

## **ADDICTION RECOVERY Online**

The face of recovery from alcoholism and drug addiction is changing as a result of the advancements in technology that are available to us today. Many of these technological innovations have significantly increased our ability to communicate with one another anytime and anywhere. We now can use electronic devices to call, text message and email each other. Cyberspace has become a valuable medium for information assistance, programming and fellowship.

The addiction treatment and recovery field is following this trend and counseling, treatment, including continuing care/aftercare groups, and 12-Step recovery meetings are now available online. Some of these resources have been in place for some time and others are joining the movement. These online resources are becoming more attractive because they are accessible, affordable and proving to be as effective as the traditional face-to-face resources. These online resources are generally private, very secure and are available twenty-four hours, seven days a week.

Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) has its own Online Intergroup of Alcoholic Anonymous and their *Getting Started in Online AA* brochure gives “A Little History” of the development of AA online:

The first AA meetings online used Bulletin Boards and were around 1986. Email groups started forming in the early nineties and the development of the worldwide internet rapidly fuelled the growth and variety of groups. The first online AA group, Lamp-lighters, was formed in 1990, and has met by email continuously since then. By the turn of the millennium, there were well over 150 online AA groups with more than 6,000 members and an Online Intergroup of AA, most using email, but some using real-time chat or web page technologies to communicate the experience, strength and hope of recovery in Alcoholics Anonymous.

The NE LAP encourages health service professionals seeking assistance with resolving alcohol or drug addiction to seek assistance from their local treatment resources and 12-Step recovery programs. These face-to-face resources offer the real time, in-person guidance and support that is such an important need for those striving to achieve recovery against such difficult addictions. There are situations however, such as distance to treatment, need for anonymity, practice demands or parenting considerations, where online resources enable a professional to get the treatment assistance or recovery support they need. The primary consideration on whether to use face-to-face or online resources, or a combination of both, is to utilize the best path that would ensure a successful recovery from addiction.

You can find out if online resources are available to you by contacting your local alcohol/drug treatment provider or visiting their web site. Online A.A. meetings can be found at [www.aa-intergroup.org](http://www.aa-intergroup.org) and Narcotics Anonymous meetings can be found at [www.na.org](http://www.na.org).

If you are a licensed health service professional and would like to take advantage of the NE LAP services, please visit our website at [www.lapne.org](http://www.lapne.org) or contact the NE LAP at (800) 851-2336 or (402) 354-8055.

### **Nebraska Licensee Assistance Program**

Alcohol/Drug abuse assistance for health service professionals licensed, certified or registered by the State of Nebraska