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Holidays & Addictions

For many, the holiday season is time of joy and celebration. For those struggling with alcohol dependence, however, the holiday season can be a time of stress, fear and relapse.

According to Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's are among the top ten "deadliest holidays."

While holiday stress may be a factor for some, family issues, loneliness or depression can also trigger relapse for those in recovery.

If you or someone you know needs help this holiday season call -
Courage to Change

Why do people take drugs?

To feel good: Most abused drugs produce intense feelings of pleasure. This initial sensation of euphoria is followed by other effects, which differ with the type of drug used.

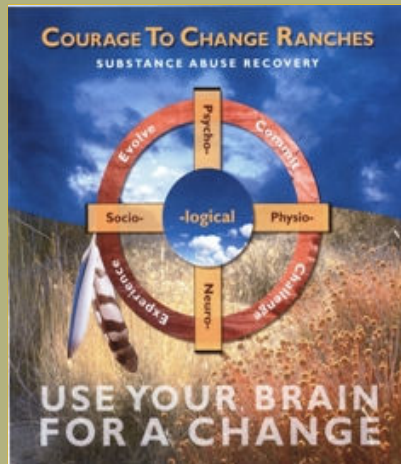
To feel better: Some people who suffer from social anxiety, stress-related disorders, and depression begin using drugs to lessen feelings of distress.

To do better: The increasing pressure that some individuals feel to chemically enhance or prove their athletic or cognitive performance can similarly play a role in initial experimentation and continued drug use.

Curiosity and "because others are doing it:" In this respect adolescents are particularly vulnerable because of the strong influence of peer pressure; they are more likely, for example, to engage in thrilling and daring behaviors.

[National Institute on Drug Abuse](#)

Faith Based Recovery by Dr. Judith Miller



Combining Science with Holistic Modalities in Addiction Recovery

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7 Components of Care

Neurotransmitter Rebalancing
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
Support Towards Legal Standing
Vocational Rehabilitation
Family Relationship Repair
Lifetime Aftercare

Spirituality is a vital Component of Care

The Courage to Change Ranch is a faith-based program, which means that we have a multi-cultural approach to spirituality. Clients are free to read, pray and worship any entity they wish from God to Jesus to Buddha, to The Creator, The Great Spirit, or whomever they wish. Our 12-Step Fellowship allows each person to select or create their own personal "Higher Power".

A special spiritual emphasis is based on White Bison's text and workbook: *The Red Road To Wellbriety* which presents the 12-Steps in the form of a Medicine Wheel. Clients find this approach meaningful in that it assists them in assimilating and practicing the 12 steps in a very personal way. We have made a Medicine Wheel for clients to visit at will to meditate, pray and to honor the seasons of their lives. Sweat lodge ceremonies are every other Saturday and are open to the public. In keeping with the Native traditions, they are lead by a Lakota Water Pourer and there is no fee or charge. These ceremonies are safe in that we do not fast prior to entering and at anytime a participant feels uncomfortable they may say: "Open the Door" and the door is immediately opened. The primary purpose of the sweat lodge ceremony is for participants to pray to whatever higher power they wish. A Talking Circle is held prior to entering the lodge. "The Talking Circle is also a Listening Circle which allows the heart to be shared with each other. What we share with each other also heals each other. When we talk about our pain in the circle, it is distributed to the circle and we are free of the pain. The talking circle works because when the people for a circle the Great Mystery is in the center." (White Bison). Following each sweat is a feast that includes food, fellowship and much laughter.

On Sunday mornings we generally load up the bus/van and take the clients to church.

Use of Amino Acid Supplements to Repair Neurotransmitter Damage by Leslie C. Botha

Whether we are healthcare providers or patients, we are all looking for more effective ways to address today's most common health issues. Although the disease spectrum seems to be endless, science is making great strides in understanding the interconnectedness of body, mind and spirit; i.e., the biological connection between the cellular self and the environment.

I just heard an interesting radio interview with Dr. Julie Holland, author of *Weekends at Bellevue*, an autobiography of her nine years working the night shift in psych ER. In the interview Holland made a statement that is still giving me pause; when one suffers from a pathological disease there is usually an end point in sight; i.e., 6 months to live for example. However, mental illness or brain damage due to alcohol and drug abuse has no boundaries and a person can succumb to an infinitesimal amount of damage and it still will not be the end cause of death. This is a frightening concept.

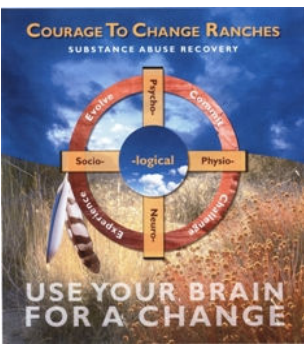
We - as a collective whole - are embarking into new territory. According to the National Hormone Institute, Alzheimer's cases now outnumber rates of breast and prostate cancer combined. Sign of an aging population? Or is it the sign of a people that have become so toxic from legal and illegal drugs, alcohol, and environmental pollutants that mental illness is now a greater concern than pathological disease?

This new territory demands a systems approach to health where the each biological system must be evaluated in relationship not only to each other but more importantly to the impact that external causes have had on the person's mental and physical health.

This new model of health care focuses on the brain as the source of imbalances that affect all other systems of the body. Neurotransmitter communication and the overall functioning of the central nervous system is crucial to the optimum functioning not just to break patterns of addiction but for the health and well being of all.

Courage to Change Ranches works with NeuroScience Inc. in identifying the parts of the neurotransmitters in the brain that needs to be rebalanced. We do this via urinary testing to measure entry level neurotransmitters at baseline and then again at one and three month intervals. NeuroScience Inc. recommends and provides an amino acid supplement regime to balance the neurotransmitters.

