

Raising the Bottom
- Alcoholism and Drug Addiction Recovery

Health care professionals battle alcoholism or drug addiction just like everyone else. They battle it until they can no longer deny that the destruction occurring in their lives is the result of their own inability to control their use of alcohol or drugs. In the world of the 12-Step recovery programs like Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA), this phenomenon is described as hitting bottom. The alcoholic or drug addict has come to believe they indeed are powerless over their use of alcohol or drugs. This acceptance of alcoholism or drug addiction enables them to embark on their own unique journey from this bottom to sobriety and a healthy recovery from their illness.

The NE LAP has been privileged to have been involved in the recovery journeys of many health care professionals over the seventeen years the program has existed. In the spirit of trying to inspire other health care professionals to raise their bottom and choose to prevent the further destruction of alcoholism or drug addiction in their lives, we offer the following thoughts on recovery.

- The earlier in the destructive process of alcoholism or drug addiction the health care professional hits bottom the better. Putting off changes in lifestyle until there is more evidence of abuse or dependence usually results in more serious consequences and unnecessary pain or suffering. For example, another DUI may result in incarceration; not seeking alternative pain management options may lead to drug diversion and loss of employment; not arresting the chronic relapsing disease of alcoholism or drug addiction can end in the loss of family relationships, employment and the revocation of a health care professional license. Making a decision to stop the abuse and end the dependency before the most serious destruction occurs, enables health care professionals to more quickly restore their careers and lives.
- The 12-Step recovery programs of AA and NA continue to be the preferred path of recovery for alcoholics and drug addicts and the treatment providers who serve them. Health care professionals who become members of AA or NA work these recovery programs. They admit they are powerless over alcohol or drugs. They come to believe a Power greater than themselves can restore their health. They make a decision to commit to this Power greater than themselves. Continuing to work the program, they will heal their emotions and mend important relationships. They also will take action steps to maintain their sobriety and help others. By helping others, their own recovery is reinforced and strengthened. Health care professionals, and others, continue to go to meetings and work the 12-Step program because they want to – for themselves, their families and those they serve.

If you or a loved one are battling the destructive effects of alcohol or drug abuse, it is a daunting task to consider making the necessary changes that would have to be made to utilize AA or NA and treatment to arrest the destruction. However, you can see from the many positive things that occur for alcoholics or drug addicts in recovery, it is well worth it. It will prevent further destruction and ensure a healthy and happy future. As we say in the NE LAP, “all good things come from recovery.”

If you have further questions about the Nebraska Licensee Assistance Program, or feel that you may benefit from assistance from the NE LAP, please contact the NE LAP Coordinator, Judi Leibrock or NE LAP Counselor Tricia Veech, at (800) 851-2336 or (402) 354-8055.