feel separated from You,
O Beloved!
I know I am One with All!
You have rolled away the stone
from my heart,
O Love, my Beloved Friend!

Session Two: Addiction and Recovery

Goal:

Understand the dimensions of recovery in the medical, psychological, social and spiritual realms.

Objectives:

1. Link varied explanatory models of addiction with approaches to recovery.
2. Identify treatment approaches for chemical addiction in medical, psychological, social and spiritual dimensions, using the “four lens” model.
3. Describe recovery from a broad spiritual perspective.
4. Explore stories from the New Testament as stories about addiction and recovery.

Activities – two hours:

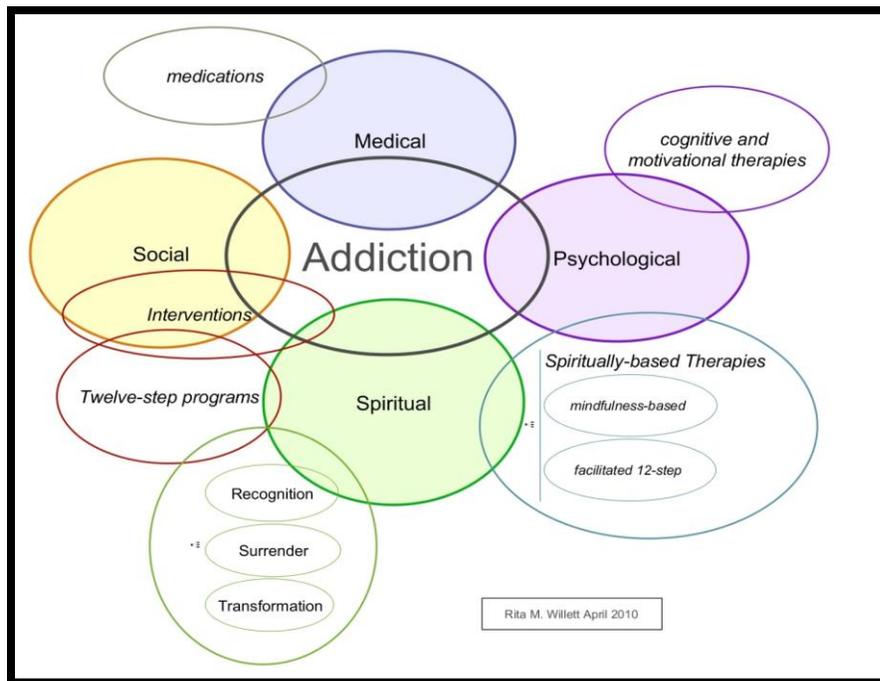
1. Review descriptions or explanatory models of addiction depicted on handout. For each model, discuss what recovery would look like and what might bring about the necessary changes.

Addiction is:	Recovery is:	Change occurs when:
Compulsion, automaticity, craving, dependence, chronic relapsing brain disease		
Escape from pain		
Voluntary behavior, disorder of choice		
Willfulness, effort to control, attempt to ‘play God’		
Immersion in a materialistic and ego-centric society		

2. Identify approaches to substance abuse treatment and recovery in each of the four dimensions:

medical	psychological	social	spiritual
medications to control cravings (methadone), to deter drug use (‘Antabuse’) or to treat co-occurring psychiatric disorders such as depression. Recovery is “not so much a matter of changing one’s mind but changing one’s brain.” (Sellman 2009.)	cognitive-behavioral therapy, motivational interviewing, 12-step facilitation, mindfulness-based cognitive therapy, acceptance and commitment therapy, dialectical behavioral therapy	support for family function, education, employment, and social engagement. Spiritually-based mutual aid groups like AA/NA, supportive faith communities	12-step programs Faith-based programs

3. Introduce a model of recovery, in the broad spiritual sense, that involves movements of recognition, surrender and transformation.
 1. Recognition is seeing ourselves and our situation clearly, literally the first of the twelve steps: We admit that we are powerless over addiction, that our lives have become unmanageable.
 2. Surrender is acceptance of uncertainty, letting go of efforts to control, trusting in God's care.
 3. Transformation occurs by God's grace. We cannot change ourselves by ourselves. Yet, transformation is not entirely passive; there is a necessary 'willingness' or participation. Transformation brings one to 'the other side' of addiction, to a sacred place that is not merely abstinence or the substitution of another addiction. Gerald May (1988) calls this process 'consecration,' a transformation of desire, an opening into 'spaciousness,' a coming home.



4. Divide into four small groups, each with one New Testament story. Begin by reading the story aloud. Each person assumes a role in the story and speaks briefly in first person from that perspective. Consider characters not named in the story, like the prodigal son's mother. After exploring these characters, discuss the story as a story of addiction and recovery. What fits for you? What does not fit?
 - Parable of the prodigal son Luke 5:11-32
 - Jesus casting out demons Mark 5:1-20
 - Jesus and the rich young man Mark 10:17-27
 - Healing at the Pool of Beth-zatha John 5:1-15
 In the large group – ask each small group to read the story and summarize the group's response.

Materials: flip chart, markers, tape for posting sheets, handouts with chart for explanatory models and treatment approaches, concept map of recovery, copies of New Testament stories.

The Prodigal Son - Luke 5:11-32

¹Then Jesus said, “There was a man who had two sons. ²The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.’ So he divided his property between them. ³A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. ⁴When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. ⁵So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. ⁶He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. ⁷But when he came to himself he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! ⁸I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; ⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.”’ ¹⁰So he set off and went to his father.

But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. ¹¹Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ ¹²But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ¹³And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; ¹⁴for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate.

¹⁵“Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. ¹⁶He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. ¹⁷He replied, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.’ ¹⁸Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. ¹⁹But he answered his father, ‘Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. ²⁰But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!’ ²¹Then the father said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ²²But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.’”

