The “I=Addict Mentality”: Why patients in early recovery chronically relapse

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Many of our patients and addicts in general experience negative self concept or negative thoughts about self. Often these irrational thoughts about themselves begin in childhood and stem from many different sources including childhood trauma, their experiences in school or in a dysfunctional family unit where there might be divorce, poor communication styles or addiction/mental health issues of one or both of their parents or siblings. Over time and development of addiction and the associated psycho-social consequences, these irrational beliefs about self such as “I’m not good enough”, “I can’t succeed at anything” or “I don’t deserve to be happy” become exacerbated and wreak havoc on our patients. Patients become fearful of setting and working towards personal goals, engage in procrastination and begin to embrace their identity as an addict, the presenting symptom in a dysfunctional family unit, or an inferior member of our society.

Often for patients that chronically relapse, work in early recovery offers glimpses of positive changes in their ability to achieve goals and to change their identities in their family units. However due to hopefulness and excitement, family members and the addict themselves often set unrealistic time frames for tangible life changes and patients become overwhelmed with fear. In order to halt expectations and movement towards interdependence in their family units, patients engage in relapse. This behavioral pattern is further reinforced via the growing phenomenon of “treatment center recidivism”. This lecture hopes to teach chemical dependency professionals how to assist patients in halting the “I=addict mentality” and increase potential for long term sobriety after completing 1 episode of treatment.

Biography

Frank Galimidi CASAC, CAP, CRADC, ICADC, SAP - VP, is a Program & Clinical Director of New Beginnings Recovery Center and Innovative Treatment Services. He is a Florida Certified Addictions Professional (CAP), New York State Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor (CASAC), Illinois Certified Reciprocal Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Counselor (CRADC), an Internationally Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor (ICADC), and has a Bachelors of Science in Psychology from Nova Southeastern University. He is also a US Department of Transportation Substance Abuse Professional (SAP).  

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