

*healing begins
here*



Focus Healthcare of California

Focus Healthcare can get your life back

Helping the Sacramento community attack the root of addiction

by Natasha von Kaenel

WHEN your girlfriend dumps you or your boss calls, screaming about the third missed deadline this month, the green tinted bottle will call out to you. You can just swipe the hard plastic card one more time. Just pop one more pill. Then tomorrow you will stop. You just can't today, because your boss has upset you. Because your car broke down. Because it's the weekend. Because. Because. Because.

In a world of stress, some people — roughly 10 percent of the population — fall into an all too familiar pattern: A glass of wine at night to take the edge off, or maybe four; or high-risk sexual encounters with strangers to feel valued; or going from doctor to doctor to keep that supply of prescription drugs on hand.

Addiction is the number one driver of social issues like high healthcare costs, drunk driving and crime in the United States. The stigma associated with addiction prevents people from

seeking help. Addiction is not a sign of weakness or a moral failure. It *is* a disease.

A person struggling with addiction often struggles with multiple expressions of the disease. It shows up in different ways. It moves from one self-destructive behavior to another. One may act out sexually one night, but come home feeling full of remorse and loneliness, only to binge on ice cream in an attempt to satisfy their deep *emotional hunger*. Another person — perhaps, an older widow — feels a void in her life, so she has fallen into a pattern of going to the casino in the afternoons to feel alive again. As she gets caught up in the drama of chasing her financial losses, she drinks one cocktail after another to calm herself down.

People who are addicted to a substance or behavior don't realize that they have a problem, especially at the height of their addiction. They often push away family and friends and perform poorly at their jobs, even lashing out at those around them as

they spiral out of control. Focus Treatment Centers help these people get their lives back.

Focus Healthcare of California, the newest treatment center located in Sacramento, gets at the root of addiction. A person struggling with addiction needs the support of others, not judgment. A 12-step community like Alcoholics Anonymous helps. When support alone fails to initiate recovery, people need treatment. They need the insight and experience of a professional team who knows the disease. They need specialists who understand how deep and painful and destructive an addiction really is.

Focus Healthcare of California stabilizes a person out of the addiction, helps him or her master universal recovery skills and provides insight to prevent relapse of the addiction to assure life-long recovery.

Kevin Phillips, the Director of Business Development for Focus Healthcare of California, wants to help people put their lives back together. "Every person deserves to be healthy. Despite the devastating consequences caused by the disease, people struggling with an addiction are people of eternal dignity — even if they may not feel like it. Beneath the selfishness, grief and chaos, there is a person worth saving. We are committed to helping that person get their life back."

ADDICTION STATS

Addiction is the number one driver of many social issues:

83 to 84 percent of people struggling with an addiction have a co-occurring disorder, i.e. they have multiple illnesses, like depression or bipolar disorder.*

In the past **20** years, the number of people with drug addictions in the United States has increased by more than 500 percent.**

More than **24** million U.S. residents ages 12 and older are currently suffering from drug addiction, yet only 10 percent of these individuals will receive help from a professional treatment facility.** Up to 24 million people of all ages in the U.S. suffer from an eating disorder.***

* Focus Treatment Centers
** Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
*** National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders



THE FIRST STEPS TO RECOVERY

Focus Healthcare of California stabilizes patients to start healing process

by Amanda Caraway

ENTERING a rehabilitation program can be a frightening experience for a patient. The person's life has often been turned upside down — a vulnerable time to place him or herself in the hands of strangers. Building a foundation of trust at the start of treatment is crucial. That's why the initial stabilization process is so important.

Stabilization is the first step in an addiction recovery program. It starts with detoxification to enable a person struggling with an addiction to clear the body of mind-altering chemicals.

"Besides clearing the body of substances, it is important to ensure the patient is medically safe," says Susan Kerr, Regional Nurse Executive for Focus Treatment Centers.

The detoxification process involves more than physical improvement. According to Becky Johnson, National Director for Focus Treatment

Centers, patients must stabilize their brain chemistry as well. "It is a detoxification of unhealthy emotions as well as a physical detoxification," says Johnson. When it comes to stabilizing a new patient, a solid external support system is important. The goal at Focus is to anchor the patient in the treatment process and anchor their family as well. A successful recovery can affect the entire family unit in a positive way.

