

## 12-Step: It Works

The 12-Step programme is well known in treating addictive issues. The inaugural 12-Step programme began in 1930s with the Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.). It offers guidance for individuals with a drinking problem and ways to overcome the addiction. Years later, the programme has been adapted by other groups and organisations to address other forms of addictions. The 12-Step programme has been widely used all over the world ever since.

The 12-Step programme aims to work for individuals “who work the programme”, regardless of religious belief. The programme is “designed to assist in the recovery from addiction or compulsive behaviour, based on the principles of acknowledging one’s personal insufficiency and accepting help from a Higher Power”. It aims to overcome addiction and look to a "Higher Power" for strength and courage. The programme provides a guideline that helps participants to work towards recovery.

The 12-Step programme focuses on the importance of admission. Peer group support is also a key element to successful addiction recovery. Sharing in a group is encouraged as it helps an individual to achieve sobriety through personal exploration and revelation. Once the individual has done “the work”, he could also help others with addiction problems.

Subsequently, the 12-Step programme also found success in treatment of other forms of addictions. Participants are advised to maintain regular attendance of the programme to achieve maximum results. 40% of participants, who attended the programme consistently over a two-year study period, maintained a high rate of abstinence, whereas abstinence rates dropped significantly to 26% for participants who stopped attending.

### Contents

#### Special Interest Articles

12-Step: It Works	1
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#### Highlights

Testimonials	2
Family: The Missing Link in Recovery	3
Project S.A.F.E.	4
Courts Donation	5
Past Events and Outreach	5
New Management Staff	6

### The 12 Steps

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

## 12-Step Workshop (Facilitated)

Every Wed (6-7pm) & Sat (1.30-3.00pm) at WE CARE  
To join the workshop, contact AlexLim@wecare.org.sg or call 6294 6252



The workshop focuses on two goals: (1) acceptance of the need for abstinence and (2) surrender, or the willingness to participate actively in 12-Step fellowships as a means of sustaining sobriety.

Topics that are covered in the workshop include:

1. Coping with negative feelings and co-dependencies, or other dysfunctional behaviours that hold us back from feeling a sense of peace and serenity
2. Building better relationships with our Higher Power, others and ourselves
3. Relieving impending doom and anxiety with a new perspective that is derived from the 12-Step principles for living
4. Recognising triggers
5. Expressing anger constructively
6. Accepting the need for abstinence
7. Practicing spirituality and inner peace
8. Developing a positive self-image

## Recovering Individuals' Testimonials

“THE  
BREAKTHROUGH  
CAME WHEN I  
STARTED TO  
SHARE ABOUT  
MY SECRETS IN  
THE 12 STEP  
WORKSHOP.”

“I came to know WE CARE in 2009 through the recommendation of Dr. Winslow. In the past, I was filled with fear. Attending the 12-Step meetings allowed me to uncover my fear and face them. The whole process took me six years. During that period, I was in and out of meetings. This is because I was unwilling to accept my cunning and baffling disease. I was still in denial.

The breakthrough came when I started to share about my secrets in the 12-Step workshop. Since then, I have been making decisions to control my addictions. I learned that it was my own unwillingness to share with others that led to my slips and relapses. Sharing is difficult.

After sharing, I became more decisive.

WE CARE became a place for me to interact and share my problems with the group. I'm not proud of my actions. I found that it's more harmful to keep secrets. Being open to a group of supportive people allowed me to keep on walking on the path of recovery. I learned to handle my anger and indecisiveness.

Right now, I take the initiative to set up the room before each meeting. I learn to be responsible and in so doing, my self-esteem has improved.”

Ken

“Driven by the consequences of my addiction, I desperately came to WE CARE in Sept 2013 for help. I attended the 12-Step Recovery Workshop every Wednesday and Saturday. The workshop taught me more than just what recovery meant. It also provided a form of social support to maintain my sobriety and prevent a relapse. I developed important life skills that aid my relapse prevention plan.

During the workshop, we shared experiences. The sharing helped me to become honest, open-minded, and willing. When I share, I feel understood by others. I realised that I'm not alone in this. They know the pain and suffering that I have gone through.

The feeling of being understood is indescribable. I learned to be responsible for my own recovery. I also developed my self-esteem. This helped me to stay strong when I am triggered.

I always know that I am co-dependent. The workshop allowed me to discover the root cause of it. I learned to set boundaries to protect myself and my loved ones. In turn, I started to help others who have suffered from similar experiences.