Healing at the Pool Beth-zatha - John 5:1-15

After this there was a festival of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ²Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew Beth-zatha, which has five porticoes. ³In these lay many invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed. ⁴One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. ⁵When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, “Do you want to be made well?” ⁶The sick man answered him, “Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me.” ⁷Jesus said to him, “Stand up, take your mat and walk.” ⁸At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk. Now that day was a sabbath. ⁹So the Jews said to the man who had been cured, “It is the sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your mat.” ¹⁰But he answered them, “The man who made me well said to me, ‘Take up your mat and walk.’” ¹¹They asked him, “Who is the man who said to you, ‘Take it up and walk?’” ¹²Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had disappeared in the crowd that was there. ¹³Later Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, “See, you have been made well! Do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to you.” ¹⁴The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

The Gerasene Demoniac – Mark 5:1-20

They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes. ²And when he had stepped out of the boat, immediately a man out of the tombs with an unclean spirit met him. ³He lived among the tombs; and no one could restrain him anymore, even with a chain; ⁴for he had often been restrained with shackles and chains, but the chains he wrenched apart, and the shackles he broke in pieces; and no one had the strength to subdue him. ⁵Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always howling and bruising himself with stones. ⁶When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and bowed down before him; ⁷and he shouted at the top of his voice, “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me.” ⁸For he had said to him, “Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!” ⁹Then Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” He replied, “My name is Legion; for we are many.” ¹⁰He begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country. ¹¹Now there on the hillside a great herd of swine was feeding; ¹²and the unclean spirits begged him, “Send us into the swine; let us enter them.” ¹³So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the swine; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and were drowned in the sea.

¹⁴The swineherds ran off and told it in the city and in the country. Then people came to see what it was that had happened. ¹⁵They came to Jesus and saw the demoniac sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the legion; and they were afraid. ¹⁶Those who had seen what had happened to the demoniac and to the swine reported it. ¹⁷Then they began to beg Jesus to leave their neighborhood. ¹⁸As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed by demons begged him that he might be with him. ¹⁹But Jesus refused, and said to him, “Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and what mercy he has shown you.” ²⁰And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed.

The Rich Young Man – Mark 10:17-27

¹⁷As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” ¹⁸Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. ¹⁹You know the commandments: ‘You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honor your father and mother.’” ²⁰He said to him, “Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth.” ²¹Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, “You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.” ²²When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

²³Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!” ²⁴And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again, “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.” ²⁶They were greatly astounded and said to one another, “Then who can be saved?” ²⁷Jesus looked at them and said, “For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible.”

(all texts New Revised Standard Version)

Session Three: Pictures of Addiction and Recovery

Goals:

Explore and integrate perspectives on addiction and recovery.

Objectives:

1. Discuss experiences, ideas, and feelings about addiction and recovery.
2. Use images and text to create a visual impression about addiction and recovery.

Activity – two hours:

Small groups (3 or 4 participants) will each create a collage depicting addiction and recovery. The process of selecting and arranging images and text allows each group to share experiences and perspectives. Collages will be displayed the following day.

Materials: poster boards, magazines, pictures, glue, markers.

Example – *Heart, Brain and Courage: Parable of the Prodigal Son* (Rita Willett 2010)



Session Four: Twelve Step Spirituality

Goals:

1. Understand Twelve-Step recovery and its relationship to Quaker spirituality.
2. Appreciate issues of race, class and gender in relation to Twelve-Step recovery.

Objectives:

1. Describe the history of Alcoholics Anonymous and the development of Twelve-Step spirituality.
2. Identify parallels and differences between Twelve-Step and Quaker spirituality.
3. Identify parallels and differences between Twelve-Step fellowship traditions and Quaker process.
4. Discuss the impact that concepts of powerlessness and surrender may have for persons or groups who have been oppressed or marginalized.

Activities – two hours:

1. Distribute handout with 12 steps, 12 traditions and 12 promises - read the 12 steps out loud.
2. Brief history of mutual help movements and Alcoholics Anonymous (presentation):
 - 1920's – 30's Oxford Group – evangelical Protestant group led by Frank Buchman promoting surrender to God, confession of sins, and public testimony. Members were generally white, highly educated and influential, including the Firestone family. The founders of Alcoholics Anonymous (Ebby T, Bill Wilson, Dr. Bob) were Oxford Group members.
 - 1935 – Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob found AA – broke away from Oxford Group's evangelical Protestant beliefs, and created an organization open to Catholics and others.
 - 12 step spiritual approach to addiction influenced by William James writing (*Varieties of Religious Experience* 1902) and Carl Jung (only hope for addiction is "a spiritual or religious experience – in short, a genuine conversion.")
3. Some come to Quakerism from 12 step recovery, finding Quaker faith and practice compatible with their recovery fellowship experience.
 - One blogger writes: "...about first generation Friends. I found it very interesting how Quaker conviction process was an abbreviated form of 12-step recovery! Six key stages: are (1.) A powerful in-breaking of God, (2.) A sense of conviction of sin (3.) A choice, repentance (4.) Being born again into perfection or a measure of perfection (5.) The convinced gathering together; 'gathered in a net' and (6.) Calling the world towards a new mode of religious experience."
From Kevin-Douglas Olive's Quaker blog *Pilgrim and Stranger* (2009)
 - The traditions of twelve step groups include anonymity, the importance of group rather than individual welfare, and the ultimate authority of God expressed through the "group conscience." Parallels have been drawn between 12 step traditions and Quaker practice.

Large group discussion of experiences, reactions, parallels and differences between 12 step recovery and Quaker faith and practice.

4. Powerlessness (presentation):

What does it mean to be 'powerless' over addiction?

- Addiction involves illusory power – addiction attempts to control what is not controllable – and perhaps admitting powerlessness means acknowledging that illusion.
- Unlike illusory power, authentic power is intrinsic to the healthy experience of being human. It is simply the power of being - the sense of self, the power of capability – the sense of mastery and the power of will – the sense of intentionality. Addiction interferes with authentic power and true recovery involves not just abstinence, but a recovery of authentic power.

The connotations of power and powerlessness are particularly important for those who have been marginalized or oppressed.

- AA was founded by white, Christian, middle-class men and is still predominantly white and male. How does that shape its understanding of spirituality and recovery?
- Alternative mutual help groups have developed for a variety of reasons – including objection to the profession of powerlessness in the 12 steps.
- Women for Sobriety: “We are capable and competent, caring and compassionate, always willing to help another, bonded together in overcoming our addictions.”
- The 16 steps of discovery and empowerment (Charlotte Kasl, PhD. copyright 1991)
Step 1: We affirm we have the power to take charge of our lives and stop being dependent on substances or other people for our self-esteem and security. (Note, Kasl is Quaker)
- African American Extended Family Program (Glide Memorial Methodist Church) has ten steps including, I will gain control over my life, I will accept who I am, I will forgive myself and forgive others, I will live my spirituality, I will support and love my brothers and sisters.

Addiction, spirituality and liberation theology (discussion):

John Blevins writes:

Men and women living in poverty, the preferential children of God in liberation theologies, bear the brunt of the dismantling of a comprehensive public substance abuse treatment system. In many circumstances, their only option to address active addiction is to confess their powerlessness before they can be part of a community of recovery. But surely there are other spiritual journeys they can embark upon. What would a spirituality of recovery from chaotic alcohol or drug use look like if it were grounded in the theological claim that God has a preferential concern for the drug user?

