

Principles of addiction and recovery: Science of the 12 steps

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Addiction is a pathological brain disease caused by a malfunction in the mesolimbic dopamine system. Recovery from addiction is a self-directed and empowering process involving personal healing and transformation. The most commonly prescribed treatment for addiction is a 12-Step program. While there are many pathways to recovery, 12-Step programs have been shown to be as effective or more effective than other types of interventions. The purpose of this thesis is to determine how and why 12-Step programs work. This thesis shall examine other treatment options for addicts, such as CBT and RET, compare these programs with the 12 Steps, and show that the spiritual component of the 12 Steps combined with elements adapted from other types of therapy cause a cognitive restructuring and change in brain chemistry that allows addicts to be free from the symptoms of their disease.

Biography

David Mallett completed his Plan II Honors Program BA from College of Liberal Arts, University of Texas at Austin and persuaded his MA from Concord Academy. He had worked as a student assistant in University of Texas at Austin Center for Students in Recovery from Jan-Dec, 2012 where he developed and facilitated activities and events for students involved in the center, assisted center staff with administrative duties as well as created and managed a database of contact information and event attendance. He was honored with various awards including Outstanding Student Health Leadership Award-University of Texas at Austin Health Services (2012), Outstanding Leadership Award-University of Texas at Austin Center for Students in Recovery (2012), Mike Wacker Award-Texas Parents (2012) and Spring 2013 Trull Foundation Scholarship for Students in Recovery-The Trull Foundation.

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