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SMART Recovery Handbook



Handbook

Tools and strategies to help you
on your recovery journey

building and maintaining motivation

copied with urges

managing thoughts, feelings,

and behaviors

living a balanced life

www.smartrecovery.org

3rd edition | © 2013



Synopsis

The SMART (Self Management Addiction Recovery Program) Handbook is written in simple, straight forward language with Tools, exercises, techniques and strategies to help those with drinking and substance-abuse addictive behaviors - including smoking - and behavioral issues, such as compulsive gambling or sexual activity, self-harm, and eating disorders. The Handbook will cover the heart of SMART's 4-Point Program. 1: Building and Maintaining Motivation 2: Coping with Urges 3: Managing Thoughts, Feelings and Behaviors 4: Living a Balanced Life SMARTS approach: Teaches self-empowerment and self-reliance. Provides meetings that are educational, supportive and include open discussions. Encourages individuals to recover from addiction and alcohol abuse and live satisfying lives. Teaches techniques for self-directed change. Supports the scientifically informed use of psychological treatments and legally prescribed psychiatric and addiction medication. Works on substance abuse, alcohol abuse, addiction and drug abuse as complex maladaptive behaviors with possible physiological factors. Evolves as scientific knowledge in addiction recovery evolves. Alternative to Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous and other 12-step programs. The SMART Recovery Handbook can also be used in conjunction with the SMART community. SMART sponsors face-to-face meetings around the world, and daily on-line meetings. In addition, our online message board and 24/7 chat room are excellent forums to learn about SMART Recovery and obtain addiction recovery support.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Basic tools all people in or near recovery need. Grounded in science and psychology. You will not find tools like these in 12 step facilitation.

This book is a real life-saver and having it on my Kindle to take with me is even better. This book outlines the basics of the SMART Recovery program and, in spite of its relatively short length, covers all of the essentials of overcoming addictions - everything from building motivation to examining your values to how to do a cost-benefit analysis for your addiction to how to cope with urges. The urge-coping skills section's particularly good - they offer quite a few "basic" and "advanced" strategies for coping with urges "in the moment." One of the advantages of this over 12-step programs is the fact that, unlike AA, it embraces the idea of full recovery; it doesn't see addiction as a chronic disease that you can control but never cure. In SMART you CAN eventually get to the point where you don't have to do anything special to "maintain." This point'll vary by person obviously, but it's absolutely possible. I know several people liked this book because it's non-religious. I would like to clarify that this is a perfectly acceptable program for those of us who are religious. In many ways I actually find this more consistent with my Christian values than AA was. If anything, I think AA as a program is the one that's problematic from a religious perspective. Not to go off on an anti-AA rant, but here it goes: apart from disagreeing with several key ideas behind AA (e.g. the "disease model"), I disliked the implicit subjectivism and, quite frankly, magical thinking involved in AA. If you wanted your "Higher Power" to be a doorknob, that's fine in AA. (Now, obviously, your doorknob isn't a source of actual power, either spiritual or otherwise, but what's that to AA?). In meetings people would often say "well, my Higher Power's like this..." or "my higher power's like that..." The two ideas presented might totally contradict each other and be viewed as, in some sense, "true" as far as the group goes. Half the time the ideas presented are some god the speaker made up and formed in their own image - their "Higher Power" is the god they wished existed, not the one that actually does. What you end up with is smorgasbord religion and what some authors have described as "moralistic therapeutic deism." In any case, I'll stop ranting - my purpose here isn't to bash AA. The program and handbook also help you "de-claw," normalize, and

demythologize the urges. I used to think of urges as completely unbearable, awful, and permanent (i.e. if I don't engage in my compulsive behavior I'll feel 100% bad 100% of the time until I do and I won't be able to stand it). They show instead that having urges is a normal part of early recovery; they aren't awful, permanent (they do, in fact, pass if you let them), or intolerable. Thinking in that way, especially when combined with urge coping skills and the ability to be more accepting of urges (I don't like them and wish I didn't have them but I can live with them while I'm getting away from the addiction), has made a tremendous difference in my ability to cope. I can now see urges and urge-coping as being like muscles - the more I use urge-coping the stronger the rational part of my mind becomes and the more I give in and engage in the behavior the stronger that becomes. If you like the Rational Recovery books ("The Small Book," "Taming The Beast," etc.), especially the earlier ones where they were still primarily using REBT, you'll love this book. SMART doesn't have concepts that correspond exactly to "the Beast" or AVRT that I've found yet (they're not described in the handbook), but the programs compliment each other well. Yeah, I know RR and Jack Trimpey walked away from support groups, but I still like the combination. The other thing I like is that this program works for all kinds of addictive and compulsive behavior (or, I imagine, even plain old bad habits; to give away the big secret). Whether you're quitting alcohol, cocaine, bulimia, or gambling, you can apply a lot of the same principals. Granted, there are some differences between quitting bulimia and quitting alcohol - you don't have to drink alcohol but you do have to eat - but a lot of the same ideas work in both cases; things like building and maintaining motivation and the urge coping skills are identical. My only complaint about the Kindle edition is that it's sometimes a little hard to navigate and if it has page numbers/markings I haven't been able to find them. On the other hand, the nice thing about the Kindle edition is that it's easy to carry around (if I have my Kindle I have the book - I don't need to add another book to my bag) and it's easy to read in public if you don't want to spread around the fact that you're recovering from an addiction. (I take the train to work a lot of days; reading on the Kindle obviously looks just like reading any other book). I highly recommend this book if you're trying to quit a compulsive behavior. This is a wonderful alternative to 12-step programs.

Great book for recovery.

Excellent info. Well presented.

Definitely a helpful workbook for overcoming any addiction and even for people who aren't

struggling with addictions! The exercises are great and truly help you think about what your true issues are and how to overcome them. Obviously not as well as a therapist/doctor would, but pretty darn close if you follow the instructions.

Newest edition of the handbook is wonderful - updated information, along with a more narrative style that is an easier read (as compared to the 2nd - yellow - edition). Highly recommended to anyone interested in changing behavior.

I have yet to finish this handbook but really like it. If you have tried AA and need a more hands on approach to healing, this is a great alternative. You really have to look into yourself and come up with honest answers and when you become conscious of your habits, you are more likely to question them in the long run. I have stopped drinking and am thankful this workbook came along as well as the decision to better my life.

SMART will set you free. Actually, you will set yourself free with the aid of SMART tools! You only got one shot at life, might as well make the most of it!

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