12-Step works. I saw my fellow-participants recovering. I was convinced that recovery is possible. I will see that other addicts have recovered from their addiction and these addicts who recovered didn't do anything special. They just followed the few simple principles of the 12-Step. Hence, if I follow those principles, I can recover too.”

Serena

## FAMILY:

### The Missing Link in Recovery

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Addiction has often been viewed as an individual-based problem. However, what's been overlooked is the repercussion. A number of studies have found that relationship dysfunction is strongly linked to substance use and seems to be a major contributing factor to relapse among substance abusers after treatment (Lemke, Brennan, & Schutte, 2007). Hence, the connection between substance use and relationship problems is not unidirectional, but rather each can serve as an antecedent to the other (O'Farrell & Fals-Stewart, 2006). This brings to awareness the importance of providing intervention and support to both the recovering individual and family.

Traditional approach was to treat the addicted individual. However, clinical trials have shown that family support can be crucial in the recovery process.

This highlighted a shift that placed a greater awareness of family members' support rather than a focus on treating the individual (Klostermann & O'Farrell, 2013).

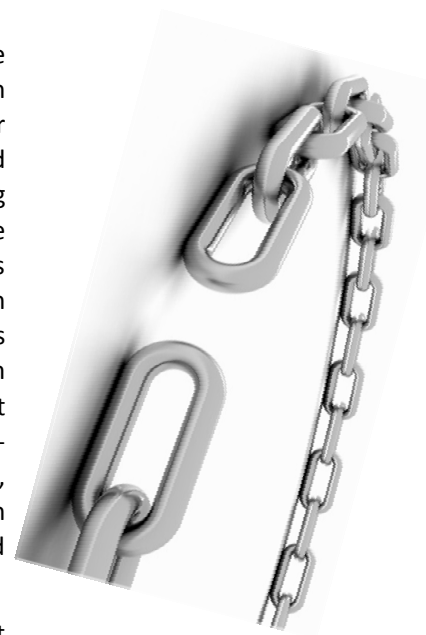
### Project S.A.F.E.

The Inter-Ministry Taskforce on Drugs, chaired by Senior Minister of State (Home Affairs and Foreign Affairs), Mr. Masagos Zulkifli, was set up in October 2011 to review the current drug abuse situation. The Taskforce recommended a comprehensive approach to tackle substance abuse problems. One of the recommendations was for active engagement of families and community to support the fight against drugs.

To address the recommendation to engage families, National Council of Social Services (NSCC) proposed a pilot model to strengthen support for families of drug offenders through a collaborative partnership with Ang Mo

The goals of family intervention include strengthening the family system in an effort to reduce risk factors and foster protective ones. Family-involved interventions also focus on strengthening the family's role through positive socialisation of children. The goal of this type of intervention is to prevent children from developing future addiction problems (DeMarsh & Kumpfer, 1985). Apart from this, family-involved treatments represent a variety of interventions including psycho-education on addiction and recovery, parent-child interactions, communication skills, emotional management and parental training.

It's important for families to know that they are just as crucial as the individual, in playing a part in the recovery process. Addictions, in any form, impact the whole family. One component of the treatment process is the restoration of the family unit. With family support, a recovering individual may increase chances of maintaining long-term abstinence.



Kio Family Service Centres (AMK FSCs) and WE CARE Community Services Ltd.

Project S.A.F.E. (Support for recovering Addicts and Families through Empowerment) was then conceptualised as a pilot programme to address the current gap in a coordinated intervention approach, targeted at both the drug offenders and their families. This model harnesses and leverages on both AMK FSCs' key expertise of working with families of drug offenders with complex needs, and WE CARE's specialisation in providing therapeutic rehabilitation work for recovering individuals. The desired outcome of Project S.A.F.E. is to support families to assist in the reintegration of the drug offender, prevention of inter-generational offending and reduction of drug offenders' relapse rates.



## New Management Staff

Tham Yuen Han joined WE CARE as the Executive Director with effect from 18 December 2013. She is responsible for the strategic direction and leadership of WE CARE, as well as providing guidance and supervision of the clinical practice. Prior to joining WE CARE, Yuen Han was in private practice as a psychotherapist and mental health trainer/facilitator, based at Promises Healthcare. She holds a Master degree in Counselling from Monash University and a Bachelor of Social Science degree from NUS. She is also a Certified Substance Abuse Counsellor and is trained in the area of substance, gambling and sexual addiction counselling.