Discuss Blevins' question: ***What would a spirituality of recovery from chaotic alcohol or drug use look like if it were grounded in the theological claim that God has a preferential concern for the drug user?***

Materials: Handouts – 12 steps / traditions / promises, flip chart and markers

*The 12 Steps**

1 - We admitted we were powerless over our addiction - that our lives had become unmanageable

Hitting rock bottom shatters the ego, and without the ego there is no more need of rock bottom. Rock bottom was just another illusion of the addicted mind. When you hit it full force, both it and you are shattered by the experience, and you discover a new kind of falling, a free-falling into God.

Rami Shapiro in *Recovery: the Twelve Steps as Spiritual Practice (2009)*

2 - Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity

Unlike anything or anyone else you might get sober for, a Higher Power doesn't change... a Higher Power is eternal. Nothing else is. Relationships, health, satisfaction with work, the joys of creativity and recreation – all are subject to change. That's why depending on them as a foundation for sobriety is a mistake.

Richard Sandor in *Thinking Simply about Addiction: A Handbook for Recovery (2009)*

3 - Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God

We were now at *Step Three*. Many of us said to our Maker, *as we understood Him*: "God, I offer myself to Thee-to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life. May I do Thy will always!" We thought well before taking this step making sure we were ready; that we could at last abandon ourselves utterly to Him.

Alcoholics Anonymous 'Big Book' (1939)

4 - Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves

Step Four calls on us to be searching and fearless. We are asked to look carefully at ourselves and to get beneath the self-deceptions we have used up to now to hide the truth from ourselves. We search within, as if entering a dark house with a single candle to guide us. We move ahead, despite our fear or resistance to the unknown. We need to be willing to illuminate every corner of every room of our minds as if our lives depend on it, because they do.

Working Step Four in Narcotics Anonymous (1988)

5 - Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs

Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. (James 5:16) Our confession actually strengthens our commitment toward spiritual growth since we now have a companion interceding in prayer for us, encouraging and sharing with us.

Robert Hemfelt and Richard Fowler in *Serenity: A Companion for Twelve Step Recovery (1990)*

6 - Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character

If we allow the Divine Indwelling or the Higher Power to heal the wounds of our unconscious, the addictive process will end and there will be no more addictions. There will still be preferences. There will be feelings of distress. But they will not touch the deep peace or calm that the Psalms refer to as the rock on which we are based, the God in whom we confidently take refuge. Awakening to the Divine Indwelling is the true security, the true freedom, and the true love of our lives.

Thomas Keating in *Divine Therapy & Addiction: Centering Prayer and the Twelve Steps (2009)*

7 - Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings

Humility is simply a basic awareness of my relationship to the world and my connectedness to all its circumstances. It is the acceptance of relationships with others, not only for who they are but also for who I am... I make my way with all the others in my life because each of them has something important to call out of me, to support in me, to bring to fruit a vision of God in my life. ..Humility is the total continuing surrender to God's power in my life and in the lives of those around me.

Joan Chittister in *Wisdom Distilled from the Daily: Living the Rule of St. Benedict Today* (1990)

8 - Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all

The root meaning of the word "integrity" calls for wholeness. The word comes from the Latin *integritas*, which refers to a state or quality of being complete, that is, a condition of wholeness... Integrity creates a sense of togetherness and belonging when applied to persons in community. Integrity forms the basis for a covenant relationship in which persons exercise a sense of responsibility and accountability toward one another.

Wilmer Cooper in *The Testimony of Integrity – Pendle Hill Pamphlet 296* (1991)

9 - Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others

The power of A.A.'s Ninth Step is that it permits the possibility of experiencing forgiveness – the experience, first, of being forgiven that then makes it possible for the alcoholic to forgive and thus to become free of the "number one offender" of resentment.

Ernest Kurtz & Katherine Ketcham in *The Spirituality of Imperfection: Storytelling and the Search for Meaning* (1992)

10 - Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect. For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

Romans 12:2-3 (NRSV)

11 - Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out

After having worked the program for a while, a person may begin to notice that what began as a desperate need for God is changing into a loving desire for God.... Before, one needed God as the agent of recovery, the divine dispenser of grace. Now this need is developing into a love for God as God's self.

Gerald May in *The Dark Night of the Soul* (2004)

12 - Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs

Each stage of our recovery then was at least a small awakening: seeing the truth of our disease in Step One; the stirrings of faith and making a commitment to our spiritual life in Steps Two and Three; awakening to our own role in life's difficulties through inventory; seeing the pain we have caused others and trying to heal that; and, with Step Eleven, plunging deeper into our spiritual practice... the Twelve Step spiritual awakening appears in Step Twelve, not Step One. It comes out of a process, the difficult inner and outer work of the first eleven Steps.

Kevin Griffin in *One Breath at a Time: Buddhism and the Twelve Steps* (2004)

*Wording adapted from the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps by 12step.org

The Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon unity
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority - a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.
6. A group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles above personalities.

The Twelve Promises of Alcoholics Anonymous

1. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness.
2. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it.
3. We will comprehend the word serenity.
4. We will know peace.
5. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others.
6. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear.
7. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows.
8. Self-seeking will slip away.
9. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change.
10. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us.
11. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us.
12. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

To You, O Lord, I lift my heart.
My God, in You I trust. Let me be not shamed,
let my enemies not gloat over me.
Yes, let all who hope in You be not shamed.
Let the treacherous be shamed, empty-handed.
Your ways, O Lord, inform me,
Your paths, instruct me.
Lead me in Your truth and instruct me,
For You are the God of my rescue.
In You do I hope every day.
Recall Your mercies, O Lord,
and your kindnesses – they are forever.
My youth's offenses and my crimes recall not.
In Your kindness, recall me – You;
for the sake of Your goodness, O Lord.
Good and upright is the Lord.
Therefore He guides offenders on the way.
He leads the lowly in justice
and teaches the lowly His way.
All the Lord's paths are kindness and truth
for the keepers of His pact and His precepts.
For the sake of Your name, O Lord,
may You forgive my crime, which is great.
Whosoever the man who fears the Lord,
He will guide him in the way he should choose.
His life will repose in bounty,
and his seed will inherit the earth.
The Lord's counsel is for those who fear Him,
and His pact He makes known to them.
My eyes at all times to the Lord
for He draws my feet from the net.
Turn to me and grant me grace,
for alone and afflicted am I.
The distress of my heart has grown great.
From my straits bring me out.
See my affliction and suffering
and forgive all my offenses.
See my enemies who are many
and with outrageous hatred despise me.
Guard my life and save me.
Let me be not shamed, for I shelter in You.
May uprightness, wholeness, preserve me,
for in You do I hope.

