

## 12-STEP PROGRAMS: WHAT ARE THEY?

*I spent a lifetime in hell and it only took me twelve steps to get to heaven... Heard at AA meeting*

### WHAT TO KNOW!

- ❖ Over 200 self-help organizations or fellowships worldwide and over several million people follow the 12-step principals for recovery
- ❖ Originally developed by AA, a 12-Step program is a self help program that follows a series of principles that will lead to recovery from alcoholism, drug addiction, gambling, overeating, sexual addiction, and other compulsive behaviors
- ❖ AA was founded by Bill W. and Dr. Bob in the 1930s; they established the practice or 12-Step programs of only using first names to maintain anonymity of its members
- ❖ When a person works the 12-steps, they replace egotistic and self-centered behavior with a moral consciousness, self-sacrifice, and constructive service to others
- ❖ The 12-Step Principles include:
  - ❖ Admitting that one is powerless to control their addictive behaviors
  - ❖ Recognizing that a higher power can restore one to sanity
  - ❖ Taking a personal inventory and making amends for past errors
  - ❖ Learning to live a new life with a new value system
  - ❖ Helping others who have addictive behaviors to recover
- ❖ Accompanying the 12-steps are the 12 Traditions which were designed for governance of the groups and to reduce conflict
- ❖ The goals of 12-Step programs are to create new lives without compulsive behaviors where those who have been in recovery for a long time help newcomers
- ❖ Key elements of the program include **Honesty** with oneself, **Willingness** to change, and **Open-mindedness** to learning a new way of living
- ❖ Sponsors teach the 12 Steps, try to prevent relapses, and help you work the steps
- ❖ 12-step programs allow for the opportunity to meet people who have the same problems and to get ongoing support and encouragement from those already in recovery
- ❖ 12-Step programs teach the skills of remaining sober, dealing with cravings, telling friends and relatives, dealing with still addicted friends, and expressing gratitude
- ❖ At 12-Step meetings:
  - ❖ You can decide for yourself if you have an addiction
  - ❖ You can meet and relate with others who have the same or similar problems
  - ❖ You develop confidence that you can stop the addictive behavior and recover
  - ❖ You will be accepted and not judged
  - ❖ You can learn how others deal with their recovery

### WHAT TO DO!

- ❖ If you attend a 12-Step program:
  - ❖ Try different group meetings as each group is different
  - ❖ Become active and share at meetings
  - ❖ Reach out and get phone numbers of others to call for support
  - ❖ Make a commitment and go to a meeting at least 2-3 times a week
  - ❖ Accept the help that others offer
  - ❖ Get a sponsor who is like a teacher and work the steps
- ❖ Consider getting professional help in addition to attending 12-Step meetings if you have addictions or compulsive behaviors

### WE CAN HELP!

Call us at **954 755-2885** or email us at [\*\*DrKimmel@KimmelPsychology.com\*\*](mailto:DrKimmel@KimmelPsychology.com)

**Joel I. Kimmel, Ph.D. P.A. and Associates**  
**5571 N University Drive, Suite 101**  
**Coral Springs FL 33067**