

Difficult Choices

For Those In Early Recovery

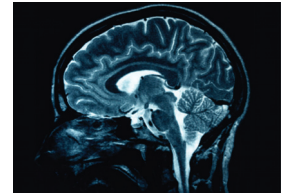
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When recovering alcoholics and recovering addicts in the early stages of recovery are trying to decide their next move after leaving treatment, they are often faced with difficult choices. “Should I go to sober living?”, “What type of sober living?”, “Should I stay near my family?”, “Should I go back to work?” are all valid and difficult questions to be asking. Difficult choices are nothing new for those with the disease of addiction, however choosing healthy options may be. That is why continued care sober living community environments such as those found at Serene Center in Long Beach, California are such a critical part of any addict’s recovery effort. Continued care sober living communities provide the fellowship, licensed counseling, and healthy life skills guidance that are critically needed between the treatment community and integration into traditional sober living.



While in treatment, alcoholics and addicts are introduced to educations and therapies designed to help their cognitive brains understand the disease of addiction and how brain chemistry and neuro pathways have actually been altered by the prolonged use of high quantities of mood altering addictive substances such as alcohol,

cocaine, benzodiazepines, amphetamines, opiates, nicotine, and other chemicals as well as impulses such as gambling, sex, work, etc. Addicts are informed that their mesolimbic system has been irreversibly physiologically altered and will forever cause the addict to intensely desire mood altering chemicals at times. Addicts are also informed that their neuro pathways have been severely damaged on a molecular basis, and that repair to these important neuro pathways is possible over an extended period of time. However, while repair is under way, the recovering addict will encounter difficulties in thinking clearly, remembering things, experiencing normal pleasures, and various other symptoms of post acute withdrawal.



It is clear that long-term recovery is difficult, as it seems that all the cards are stacked against the addict. But there is a great equalizer when it comes to addiction. When someone in recovery remains sober by not using any mood altering addictive substances, the mesolimbic system loses its power over the cognitive mind. And while it is difficult for those in early recovery to make healthy choices, it is entirely possible to do so if they surround themselves with the help they need. And making healthy choices over a period of one to three years will eventually

allow their neuropathways to rebuild themselves and symptoms of post acute withdrawal will dissipate. And after five to seven years of sobriety and working an excellent recovery program, the addict will experience long-term recovery and lead happy, healthy, productive lives once again.



Perhaps the most important aspect of building a healthy lifestyle of recovery is remaining sober and not using any mood altering addictive substance. Cravings are the most severe when the recovering addict is stressed by internal or external agitates. When in treatment, the recovering addict is surrounded by compassion and therapists that help them deal with those stressors in healthy ways. Continued care sober living continues providing these valuable surroundings so craving will not overcome the recovering addicts desire to stay sober. It is common for stress induced cravings to recur up to a full year after first obtaining sobriety. However, after prolonged exposure to therapeutic exercises on managing stress, the recovering addict will grow more and more capable of handling stress on their own. Essentially, continued care sober living helps people to help themselves.

Many that have not had exposure to continued care sober living do not understand the tremendous life-changing benefits of licensed therapy, education, and balanced center living guidance delivered within a structured addiction after care framework. Put simply, continued care sober living is the next step in the continuum of care for the recovering alcoholic and addict leaving

primary treatment and/or outpatient treatment, and affords the recovering addict the best opportunity for continuous recovery.