Redeem, God, Israel from all its straits.

Psalm 25

*The Book of Psalms:
A Translation with
Commentary*

by Robert Alter

Session Five: Friends and Family

Goals:

1. Understand the experience of family and friends when a loved one is addicted.
2. Consider the spiritual needs of those who care for a person with addiction.

Objectives:

1. Describe common responses of family and friends in the setting of addiction, including denial, anger, blame, resentment, guilt, shame, attempts to control, appeasing and caretaking, grief, and despair.
2. Define ambiguous grief as grief without closure because the loved one is physically but not psychologically present (addiction, dementia) or psychologically but not physically present.
3. Describe the challenge of discerning what assistance to provide someone with active addiction: What kinds of 'help' are likely to reinforce dependence and enable ongoing addiction? What kinds of assistance are loving and supportive of sobriety and recovery?
4. Identify approaches to coping with a loved one's addiction, including:
 - Accepting uncertainty
 - Maintaining hope while letting go of wishes
 - Setting healthy boundaries
 - Finding support
5. Recognize the power of paradox in complex situations and relationships. For example:
 - Each of us is doing our best - AND – each of us can do better.
 - Our best human love is conditional and imperfect – AND YET – God's unconditional and perfect love is present in every expression of human love.
 - Holding the tension between reality and possibility
6. Recognize the role of mutual help groups (such as Twelve Steps) and Friends care committees in supporting families of those with active addiction.

Activities:

1. The story of Maria and Alejandro (see attached) – discuss what they may have thought and felt.
2. Present definition of ambiguous grief, approaches to coping, and paradox using Maria and Alejandro's story and / or the experience of the presenter. (see attached)
3. Ask participants to consider the relevance of the Twelve Steps for family and friends own "recovery." (Read steps 1-3, 4-7, 8-9, 10, 11, 12 and discuss.) For Twelve-Step programs like Al-Anon and Families Anonymous, identify both potential benefits (recognizing efforts to control the loved one, letting go of outcomes, finding spiritual support and strength) and pitfalls (labeling common family reactions as pathology i.e. "co-dependency" and reacting as if any support is "enabling" behavior.)
4. Imagine being on a care committee for the family of someone with active addiction. What needs might you anticipate?

Materials: flipchart, markers, copy of Twelve Steps

Maria and Alejandro's Story



In 1996, Maria and Alejandro Martinelly-Montano left Bolivia with their 8 year old, Carlos Abraham, and his sister. They came to United States hoping for educational and economic opportunity. Bolivia is a poor country. In the 1990's, it produced 1/3 the world's supply of cocaine. Maria and Alejandro were probably middle class since they found the means to leave – perhaps with tourist visas. In the next few years, they had two more sons, submitted immigration papers, and were granted work permits but not legal residence.



In 2007, Carlos, age 19, was found asleep at the wheel of an idling car and convicted of drunken-driving. His license was suspended. The next year, Carlos and his girlfriend Nancy had their first child, Carla. Again, Carlos was arrested for drunken driving with a blood alcohol level over twice the limit. He served 20 days in jail and now faced possible deportation to Bolivia. In 2009, Carlos and Nancy had their second child, Raymond.



Maria and Alejandro were concerned about their son's drinking. We don't know what help they sought – we do know that Prince William County, Virginia was taking a very hard line on illegal immigrants, limiting their access to social services. Carlos lived at home and worked at various jobs. He spent time with Nancy, Carla and Raymond. But Carlos continued to drink heavily. Periodically, he drove with a revoked license so Maria and Alejandro always hid the family car keys.



Early one Sunday morning in August 2010, Carlos had a drinking binge, found the car keys and took off. He lost control of the car and had a head-on collision with three Catholic nuns from Richmond. Sr. Denise Mosier was killed instantly. Sr. Connie and Sr. Charlotte were critically injured.



The next evening, Maria and Alejandro went to the Benedictine Monastery to express their sorrow and seek forgiveness. Alejandro said, "it was an expression of my family's emotion, from our hearts." The Sister who greeted them said that Sr. Denise would have been the first to forgive Carlos, 'a good man with a bad drinking problem.' She begged them to get help for their son, so that he might be a good father to his two young children. The Martinelly-Montano's continued visiting at the monastery and attended the funeral for Sr. Denise. Nancy Avalos, Carlos' fiancée, said, "I apologize to the whole community for this loss and I understand she was a person who gave her life to help people."



Carlos is awaiting trial for felony murder, facing up to 40 years in prison. Nancy says, "If he is put in a jail cell for years, that's my children in there, that's me in there, that's his mom in there."

Information from online public news sources – see references in bibliography.

A Mother's Story

My own experience as the parent of a son with chaotic substance use includes grief, fear, guilt, shame, blame, anger, resentment, efforts to fix or control the problem...

Being Mom to a son with relapsing substance abuse is an experience of ongoing grief. At times, even when he was standing in front of me, I felt as if I had lost my child. When he was high or antagonistic, he seemed like a stranger, like someone possessed, someone I didn't really know. Other times, he was physically absent and relentlessly present in my heart and my mind. I grieved the first Christmas and the first birthday that I didn't celebrate with him. I grieved the loss of my dreams for him – teaching him to drive, knowing his first girlfriend, and sending him off to college.

When my son began drinking and using drugs I blamed myself - and I tried desperately to control him. When I realized that I could not change him or keep him safe by myself, I set out to find the right experts instead. I felt responsible for the problem and I was determined to solve it – but nothing I did seemed to help. Instead, I was shown over and over how tightly I grasp for control – and what an illusion that is.

When I wasn't blaming myself, I was blaming other people or my son himself for the drug addiction. I blamed his drug-using peers and the teachers and counselors who had let him down or betrayed his trust... In my mind I was looking for the cause of his troubles – if only I could find the cause, I could figure out the solution. That blame became a heavy burden of resentment.

I have had to make very difficult decisions – I put him in residential treatment against his wishes when he was 16; I asked him to leave home at 19. It has been so hard to figure out what kind of support to provide him – what would reinforce dependence and enable ongoing addiction? What would support his sobriety and recovery?