Building this comprehensive addiction program started with a small core group, assembled by Johnson. As she chose the right staff she says she considered this question: In a world that feels increasingly disordered, how do you hire the right team to bring order? "The invitation for involvement in our program development was extended to the most fiercely ambitious, empirically creative and productively paranoid professionals I know," says Johnson. The core team of Focus built something that nationally recognized leaders in the industry felt inspired to join. "You can't overstate the value of having Terry Gorski and Anita Johnston on the team. Their weekly clinical involvement in clinical development is unique to Focus. It is seen, felt and experienced by the staff and patients every day."

Both Kerr and Johnson have seen many success stories and say they, along with fellow staff members, will continue to work together to fight for the futures of their patients.

"I love seeing patients change as they go through the program," says Kerr. "I enjoy watching them start a new life focused on work, school and relationships that weren't possible before."

"I love seeing patients change as they go through the program ... I enjoy watching them start a new life focused on work, school and relationships that weren't possible before."

SUSAN KERR

Regional Nurse Executive, Focus Treatment Centers

STABILIZATION

Focus Healthcare of California makes detoxification and stabilization an integral part of the recovery process. Stabilization is a priority. The clinical team begins to make therapeutic gain with a patient at the earliest opportunity.

It is common for patients to fear the recovery process, especially when facing withdrawal. The clinical team provides 24-hour medical monitoring for patients and works to manage withdrawal symptoms.

Treatment goals are established early and include learning life skills and developing healthy relationships. Patients can involve family members through family sessions and intensive three-day workshops for families. The ultimate goal is to make a positive impact on the entire family unit, not just on the patient.

RECOVERING FROM ADDICTION AND STAYING RECOVERED

Focus Treatment Centers teach patients universal recovery skills to stay healed

by Kendall Fields

FOR an alcoholic, alcohol is not the problem. For a gambler, blackjack is not the problem. For a person struggling with an addiction to drugs, cocaine is not the problem. All of these have the same problem — their brain is not functioning properly.

Sheila Thomas and Thomas Tullos, co-clinical directors at Focus Healthcare of California, explain that addiction is a brain disease, much like Alzheimer's or Parkinson's.

Unlike individuals who suffer from other brain disorders, Tullos says, many people who suffer from an addiction do not seek the help that they need because of the shame associated with addiction. Society has perpetuated this belief that addiction is a sign of weakness, a lack of willpower, a morality issue or a sign of a poor upbringing. Addiction is a brain dysfunction where an impulsive behavior becomes a compulsive behavior, Tullos says.

Once addiction is set in a person, they can't stop this compulsive behavior without help and support.

