

U.S. Government and Professional Endorsements

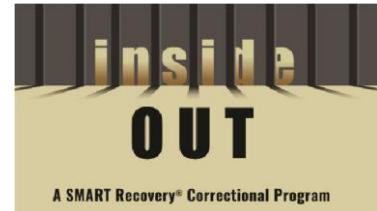


National Institute
on Drug Abuse

Understanding Drug Abuse and Addiction:
What Science Says
Self Help and Drug Addiction Treatment

Self-help groups can complement and extend the effects of professional drug addiction treatment. The most prominent groups are those affiliated with Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), Narcotics Anonymous (NA), and Cocaine Anonymous (CA) ... and SMART Recovery. Most drug addiction treatment programs encourage patients to participate in a self-help group during and after formal treatment.¹

SMART's InsideOut® program for correctional facilities was funded by \$1 million in NIDA Small Business Innovation Research Grants. SMART offers the court-mandated nonreligious recovery support that meets the best practice standards set by the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP). Major research has established that the program significantly reduces reconviction rates.²



National Institute
on Alcohol Abuse
and Alcoholism

Understanding the Impact of Alcohol on
Human Health and Well-Being
Medical Attention | The Patient is Drinking

Encouraging patients to go to mutual-support groups such as AA or SMART Recovery is the first-line response in this situation. Although some patients will inform you early on that they have no intention of attending these meetings because of previous negative experiences or a fear of groups, encourage them to try these groups by stressing that a different type of group could be helpful (e.g., going to SMART Recovery instead of AA).³

NIH funded CheckUp & Choices, an evidence-based web app based on SMART's 4-Point Program® that helps people stop drinking, which was developed under the leadership of Reid Hester, Ph.D. After NIAAA-funded research proved its effectiveness, new apps were developed for opioids, stimulants, marijuana and compulsive gambling (www.smartrecovery.org/checkupandchoices).



¹ NIDA, February 2016, www.drugabuse.gov/publications/teaching-packets/understanding-drug-abuse-addiction/section-iv/5-self-helpdrug-addiction-treatment.

² In a study of 6,000 inmates, reconviction rates for violent crimes were 42 percent lower for the 3,000 who attended SMART meetings while incarcerated, according to research conducted in Australia by Chris Blatch et al., "Getting SMART, SMART Recovery Programs and Reoffending," Journal for Forensic Practice, 2016, Vol. 18 Iss: 1, 3-6.

³ NIAAA, COMBINE: Medical Management Treatment Manual – A Clinical Treatment Manual for Medically Trained Clinicians Providing Pharmacotherapy as Part of the Treatment for Alcohol Dependence, 39, https://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/combine/Combine_2.pdf.



Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator Peer Support ... Self-Help Groups (Addiction)

Lists SMART Recovery and 12-step groups.⁴ SAMHSA has funded training for facilitators of regular SMART Recovery and InsideOut meetings. It also underwrote the creation of the video "How to Facilitate a Basic SMART Recovery Meeting."



Adult Court Best Practice Standards, Volume I Substance Abuse Treatment Peer Support Groups

Participants regularly attend self-help or peer support groups in addition to professional counseling. The peer support groups follow a structured model or curriculum such as the 12-step or SMART Recovery models.⁵ Seven U.S. Appellate Court rulings and three State Supreme Court rulings have found that 12-step programs are religious, and court mandates to attend such meetings violate the freedom-of-religion clause of the First Amendment.⁶



The Drug Court Judicial Bench Book Self-Help Recovery Programs

One important concern about 12-step programs is that they do rely on recognition of a higher spiritual power, which has been interpreted by appellate courts to have religious significance that may trigger First Amendment objections. Appellate courts have held that the State cannot mandate attendance in these groups unless it also offers a secular alternative. There are several secular alternatives that may be offered to drug court participants. For example, SMART Recovery (www.smartrecovery.org) and Save Our Selves (SOS) (www.sossobriety.org) have a scientific or cognitive orientation as opposed to a spiritual or religious orientation.⁷



Federal Bureau of Prisons: Self-Help Groups

The Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) Residential Drug Abuse Program (RDAP) offers treatment based on Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and self-empowerment, which is quite similar to SMART's InsideOut program. After inmates are released, the BOP recommends SMART meetings for "... participants [who] immediately reject AA and NA as a result of the spiritual component of these programs and/or as a result of the fact that these programs subscribe to the disease model of addiction. The disease model assumes that you are powerless over your addiction. The disease model can conflict with the bio-psychosocial model that is utilized in RDAP, which asserts that although there are many factors (genetics, personality, societal influences, family environment, etc.) that contributed to one's addiction, the individual is ultimately responsible for all the choices made in his life."⁸

⁴ SAMHSA, Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator, <https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov>.

⁵ NADCP, 2013, www.nadcp.org/sites/default/files/2014/D-22.pdf, Chapter V. Substance Abuse Treatment, Section I. Peer Support Groups, 40, including footnote 19, which states, "Drug Courts must offer a secular alternative to 12-step programs such as Narcotics Anonymous because appellate courts have interpreted these programs to be deity-based, thus implicating the First Amendment."

⁶ See the presentation by SMART President Joe Gerstein at the 2017 NADCP Training Conference, "The Power of Choice in Achieving Recovery" (www.smartrecovery.org/courts/), slides 6-10. In a 2013 case (*Hazle v. Crowfoot*), the court ordered the State of California and a treatment provider to pay \$2 million in damages to an inmate for failing to observe this First Amendment right.

⁷ Eds. Douglas B. Marlowe, J.D., Ph.D., Judge William G. Meyer (Ret.), 2011, www.ndci.org/sites/default/files/nadcp/14146_NDCI_Benchbook_v6.pdf, 75.

⁸ RDAP Law Consultants, RDAP: The Bureau of Prisons Alcohol, Narcotic and Prescription Drug Abuse Program, 2014, 4.