Parker Palmer quote from *A Hidden Wholeness*:

The insight at the heart of nonviolence is that we live in a tragic gap – a gap between the way things are and the way we know they might be. It is a gap that never has been and never will be closed. If we want to live nonviolent lives, we must learn to stand in the tragic gap, faithfully holding the tension between reality and possibility in hopes of being opened to a third way. I harbor no illusions about how hard it is to live in that gap...

Ultimately, what drives us to resolve tension as quickly as we possibly can is the fear that if we hold it too long, it will break our hearts... holding powerful tensions over time can be, and often is, a heartbreaking experience.

But there are at least two ways to understand what it means to have our hearts broken. One is to imagine the heart broken into shards and scattered about – a feeling most of us know, and a fate we would like to avoid. The other is to imagine the heart broken open into new capacity – a process that is not without pain but one that many of us would welcome. As I stand in the tragic gap between reality and possibility, this small, tight fist of a thing called my heart can break open into greater capacity to hold more of my own and the world's suffering and joy, despair and hope. If you need testimonials to those options, talk to the parents of a teenage child.

Session Six: Addiction and Community

Goals:

1. Understand the impact of addiction on a community.
2. Appreciate the role of community in intervention for addiction and support of recovery.
3. Consider the 'testimony of temperance.'

Objectives:

1. Give examples of the impact that addiction has on communities, including family disruption, child neglect and abuse, homelessness, motor vehicle accidents, incarceration, illness and death.
2. Recognize that intervention is based on love, integrity (not enabling addiction), justice and hope.
3. Identify settings for structured intervention: Family, Workplace, Legal, Medical
4. Define 'soft' intervention as ending the enabling behavior that supports addiction.
5. Identify an addict's crisis as an opportunity to offer treatment.
6. Discuss the history of Quaker temperance and its relevance today.

Activities:

1. Ask participants to share examples of the impact of addiction in communities.
2. Read and discuss Luke 10:25-37 - The Parable of the Good Samaritan (attached)
3. Identify love, integrity, justice and hope as values that underlie intervention.

A Meeting community should be ready to listen non-judgmentally, offer information about sources of help, refuse to enable people to continue in harmful patterns, and continue to offer an environment free from addictive practices.

Baltimore Yearly Meeting Faith and Practice

...we reach out to the true person behind the addiction using love, compassionate honesty, and a vision for the future... Somewhere far beneath the addiction, inside the captive heart, the true spirit hears the voice of love calling and experiences a moment of clarity. In that moment, our loved ones cease to listen to the voice of addiction. They instead listen to our voice and trust us. Addiction loses its power and the true spirit asserts itself and says yes. In that moment, we open the door...

Debra Jay in *No More Letting Go* (2006)

4. Describe intervention settings and strategies and what role a Meeting community might have.
5. Small groups – share personal responses and perspectives to Quaker quotes and excerpts from various Yearly Meetings' Faith and Practice concerning the use of alcohol and other addictive substances.
Convene in the large group to share perspectives and questions.

Materials: flip chart, markers, handout

Luke 10:25-37 - The Parable of the Good Samaritan:

Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. 'Teacher,' he said, 'what must I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the law? What do you read there?' He answered, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.' And he said to him, 'You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.' But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?' Jesus replied, 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while travelling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, "Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend." Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?' He said, 'The one who showed him mercy.' Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.' (NRSV)

Quaker Temperance

To conform a little to a wrong way strengthens the hands of those who carry wrong customs to their utmost extent: and the more a person appears to be virtuous and heavenly-minded, the more powerfully does his conformity operate in favour of evil doers... We are under [a strong obligation] to beware lest by our example we lead others wrong. John Woolman

All intoxicating liquors may be considered as poisons; however disguised, that is their real character, and sooner or later they will have their effect. Anthony Benezet

By practicing total abstinence from that which intoxicates, by ceasing to hand the wine as an act of hospitality to a friend, and by going forward to rescue those who have sunk to the lowest degradation, you may be instrumental in setting the feet of many upon the rock of Temperance Lucretia Mott

While Friends may have all but forgotten to face up to the problem of alcohol abuse, it has not forgotten about us. Most adult Friends, of whatever background, could probably count, as I can, several persons and families of their direct acquaintance who have been or are being ravaged by it. If comparable numbers of Friends were being hauled off to jail for refusing to swear oaths or submit to the draft, we would be organizing committees nonstop on their behalf. Chuck Fager

North Carolina Yearly Meeting Conservative - 1983

Are we mindful of Friends testimonies against alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and other harmful drugs; and do we refrain from using them or dealing in them, realizing that abstinence is the clearest witness against overindulgence?

NEYM - 1986

Friends seek to live in the world, to be a part of it, and to be a leaven to its standards of daily conduct and custom. Respect for themselves and the determination not to encourage weakness in others by their own conduct has led Friends to advocate abstinence from use of alcohol, tobacco, and the abuse of drugs, from gambling and lotteries, and from entertainments or amusements which are tawdry or merely sensational in their appeal. Friends should be clear that abstinence is not an end in itself but a means to fullness of life. When it is necessary for Friends to dissent from familiar social usage, let it be done without self-righteousness and in a loving spirit which will maintain fellowship with those who still accept the practices and standards Friends have been led to reject.

BYM – 1988

Friends' longstanding testimony against the use, production, or sale of tobacco and alcoholic beverages is not fully accepted by some. For many, however, complete abstinence is the only effective way to avoid the dangers of the use of these materials. Friends are in unity against illegal narcotics and mind-altering substances, now readily available. Use of any of these materials has adverse effects which reach beyond the individual to harm the family and the community; dealing with illegal drugs also supports a criminal underground. Even legitimate prescription drugs can be used inappropriately and excessively. All these usages deaden the individual to life and spiritual values.

For those trapped in substance abuse, such advice may seem hollow. Commonalities exist between addictive behaviors with these substances and other compulsive actions, such as in the areas of eating disorders, gambling, overwork, and physical abuse. The causes go deep and may not be fully understood, but the resulting pain, fear, desperation and denial, damaging the abuser and all those around that person, need to be supportively recognized. A Meeting community should be ready to listen non-judgmentally, offer information about sources of help, refuse to enable people to continue in harmful patterns, and continue to offer an environment free from addictive practices.

NYYM - 1998

Friends are earnestly advised to refrain from practices that are detrimental to the body or the mind, for example, the use of intoxicants and tobacco, and the misuse of drugs.