Yvonne Yuen joined WE CARE as Head, Operations & Services with effect from mid-January 2014. Yvonne is responsible for the daily operations and services of WE CARE, including its financial and administrative matters. She has over 30 years of experience working in multinational companies in the financial and manufacturing sectors. She also brings with her more than seven years of experience in providing counselling intervention for persons recovering from addictions. Yvonne has a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology from the University of Southern Queensland and a Master of Social Science (Counselling) degree from the University of South Australia. She is also a Certified Gambling Addiction and Substance Abuse Therapist accredited by The Association of Professional Substance Abuse Therapists (APSAC).

## Resignation

Treana Tan (Clinical Director) and Joseph Leong (Director, Operations) have left WE CARE as a result of personal and family commitments. We wish them all the very best in their future endeavours.

## Events & happenings at WE CARE



WE CARE participated in the NAMS Inaugural **National Addictions Awareness Day 2013** on 23 Nov, 2013 by manning a booth to create awareness of the services provided by WE CARE.

Picture above shows Mr. Gan Kim Yong (Minister for Health) and Dr. Amy Khor (Mayor of South West CDC) visiting WE CARE's booth during the event.



Our staff participated in the **Ashram Volunteer Appreciation Night**.

L-R: Alex, Alvin Dawson, Anil Singh, Linn Chen, Nathan, Yin Feng



WE CARE conducted a talk at Ngee Ann Polytechnic on 13 Nov 2013 to raise awareness of the dangers of addiction. Entitled **"The Ugly Truth"**. Feedback from the audience was favourable, and inspired us to look into organising more of such talks in future aimed at tertiary students.

## Events & happenings at WE CARE

Thank you Courts for your generous donation!



WE CARE representatives receiving a donation of S\$145,000 from the Managing Director of Courts, Mr. Terry O'Connor and his wife, Mrs. Janice O'Connor. On hand to receive the donation on 21 Jan, 2014 from Courts were Ms. Eugenia Gajardo, Ms. Tham Yuen Han and Ms. Yvonne Yuen.



WE CARE's, *The Dreamers*, performed at the **International Volunteer Day Concert**, held at \*SCAPE Park on 30 Nov, 2013. Hidden talents were uncovered during this event, and demonstrated that "WE CARE's Got Talent"! The picture on the left shows the band members wowing the crowd at the concert.



Well-known megastore Courts organised a **Charity Party** on 30 Nov, 2013 to raise funds for charity. WE CARE was privileged to be a beneficiary. (Photo includes Ms. Frances Cheang, WE CARE Chairperson, Ms. Eugenia Gajardo, ex WE CARE Board member together with Mr. Terry O'Connor, Managing Director of Courts.)




February 2014— **GamCare** workshop  
The WE CARE team conducted a one day workshop on treating gambling addiction for professionals on 26 Feb, 2014. The participants were from various agencies and government bodies. The workshop was held at the premises of Promises Healthcare. Seen in the pictures on the left : Ms. Marjorie Nixon, Dr. Muni Winslow, Ms. Tham Yuen Han and Ms. Yvonne Yuen.



In February 2014, we were fortunate to have Ms. Marjorie Nixon back in Singapore to conduct a workshop on “**Youth and Addiction**”. Marjorie, now Principal Consultant to WE CARE, shared with the audience on the latest developments in the field of addiction counselling in relation to youth. The workshop was attended by counsellors and social workers from various schools, service providers and agencies.

**Facilitated Recovery Enabling Education ( F.R.E.E. ) programme**

**Basic English lessons**

In March, we organised our first English language lessons for our drop-in members at the centre. This would not have taken place if not for the requests of our recovering members who hope to improve their language skills, so as to enhance their employability. We hope this 10-session course will be the first of more to come.

We encourage more members to participate in these classes. We also welcome suggestions for other courses.

In February, a series of 5-session of Facilitated Recovery Enabling Education ( F.R.E.E. ) programme was rolled out. The F.R.E.E. programme helps recovering folks learn about addiction and develop coping skills for relapse prevention. During the sessions, they learn about cravings, urges and triggers and how to manage and prevent them. The programme is offered to all recovering individuals at no cost.



**GOODBYE 11 KAMPONG BUGIS,  
HELLO 11 JALAN UBI**

We are moving in June 2014 . Keep posted on our exact date!