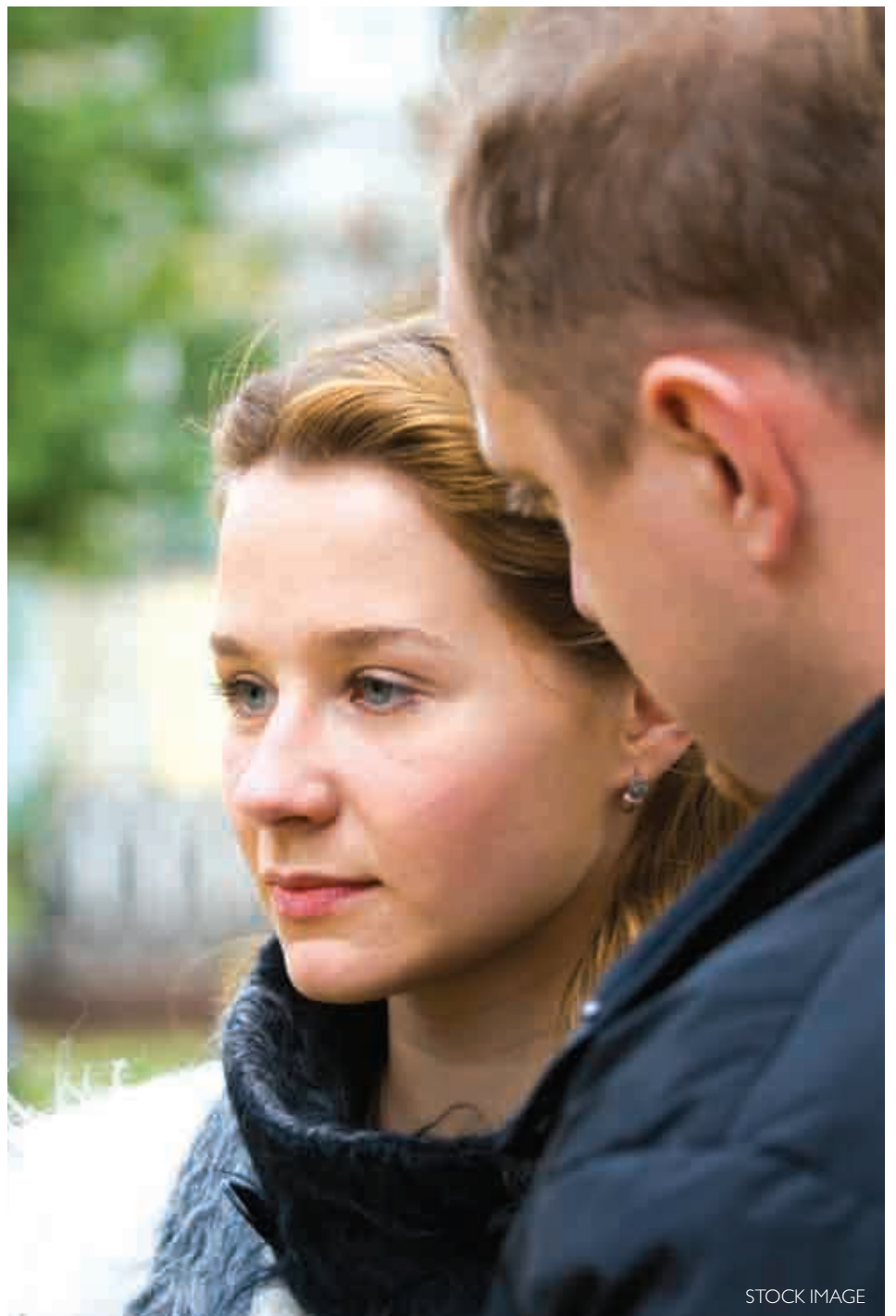
Focus Healthcare of California helps patients master universal recovery skills. This helps patients establish a strong foundation for recovery within treatment. More importantly, it helps them remain in recovery the rest of their lives. "People think detox solves the problem," Tullos says. "But it's just the beginning. You've got all the chemical out, but you have not solved the damage done to the brain."

According to Thomas and Tullos, the recovery process takes about three to five years, allowing the brain to heal. However, Thomas explains that during this first five years of recovery, the risk of relapse is the highest. A relapse during this recovery reverses brain healing. The addicted brain is like a dirt road after it rains. When someone acts on their addiction, it's like driving an 18-wheeler truck on the dirt road, making ruts in the road. Each time the person practices their compulsive behavior, it's like driving that truck over the ruts, creating deeper ruts. "The more the road is used," Tullos says, "the deeper the ruts will be."

UNIVERSAL RECOVERY

Focus Healthcare of California is committed to treating the whole addiction to heal the whole person. The Focus team treats the whole addiction through comprehensive assessment, identifying co-occurring disorders and the migration of addiction. To help patients live life in a balanced way, Focus staff bring awareness by building motivation, teaching skills to cope with urges and manages thoughts, feelings and behaviors.

This recovery and relapse prevention process is crucial because it allows the brain to heal. It takes the brain three to five years to actively recover from addiction — any relapse during this time is a major setback in the recovery process. Through its Whole Person Care approach, Focus Healthcare of California helps patients find the strength and hope they need to recover and empowers them to deal with future stress in more healthful ways.



STOCK IMAGE

The more a person acts on their addictive behavior, the more damage there will be to the brain."