PYM – 2002

George Fox and other early Friends contended that drunkenness was incompatible with a life in the Spirit. William Penn wrote in 1678:

Drunkenness, or excess in drinking, is not only a violation of God's law, but of our own natures... it fits men for that which they would abhor, if sober.... It renders men unfit for trust or business, it tells

secrets, betrays friendship, disposes men to be tricked and cheated; finally it spoils health, weakens the human race, and above all provokes the just God to anger.

Many other mind-affecting drugs have come to be widely used. Like alcohol, they separate the user from God, family, and friends. Drugs and alcohol easily become the controlling factor of the user's life. Individuals and families are shattered. With the proliferation of some drugs, whole communities have broken down.

The use of tobacco can cause serious illness in both the user and those regularly exposed to second-hand smoke. Smoking deadens the senses; it can come between the user and the Spirit.

Friends should be clear about the negative personal and social effects of gambling, alcohol, drugs, and tobacco. We should also seek to ensure that the children in our meetings and schools are taught about these effects and the relationship of addictive behavior to issues of social justice such as: the marketing of addictive substances; the violence associated with drugs and alcohol; the root causes of some homelessness; and the negative repercussions of gambling and state supported lotteries.

Addictive behavior, whether manifested in gambling or in the use of drugs, tobacco or alcohol, is a symptom of a disease which cannot be controlled by reason or an act of will. It is a terrible, life-destroying trap from which the addict is not easily extricated. Friends urge their members to manifest intelligent compassion toward victims of addiction, to aid and encourage them in seeking appropriate treatment.

Contemporary Friends acknowledge the wisdom of the Advices of our forebears, to:

Shun the use of mind-changing drugs and intoxicants, of gambling, and of other detrimental practices that interpose themselves against the Inward Light. It is the experience of Friends that these drugs, intoxicants, and practices lead to a personal willfulness and inability to listen for the will of God.... Keep your recreations from becoming occasions for self-intoxication and avoid those conventional amusements which debase the emotions....

SEYM - 2007

Friends find that simplicity involves refraining from excess in general, including avoiding the addictive use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco, gambling, and even a compulsive engaging in work, causes or hobbies. Such excess can lead to a life harmful to health, loving relationships, and spiritual experience.

Freedom Friends Church - 2009

We renounce slavery in all its forms. Free people must always be vigilant, guarding against creeping bondage. Physical slavery is still a scourge on our planet in many places, and many are enslaved in poverty. In our lives more insidious forms often replace the old forms of this evil: the slavery of addictions; to food, drugs, tobacco, sex, alcohol, spending and many more. Pride can become a slavemaster and so can power. We acknowledge only one safe master, and that is our God and Redeemer. We see complete surrender to God as the most effective prevention to slavery. We have found that the best treatment for active addictions and slaveries is a spiritually based 12-step group, such as Alcoholics Anonymous. We find the precepts of AA to be harmonious with the gospel and with Holy living. We incorporate these precepts into the life of the church in every way we can.

Session Seven: Pastoral Care

Goal: Understand pastoral care for those affected by addiction.

Objectives:

1. Include the person with addiction, family and friends, and the meeting community as those who may be in need of pastoral care.
2. Describe responses and responsibilities of a meeting community to problems with addiction.
3. Identify barriers and limits to a meeting's response to problems with addiction.

Activities:

1. Briefly discuss the role, responsibilities, barriers and limits that Care and Counsel (or Ministry and Counsel) might have in addressing problems of active addiction in the meeting community.

A Meeting community should be ready to listen non-judgmentally, offer information about sources of help, refuse to enable people to continue in harmful patterns, and continue to offer an environment free from addictive practices. (Baltimore Yearly Meeting Faith and Practice)

2. Divide into small groups, functioning as Care and Counsel committees and discuss approaches to the following situation:

The Building Coordinator of Meeting ("BC") spoke with the clerk of Care and Counsel about the Assistant Building Coordinator ("ABC"). On more than one occasion, ABC forgot to open the building for community groups scheduled to use it. When BC and ABC met about building use business, ABC often smelled like alcohol. ABC was not employed – recently laid off from a job – and the family, including two children, depended on the spouse's income. BC has been reluctant to broach the issue of alcohol with ABC. Now BC suspects that ABC is stealing money from the Meeting – pulling cash out of the donation box and keeping money that community groups pay to use the space.

Convene in the larger group to share each 'committee's' perspectives :

- How did each committee address the needs of:
 - ABC?
 - The spouse and children?
 - BC and the larger meeting community?
- Did the committee look outside the meeting community for resources?
- The situation, as described, does not identify the gender of BC, ABC, the spouse, or the clerk of Care and Counsel. Did your group make any assumptions about gender? Does it matter?

Materials: flip chart, markers, handout

Psalm 116

*The Complete Psalms:
The Book of Prayer Songs*

by Pamela Greenberg

I love you, God, for you listen to my voice,
my prayers for solace in times of need.

Because you leaned your ear toward me with kindness,
I will call out to you all of my days.

The rope of death circled around me;
constrictions of the underworld tracked me down.

Narrowness of circumstance and grief –
Wherever I looked I would find them.

But I would call out your name –
“Please, God, save me!”

Generous and just, our Hope is full of compassion.

You keep watch over the willing.
I sank to low depths, but you saved me.

Return, my soul, to a place of rest,
for the Eternal will sustain you with kindness.

God rescued me from death,
my eyes from drowning in sadness,
my foot from stumbling.

I will walk before the Holy One in the land of the living.

I kept a corner of faith even when I said:
“My suffering is beyond measure.”

Too quickly I proclaimed while afraid:
“All humanity is full of betrayal.”

With what can I repay you, God,
for all your kindness to me?

A cup of gratitude I lift up,
crying your name out in praise,

upholding my vows to you
in sight of all your people.

Sorrowful in your eyes
Is the death of your faithful.

I plead with you, God, for I am your servant;
your servant, offspring of those loyal to your name.

You opened my tight and hard-knot places.
To you I will bring offerings of thanks;

I will cry out your name in praise,
upholding my vows to you
in sight of all your people –

in the courtyards of the house of worship,
in the midst of Jerusalem – praise God!

Session Eight: Standing in the Light

Goal: Understand use of Experiment with Light Meditation to address addiction.

Objectives:

1. Explain the six-part guided meditation practice developed by Rex Ambler and based on early Friends' experience with the Light.
2. Identify aspects of recovery in this meditation practice:
 - Recognition
 - Surrender
 - Transformation by God's grace

Activities: Guided meditation using the Experiment with Light.