In using this process C2C is able to work with dual diagnosis do's as well as attention deficit and learning disabilities at the same time that we are working with addiction issues. All of these problems begin in the brain. And for the most part they are all manageable and treatable. Even though these are frightening times - they are also exciting times for science, health and recovery.



Why Study Drugs and Addiction?

Abuse and addiction to alcohol, nicotine, and illegal substances cost Americans upwards of half a trillion dollars a year, considering their combined medical, economic, criminal, and social impact. Every year, abuse of illicit drugs and alcohol contributes to the death of more than 100,000 Americans, while tobacco is linked to an estimated 440,000 deaths per year.

People of all ages suffer the harmful consequences of drug abuse and addiction.

The following statistics were provided by [Mothers Against Drunk Driving](#):

In 2007, 12,998 people died in alcohol-related crashes.

Someone is killed by a drunk driver once every 40 minutes, on average.

Approximately three out of every 10 people will be involved in a car crash where alcohol is a factor at some point during their lives.

More than 1.46 million people were arrested in 2006 for DUI (Driving Under the Influence or Alcohol or Narcotics).

More than 500,000 people were injured in motor vehicle accidents where alcohol was a factor; this works out to one person being hurt about every minute.



Babies exposed to legal and illegal drugs in the womb may be born premature and underweight. This drug exposure can slow the child's intellectual development and affect behavior later in life.⁶

Adolescents who abuse drugs often act out, do poorly academically, and drop out of school. They are at risk of unplanned pregnancies, violence, and infectious diseases.

Adults who abuse drugs often have problems thinking clearly, remembering, and paying attention. They often develop poor social behaviors as a result of their drug abuse, and their work performance and personal relationships suffer.

Parents' drug abuse often means chaotic, stress-filled homes and child abuse and neglect. Such conditions harm the well-being and development of children in the home and may set the stage for drug abuse in the next generation.

How does science provide solutions for drug abuse and addiction?

Scientists study the effects that drugs have on the brain and on people's behavior. They use this information to develop programs for preventing drug abuse and for helping people recover from addiction. Further research helps transfer these ideas into practice in our communities.

From the National Institute on Drug Abuse [The Science of Addiction "Drugs and the Brain"](#)

Meet the Brains on the Range - Ross Hilzer - C2C Counselor

Ross Hilzer is the co-founder of Courage to Change Ranches and recently celebrated 6-years in recovery. He is a CACII (pending) and a dedicated counselor. Clients love his groups and occasionally he will hold an individual session which he calls "knee-to-knee." One client said: "he has a gentle way of being in-your-face." Ross's greatest attribute is also his greatest fault in that he cares so much for the clients that it breaks his heart if they do not do well when they leave the ranch.

A native to Colorado, Ross grew up in a small rural town on the eastern plains. Because his father was an alcoholic (his mother passed away when he was 8 years old) Ross was raised on a ranch by his grandparents; Russian immigrants who lived through the depression and therefore lived a life of frugality. Until his senior year in high school, Ross was a "B" student, and was a 2nd chair all state trumpet player.

However, his envy of the other kids who wore the latest trends in clothing and Converse sneakers, compared to his second hand threads caused Ross to lose interest in school as he tried to be "cool" like the rest of the "white picket" guys that he hung out with. He no longer identified with being a jock, or a musician/trumpet player and fell into the black hole of alcoholism – a hole that lasted for the next 30 years.

Ross is quick to add that out of the eight kids who graduated from his senior class in 1976, four are dead; one as a casualty of the Persian Gulf War – and the other three from alcohol and substance abuse. For many years he traveled across eastern Colorado – hitting the bars – to check and see what he was missing and stopping at liquor stores along the way to keep him fueled for the "adventure."

After numerous DUI's, Ross came to his senses in a penitentiary – naked - in a 50 degree holding cell on a suicide watch. It was at that point that Ross knew that he had hit the bottom and his days of boozing were over.

After spending 14 more months in jail, Ross was released



"One of the requisites for being a part of AA is to stay sober and help other alcoholics/addicts who are still suffering. Opening up our home is a way to keep addicts in a temporary safe zone until they have the tools to walk the path of recovery." RH

and stepped into a life of recovery. "I knew that I needed a life of recovery. "I knew that I needed a higher power to help me get through this ordeal," Ross states. "There was no bartering to get me through this one. " With the assistance of his wife, Judith Miller, CEO of Courage to Change Ranches, he began his new path. Judith was familiar with amino acid supplements and when they both saw the difference it made in his treatment, they wanted to share their findings with other people crippled by their addictions.

When asked how he felt about entering his 7th year of recovery, Ross thoughtfully said: "I consider everyday a miracle – and I still take it one day at a time. But today I can drive by a liquor store or bar knowing that I am not missing anything. I am enjoying life without being under the influence of a mind altering mood stimulant."

When asked why he and Judith decided to open their home up to addicts and expand it to a facility with a professional staff offering a recovery program that works, he stated: "One of the requisites for being a part of AA is to stay sober and help other alcoholics/addicts who are still suffering. Opening up our home is a way to keep them in a temporary safe zone until they have the tools to walk the path of recovery. "

Ross has now dedicated his life to working with addicts in recovery. In his counseling sessions, he instills a message of hope and integrity to self and others. According to Ross, unless you are honest with yourself – you cannot be honest with others. His desire is to attain a CAC III level and to share his experience and the wisdom he has gained with others who have the courage to change.