To minimize the chance of relapse, Focus Healthcare of California helps patients learn to deal with stress in more healthy ways. "The treatment emphasizes a lifelong focus of maintenance to make sure people don't slip back if there is a traumatic event. Maintenance is forever," Thomas says. "We want

our patients to maintain a healthy brain for the rest of their lives."

In addition to mastering universal recovery skills, a support system is important for recovering people to succeed on their journey of healing. "No one heals alone," Tullos says. "It is important to enlist other people — friends and family members — in the healing process. This encourages and reinforces the healing process."

"The treatment emphasizes a lifelong focus of maintenance to make sure people don't slip back if there is a traumatic event. Maintenance is forever."

THOMAS TULLOS

Co-Clinical Director, Focus Healthcare of California



Getting Through Tough Times Without Relapsing

Patients learn skills to prevent relapse at Focus Treatment Centers

by Amanda Caraway
A person suffering from addiction can feel little reason to hope. But according to Terry Gorski, an internationally-recognized authority on addiction and relapse prevention, even those who feel they have lost everything can begin to live a better life in less than a year with the proper treatment.

As the Director of Clinical Development for Focus Healthcare of California, Gorski's primary responsibility is to guide the staff in finding new approaches to help patients break the patterns of addiction and stay in recovery without falling into old habits. For 40 years Gorski has been using cognitive behavioral therapy to find new methods to beat what he calls the addiction cycle.

"It is easy to get trapped in the addiction cycle when something feels so good that you want to do it again, and again," says Gorski. "Ending the cycle is about breaking the habits that surround the addiction, not just ending the addiction."

Gorski has been working with addiction since he was in college in the late 1960s when he took a job at a psychiatric unit that focused on alcoholism. He realized that working with addiction was much more rewarding than working with patients in most other areas of mental health.

"When treating addiction you are dealing with every aspect of the human experience and success is very high comparatively

speaking," says Gorski. "I became addicted to helping people."

During training his mentor recommended that he stop using alcohol and drugs for a full six months to truly understand how much using is part of our culture. This led him to find a community of recovering people for support. The six-month test was a good one because Gorski

have a headache at work our first thought is to take a pill instead of simply taking a break from staring at the computer."

Those with an addictive brain response have a higher tolerance for pleasure chemicals, which can lead to destructive habits. The addicted brain adjusts more easily to having chemicals in the system and the person needs a higher volume to feel impaired.

"It is easy to get trapped in the addiction cycle when something feels so good that you want to do it again, and again. Ending the cycle is about breaking the habits that surround the addiction, not just ending the addiction."

TERRY GORSKI

Director of Clinical Development, Focus Healthcare of California



says it takes a good six months to break the addiction cycle and learn to live in a different way.

"In our society we attribute a lot of positive experiences to alcohol when in reality the consumption of alcohol is a very small part of the experience," says Gorski. "A lot of it comes from a better living through chemistry belief system. When we

However, Gorski says people can find their way to recovery with proper treatment. The earlier they recognize the addiction, the easier it is to heal. One of the most important aspects of recovery is having skilled professionals guiding you within a healthy recovery community that includes family members and friends.

RELAPSE PREVENTION

The best way to address relapse prevention is to take an offensive approach at the beginning of recovery treatment. Identify core personality and lifestyle problems that can lead to addiction. Early on, a patient needs to develop basic relapse prevention skills including impulse control and the management of stress.

During recovery patients should develop a step-by-step process to help recognize the early warning signs of relapse. This empowers them to manage high risk situations and interrupt the relapse progression early.

Having patient accountability early in the process is also important for relapse prevention. Patients must be actively involved in their treatment, participating in community meetings and assisting others with recovery.

Treatment goals should include developing life skills and healthy relationships. Having a solid external support system including Narcotics Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous and other such networks will help them find the necessary support once they leave the program.

THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

Patient overcomes alcohol addiction at Focus Treatment Center

by Natasha vonKaenel

ROSS Martin first tasted alcohol when he was 18. It was a swig from a bottle of warm amber whiskey. The swig was followed by a full pint. “The next day, of course, I wasn’t feeling too hot,” Martin says, “but there was something about it that made me want to do it again. I don’t know if I was an alcoholic from that moment on, but within a year, I was probably drinking on a daily basis.”

