

Healing from Trauma

How the 12 Steps Can Help

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Understanding the Trauma Journey

Healing from trauma is a challenging journey, especially for those who have struggled with addiction. Many addicts and alcoholics have a history of past trauma, which often leads to mental health complications. As a coping mechanism, they might turn to substances to numb their pain. Fortunately, the [12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous](#) (or [Narcotics Anonymous](#)) offer a structured approach to healing, helping individuals address their trauma and break free from the victim mentality.

The Connection Between Trauma and Addiction

Addiction and trauma are often intertwined. People who have experienced significant trauma in their lives may develop mental health issues, leading them to seek solace in alcohol or drugs. This coping mechanism, however, creates a vicious cycle, where the trauma is masked but never truly addressed, leading to further mental and physical health problems. Without outside help or a program of recovery, it can be very difficult to break free from trauma.

How the 12 Steps Address Trauma

The 12 Steps of recovery (part of the Alcoholics Anonymous program), provide a pathway to healing for many suffering from addiction. These steps not only focus on achieving sobriety but also on addressing the underlying causes of addiction, including trauma.

The 12 Steps can help us recover from trauma in the following ways:

Step 4: Making a Fearless Moral Inventory

In Step 4, we write about what has happened to us (as well as what we've done to others). This step is crucial for acknowledging and understanding past traumas. By putting these experiences on paper, we begin the process of confronting and accepting our past.

Step 5: Admitting to Ourselves and Another

Step 5 involves sharing our past experiences with our sponsor. Talking about our past trauma helps diminish the sense of aloneness and isolation that often accompanies it.

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By verbalizing our pain, we can start to let go of the burden we've been carrying. Sharing our experiences often provides a sense of relief that we've never felt. For many of us, the fifth step starts our journey to breaking free from trauma.

Steps 8 and 9: Forgiveness and Making Amends

Forgiving those who caused us trauma is another significant step in our healing process. Even if it's just for their own peace of mind, forgiveness allows us to release the pain and move forward. Making amends, when possible, further helps to heal and rebuild relationships—because sometimes, as victims of trauma, we continue the cycle and hurt others.

Overcoming the Victim Mentality

A common response to trauma is adopting a victim mentality. This mindset can negatively impact relationships that would otherwise be healthy. By working the steps with a sponsor, individuals can recognize patterns in their behavior that perpetuate this victim mentality. Breaking these patterns is essential for approaching all relationships, including the one with themselves, in healthier ways. This shift leads to more fulfillment and joy in life.

The Empowerment of Breaking Free

Breaking free from trauma is a journey that takes time, but the 12 Steps provide a proven method for getting sober, breaking harmful patterns, and escaping the victim mentality. This process is empowering, allowing us to turn our will and lives over to a higher power and operate with a healthier attitude, as opposed to with a trauma response.

The Promises of the Big Book

The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous outlines a series of promises that come true when individuals diligently work through the 12 Steps. These promises include a newfound freedom and happiness, a clear sense of purpose, and a deep sense of peace and fulfillment. By working the steps, individuals can expect to:

- Experience a new sense of freedom and peace
- Lose the feeling of uselessness and self-pity
- Gain new insights and perspectives on life
- Feel connected to a higher purpose and have hope for the future

These promises bring a sense of hope and direction, affirming that life can be lived with a sense of joy, freedom, and purpose.

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Embracing a New Life

Breaking free from trauma is not easy, but it is possible with the right tools and support. The 12 Steps offer a comprehensive approach to addressing trauma, achieving sobriety, and reclaiming our lives. By working these steps, we can heal our past, improve our relationships, and find a new sense of empowerment and joy in life!

The Time to Get Clean and Sober is Now

If you are struggling with addiction and trauma, the time to seek help is now. Choosing long-term recovery offers you, your family, and friends a new way of living. It offers a way to let go of the past, to grow and live for the future. You deserve it.