1. Explain the meditation process, reading quotations from George Fox for each step.
 - Relax body and mind
 - Let the real concerns of life emerge
 - Focus on one concern
 - Ask why it is the way it is
 - Welcome the answer
 - Feel different
2. Experience the meditation (5 or 6 minutes of silence after each step is read)
3. Allow fifteen to twenty minutes individual silence (time to walk, draw, write, etc.)
4. Convene for worship sharing.

Materials: Handouts

Experiment with Light Meditation

1. **Relax body and mind.** Make yourself perfectly comfortable. Feel the weight of your body on the chair (or the floor.) Release the tension in each part of your body. Let all your immediate worries go. Relax your mind so much that you give up 'talking to yourself' in your head. Let yourself be wholly receptive.

Keep within. For the measure is within, and the light is within, and the pearl is within you.

2. In this receptive state of mind, let the **real concerns of your life** emerge. Ask yourself, "What is really going on in my life?", but do not try to answer the question. Let the answer come. You can be specific: "What is happening in my relationships, my work, my Meeting, in my own heart and mind?" And more specifically still: "Is there anything here that makes me feel uncomfortable, uneasy?" As we gradually become aware of these things we are beginning to experience the light.

Let the light that shines in everyone of your consciences, search you thoroughly, and it will let you clearly see. As the light opens and exercises your conscience, it will let you see invisible things, which are clearly seen by that which is invisible in you.

3. **Focus on one issue**, one thing that gives you a sense of unease. Try to get a sense of it as a whole. Deep down you know what it is all about, but you don't normally allow yourself to take it all in and absorb the reality of it. Now is the time to do so. You don't have to get involved in the problem or entangled with the feelings around it. Keep a little distance, so that you can see it clearly. Let the light show you what is really going on. Ask, "What is it that makes me feel uncomfortable?" Let the answer come. And when it does, let a word or image also come that says what this thing is really like.

As the light appeared, all appeared that is out of the light, darkness, death, temptations, the unrighteous, the ungodly; all was manifest and seen in the light.

4. Ask yourself **why it is like that**, or "What makes this thing the way it is?" Don't try to explain it. Just wait in the light till you can see what it is. Let the answer come. If you get a simple answer like, "Because I'm afraid" or "Because that's the way she is", ask again the question why. "Why am I afraid?", "Why is she like that?" Let the full truth reveal itself, or as much truth as you are able to take at this moment.

Do not look at the temptations, confusions, corruptions, but at the light that discovers them. For looking down at corruption and distraction, you are swallowed up in it; but looking at the light that discovers them, you will see over them. There is the first step to peace.

5. When the answer comes, **welcome it**. It may be painful or difficult to believe with your normal conscious mind, but if it is the truth you will recognize it and realize that it is something that you need to know. Trust the light. Say yes to it. It will then begin to heal you. It will show you new possibilities for your life. It will show you the way through. However bad the news seems to be at first, accept it and let its truth pervade your whole being.

The light will lead you out of darkness into the light of life, into the way of peace and into the life and power of truth.

6. As soon as you accept what is being revealed to you, you will begin to **feel different**. Even bad news will seem strangely good. Accepting truth about yourself is like making peace. An inner conflict is being resolved. This is the beginning of changes that the light may bring about.

Living in the truth ye live in the love and unity. In the light walk, and ye will shine.

When you feel ready, open your eyes, stretch your limbs, and bring the meditation to an end.

adapted from Rex Ambler, with passages from George Fox's writings as edited by Klaus Huber

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(* annotated below)

Griffin, Kevin. *One Breath at a Time: Buddhism and the Twelve Steps*. N.p.: Rodale, 2004.

Kevin Griffin weaves his own story of addiction and recovery through the Twelve Steps, elaborating on each step from a Buddhist perspective. Griffin explains his understanding of 'God' and 'Higher Power' as a Buddhist and nontheist, and invites others to their own relationship with God. A practicing Buddhist before acknowledging his addiction, Griffin lived in denial and compartmentalized his spiritual life. Then, the truth of his addiction "came quietly in my own moment of clarity." The Buddhist Eightfold Path, offered in Step Twelve as a way to 'practice these principles in all our affairs,' resonates with Quaker practice.

Hemfelt, Robert and Fowler, Richard. *Serenity: A Companion for Twelve Step Recovery*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1990.

Serenity combines the New Testament, Psalms and Proverbs (New King James) with short meditations on each of the Twelve Steps. Throughout the Scriptures, relevant passages for each step are highlighted.

Heyman, Gene M. *Addiction: A Disorder of Choice*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2009.

Heyman draws on history, personal accounts by individuals with addiction, and numerous studies to describe both the nature of addiction and the nature of choice. He argues that addiction is NOT a chronic relapsing brain disease; rather it is a disorder of choice. While no one would choose long-term addiction with all its negative consequences, the choice is really made at each episode of use. A choice can be voluntary and still not have the best eventual outcome. Heyman suggests that this model shows both the dark side of voluntary actions and the 'bright side' which is the potential for change when other life alternatives become more desirable than ongoing substance use.

Jay, Debra. *No More Letting Go: The Spirituality of Taking Action Against Alcoholism and Drug Addiction*. New York: Bantam Dell, 2006.

Debra Jay challenges the conventional wisdom of waiting for someone with addiction to "hit bottom" and ask for help. The very nature of addiction, its effects on the brain, impairs perspective and decision making so that even horrendous situations may not prompt the addict to quit or seek help. People with addiction may become seriously ill, be incarcerated, hurt others or die before getting treatment on their own. The alcoholic or addict AND family or friends share responsibility to pursue treatment. All have responsibility to differentiate the person from the disease, to be intolerant of untreated addiction and to intervene where possible. Jay references major world religions in support of intervention as a spiritual charge. She says that *alcoholic souls are locked down by addiction*, and attests to the power of love in reaching that soul.

Keating, Thomas. *Divine Therapy & Addiction: Centering Prayer and the Twelve Steps*. Brooklyn: Lantern Books, 2009.

For each of the Twelve Steps, Keating records his discussion with Tom S., a member of Alcoholics Anonymous. Keating's explanation of addiction relates to basic instinctual needs of early childhood: security, approval and control. As the child grows, these emotional needs intensify until it becomes impossible to gratify these desires; continued attempts to do so become an addictive process. In this context, addiction is part of the human condition. Those genetically predisposed develop chemical dependence; others different addictive behaviors. The task is to move from seeking happiness in self-centered gratification to seeking true happiness through humility and trust in God. Keating says *everybody is called to recovery from something*. He explains why centering prayer is especially helpful in recovery:

- *Since you don't think about God in non-conceptual meditation, God can introduce God as God actually is.*
- *God does not so much talk to us in contemplation as embrace us in contemplation.*

Kurtz, Ernest and Ketcham, Katherine. *The Spirituality of Imperfection: Storytelling and the Search for Meaning*. New York: Bantam Books, 1992.