It got to the point where he says everything he did needed to include alcohol. “I would tell people that I wouldn’t go to movies because they didn’t serve alcohol. I wouldn’t go to this restaurant because they didn’t serve alcohol.”

And 15 years after his first drink, Martin’s addiction was too much for his family and friends to handle. “I think everybody was just getting sick of my behavior.”

It took heavy pressure from his brother, three best friends and a girlfriend to get him even thinking about treatment. His girlfriend, who would later become his wife, threatened to leave Martin and take their 2-year-old daughter with her. “I could paint you a picture of that moment, standing in my backyard, as if it happened yesterday,” Martin says slowly. “I remember it that vividly and clear, which is pretty amazing considering the intoxicated state I was in at the time.”

Martin knew he needed to make a change. But he couldn’t do it alone.

With the help from his friends and family, 33-year-old Martin entered treatment at Focus Healthcare. For 28 days, he woke up at 7 a.m., and from that moment on until 8 p.m., it was all about his recovery. For Martin — and many who are struggling with addiction — the guilt

and shame surrounding their illness makes it difficult to share their feelings. But by offering counseling through process groups, behavior therapy, art therapy, nutrition groups, spirituality groups and relapse prevention groups, the Focus team helps patients attack their addiction in the way that best suits them.

For some, therapy through art or yoga or swimming helps them to slow down and relax without turning to their addictive behavior. For others, writing their personal story, relapse plan or letter saying goodbye to their addiction is what helps them succeed in their toughest times. There is something for everyone.

For Martin, being sober and reflecting on the underlying reasons he drank helped him start over. “A lot of my stuff was admitting that I didn’t have all the answers. I wasn’t the center of my own universe. And the world didn’t revolve around me.” When he felt overwhelmed, Martin says he could turn to his peers and the staff for support. “At Focus, there is just a general sense of actually caring and they always had a way, at least for me, to break through some of the denial ... help me realize what was really going on.”

After deep introspection, Martin says he is stronger and happier than before. Three years since entering treatment, Martin has not had one sip of alcohol. Today, Martin



PHOTO COURTESY OF
ROSS MARTIN

“I would tell people that I wouldn’t go to movies because they didn’t serve alcohol. I wouldn’t go to this restaurant because they didn’t serve alcohol.”

ROSS MARTIN

Former Patient, Focus Treatment Center

is working to help others overcome their addictions as the alumni coordinator at Focus Healthcare in Tennessee.

Not every day is easy, he says, explaining how, like most alcoholics in recovery, the thought of alcohol crosses his mind. “I would be a liar if I said that it didn’t. But as quick as that thought enters my head these days, it exits my head as well.” With his new daughter being born in the next

few months, he is afraid that raising his newborn sober will all be new to him. Even with the fear that everything will be new, he feels blessed. “I wouldn’t trade the life I have for anything.”

Q & A with Kevin Phillips

by Mike Blount

AS the Director of Business Development for Focus Healthcare of California, Kevin Phillips wants to grow the organization to help more people successfully recover from addiction. To Phillips, seeing a person go through a successful recovery from addiction is one of the most gratifying feelings in the world — and Phillips believes it gets to the core of our problems as a society.

What motivated you to get into this work?

I care about people. Our society is feeding a lot of addiction. Almost every family is affected by it. Most of the crime in this country is tied to addiction. In 2005, federal, state, and local government spent almost \$500 billion on the problem. Only 1.6 percent of that went to treatment or

prevention. Most of it went to cleaning up the wreckage. If you want to drive a stake through the heart of the vampire that is sucking the lifeblood out of the nation, you want to drive a stake through the heart of addiction. It is the single most expensive healthcare problem in America. If we could solve it, we would solve the healthcare crisis in this country.

How is Focus Healthcare of California's treatment different from other addiction recovery centers?

We provide comprehensive treatment of addiction including process addiction including food, sex and money. All addictions are manifestations of the same disease. It all comes from the same place in the brain. It involves a dysregulation of the mesolimbic dopamine system — the pleasure pathway. What makes us different

is our commitment to get at the root of the disease.

What is "Whole Person Care?"