Kurtz and Ketcham describe a spirituality that has at its center the paradox that:

To be human is to be incomplete, yet yearn for completion; it is to be uncertain, yet long for certainty; to be imperfect, yet long for perfection; to be broken, yet crave wholeness.

Finding spirituality amidst this paradox requires acceptance of human imperfection and the uncertainties of life; embracing mystery and letting go of our desire for magic or control. These ideas are illustrated with stories of many traditions. Such stories are promoted – both in the telling and the hearing – as the best approach to paradox; to integration of mind, heart and spirit; to creation of community. Although not explicit in the title, addiction and Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) are central themes. AA is seen as a 20th century rediscovery of the spirituality of imperfection. The story of AA's founding and the influences of Carl Jung and William James are described. Stories from twelve-step participants are told. The format of these stories is often “what we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now.” Through these stories, people experience the spirituality of release, gratitude, humility, tolerance, forgiveness and being-at-home.

Maté, Gabor. *In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts: Close Encounters with Addiction (U.S. Edition)*. Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 2010.

Gabor Maté is a Canadian physician working with drug addicts in Vancouver. His book includes stories of his patients and his perspective on the biologic, emotional, social and spiritual aspects of addiction. Maté's own words provide an introduction to this compelling work:

Addiction, or the capacity to become addicted, is very close to the core of the human experience. That is why almost anything can become addictive, from seemingly healthy activities such as eating or exercising to abusing drugs intended for healing. The issue is not the external target but our internal relationship to it. Addictions, for the most part, develop in a compulsive attempt to ease one's pain or distress in the world. Given the amount of pain and dissatisfaction that human life engenders, many of us are driven to find solace in external things. The more we suffer, and the earlier in life we suffer, the more we are prone to become addicted. The inner city drug addicts I work with are amongst the most abused and rejected people amongst us, but instead of compassion our society treats them with contempt. Instead of understanding and acceptance, we give them punishment and moral disapproval. In doing so, we fail to recognize our own deeply rooted problems and thereby forego an opportunity for healing not only for them, the extreme addicts, but also for ourselves as individuals and as a culture.

May, Gerald G. *Addiction and Grace: Love and Spirituality in the Healing of Addictions*. New York: HarperCollins, 1988.

Gerald May was a psychiatrist who explored the interface between psychology and spirituality. In *Addiction and Grace* he describes psychological and physical aspects of dependence and the spiritual dimension of temptation and attachment in addiction. May casts addiction as idolatry, blocking our innate desire for God with attachments to objects – and he says that addiction is inherent in the human condition, affecting our will, our freedom, and our capacity to love. By their very nature, addictions cannot be overcome by sheer willpower; and by its very nature, the human spirit always retains some capacity to choose, some measure of freedom. “The power of grace flows most fully when human will chooses to act in harmony with divine will.” May differentiates ‘reformation’ of addictive behavior, by which one substitutes another addiction, from ‘consecration’ or dedication to God, which is an opening into ‘spaciousness.’ May uses the term ‘deliverance’ for the extraordinary experience of grace that can suddenly – and gently – release the power

of addiction and enable change. To then live a consecrated life involves honesty, dignity, community, responsibility and simplicity.

Nouwen, Henri J.M. *The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming*. New York: Doubleday, 1992.

Nouwen describes the prodigal son in himself – and in all of us – as taking our gifts, leaving the home where we are loved unconditionally, and trying to make it on our own. The return, the turning-around, occurs when we reclaim the truth that we are children of God. The elder son, dutiful and obedient, is himself lost to judgment and bitter resentment, unable to return home on his own. Nouwen says, “Although we are incapable of liberating ourselves from our frozen anger, we can allow ourselves to be found by God and healed by his love through the concrete and daily practice of trust and gratitude.” Finally, Nouwen talks about our call to become the Father of the parable, “to be compassionate as your Father is compassionate.” That process involves grief, forgiveness and generosity. The power of this book lies in the challenge to imagine in oneself not only the prodigal and the elder son but also the father who loves them.

Quaker Action on Alcohol and Drugs. *To Use or Not to Use? Quaker Views on Alcohol, Drugs and Gambling*. Gloucester, United Kingdom: author, 2006.

Quaker Action on Alcohol and Drugs (QAAD), the successor to the Friends Temperance Union, works in England to address substance use and gambling in a context of Quaker values. This publication reviews Quaker history on these issues; then it describes a survey by Helena Chambers of 159 Quakers in England, Scotland and Wales. The survey on substance use and gambling is reported largely in narrative, interspersed with Quaker quotations. Long narratives give the perspectives of a substance abuse counselor, an individual in recovery and the mother of a son with addiction. Themes in the narratives include personal discernment, the impact of use on the spiritual life, the impact of use on others in community, and support (rather than exclusion) for those struggling with addiction.

Sandor, Richard S. *Thinking Simply About Addiction: A Handbook for Recovery*. New York: Penguin, 2009.

Sandor is an addiction psychiatrist who describes addiction as a disease of automatic behaviors, managed with abstinence. He is an advocate of twelve-step groups and endorses the need for a ‘spiritual awakening’ to achieve true recovery. This overview includes medical information and it incorporates Sandor’s professional experience and personal perspectives.

Shapiro, Rami. *Recovery: The Twelve Steps as Spiritual Practice*. Woodstock, Vermont: SkyLight Paths, 2009.

Shapiro is a rabbi who draws from the major world religions in explaining Twelve Step spirituality. He describes spiritual practices from many traditions, such as mindful breathing, confession, and centering prayer, in conjunction with the steps. Shapiro’s personal experience of Twelve Step work in Overeaters Anonymous informs his writing. However, he addresses addiction and recovery in the broadest sense:

First, it is the obsessive quest for control rather than the compulsive use of a specific substance or behavior that defines an addict. Second, most of us are addicts seeking to play God by trying to control our lives and the lives of those who touch ours. And third, the Twelve Steps can be of service to all of us since we are all addicted to the delusion of control.

Shapiro includes a six-page list of suggested readings related to addiction, recovery and spirituality.