Whole Person Care recognizes that recovery involves adopting a healthier approach to life. Healthy relationships is the antidote to addiction. A colleague recently put it this way: People are not addicted to drugs. They are addicted to a pathological relationship to intoxication. They are trying to get from a chemical or a self-destructive behavior what they are designed to receive from people who are trying to love them.

Why does this treatment work?

The reason this treatment works is because we work on the core issues that cause the addiction — the trauma and grief and shame and the brokenness of relationships that feed the addiction. I like to say we kill the monster.

How is the family involved in the treatment?

Family involvement in addiction recovery is very important. When the family learns more about the disease, then they can be more constructive in their relationship with the person who is suffering.

How does stigma affect addiction recovery?

It undermines a person's ability to get treatment and the ability to get well. A person who is struggling under the burden of an addiction experiences a lot of shame and often will hear people saying, "You're just being selfish" or "You need to stop." These remarks are generally fueled by ignorance and a lack of understanding. The stigma keeps people from seeking the help and recovery they need.

What are some common misconceptions about addiction?

Many think a person trapped in an addiction enjoys it — as if alcoholics enjoy being drunk, for example. They don't. They're suffering immensely. They can't just stop even though they want to. Some believe a person suffering from addiction get what they deserve. Often, they lose their house, money and families. They believe they deserve it because of a willfulness to keep using, but they can't just stop. We all have a little responsibility in this. First, we glamorize the behavior that leads to addiction. We laugh at the drunk at the party, or encourage one another to "have another." But then the addiction sets in. We turn our backs on the people we once encouraged. We criminalize their behavior and shame them into isolation. We are all culpable in this.



PHOTO COURTESY OF KEVIN PHILLIPS

START YOUR RECOVERY

Recovery is possible. Addiction has many manifestations, including chemical dependency and compulsive behaviors involving food, sex and money. Healthy interpersonal relationships are the antidote to addictive behaviors. Our gender specific programming provides a safe space for exploration of self. We identify core issues that underlie addiction by breaking through denial, resolving trauma, reestablishing healthy emotional expression, and looking deeply into an individual's grief and loss. Our experience reinforces our belief that by treating the whole addiction, we are healing the whole person.

Focus Healthcare of California
2221 Fair Oaks Blvd.
Sacramento, CA 95825
Telephone: (916) 514-8500
Toll free: (888) 943-2145
www.FocusTreatmentCenters.com

Endorsements

"I emphatically endorse the impressive work of Focus Health Care of California in Sacramento. I am excited to have a treatment program in my area that deals with the core issues of addiction. If it had not been for their experience and expertise in all areas of addiction, one student I had referred might have overdosed. She is now safe. I will continue to refer my clients to this wonderful facility."

STEPHANIE LAKE, M.ED, CATC IV

Program Coordinator
Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Intervention Services
University of California, Davis



"As an outpatient treatment program serving addiction in adolescence, young adults and adults for the past 31 years, we are grateful that Focus Healthcare of California is addressing addiction in a structured, comprehensive manner that addresses all addictions and co-occurring mental health disorders under one roof."

NEW DIRECTIONS PROGRAM

David Gust, LAADC, NCACII, CADCI
Kent Morrison, LADC
Vennessa Liindsey, LADC



"We are excited to welcome Focus Healthcare to the Sacramento area! We know they offer cutting edge treatment with a fine team of seasoned professionals."

BARBARA THOMPSON

Executive Director
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence



"I would not hesitate to refer a student/young person to Focus Healthcare in Sacramento. I personally know some of the staff and appreciate the comprehensive approach they take toward recovery and wellness."

THERESA FAGOURI, CHES

Program Coordinator
Campus Alcohol and Drug Education Center
California State University, Chico



"I'm very excited that Focus Healthcare now has a Sacramento residential addiction program built around Terence T. Gorski's evidence-based, relapse prevention clinical system. They have faithfully reproduced the Gorski-Cenaps Development Model of Recovery in a beautiful state-of-the art facility. I wholeheartedly recommend them to anyone in need of addiction treatment."

DR. STEPHEN F. GRINSTEAD, AD, LMFT

Grinstead Psychotherapy, Training and Coaching

