



Holistic Health and the Process of Recovery

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ABSTRACT

An integrated, holistic concept of comprehensive recovery healthcare has evolved from studying the complex interaction of genetic, emotional, spiritual, physical, dietary, mental, and environmental life issues [1]. Long-term trauma recovery management involves one's body, mind, and spiritual balance characterized by: (1) positive emotions, (2) constructive thoughts, and (3) responsible actions. Complete transformation emphasizes the person's physical, emotional, social, and spiritual integration. Various therapies, which address the body's energy fields, ensure a more significant opportunity for sustained health. Eastern practices such as massage, meditation, Asian acupressure methods, and acupuncture have been beneficial in reducing stress, tension, and anxiety. Bodywork activities such as Therapeutic Touch, Reiki Therapy, and Cranio-Sacral Therapy can reduce the emotional stress of daily life problems. The cornerstone to holistic health assumes whole foods, medicinal herbs, and nutritional supplements enhance diet, build physical balance, and nourish body tissues.

The movement towards a person's physical, emotional, social, and spiritual integration and a responsible lifestyle is a desire of all recovering individuals. Holistic health is always reflected in a person's attempt to take control over their body, mind, and spirit. This integrated concept of comprehensive health arises from a complex interaction of genetic, emotional, spiritual, physical, dietary, mental, and environmental life issues. Long-term trauma recovery management involves a body, mind, and spiritual balance characterized by positive emotion, constructive thoughts, and responsible actions. Total transformation emphasizes the whole person's physical, emotional, social, and spiritual integration [1].

Trauma Recovery

The somatic (physical) approach to health assumes that trauma recovery engages the mind and spirit and works directly with the physical body. Eastern practices such as massage, meditation, Asian acupressure methods, and acupuncture have been beneficial in reducing stress, tension, and anxiety. Bodywork activities such as Therapeutic Touch, Reiki Therapy, and Cranio-Sacral Therapy can reduce the emotional stress of daily life problems. The cornerstone to holistic health assumes whole foods, medicinal herbs, and nutritional supplements enhance diet, build physical balance, and nourish body tissues [2].

Assuming a relationship exists between the soma (body) and the psyche (mind), any movement to optimal health must involve psychic approaches to recovery and trauma management. These psychic approaches mandate that individuals work directly with their thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and attitudes regarding their worldview. The body and the mind cannot ignore their spiritual presence since the ego's intellectual strength must be transcended to find peace in the collective evolution of human

consciousness [3]. Our thoughts and feelings influence our bodies and affect our psychic state. Health can be achieved by: (1) Helping our bodies heal through lifestyle changes, (2) Working with our negative thoughts and feelings (which destroy our bodies), and (3) Finding our spiritual path.

When the mind and the body seek harmony and balance, one's life force (spirituality) can create wellness as an ongoing process of existence [4].

If personality is to become a path rather than harden into pathology, we need to learn to work with ourselves as we are, without aggression or blame. This work means creating conditions that encourage the personality structure to break open from within, revealing essential qualities of our being that are hidden.

Recovery and trauma management not only help a person develop a better sense of their conscious identity, but it also

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must explore the deeper meaning of one's existence. The more one feels one's beliefs, values, and thoughts are outside of oneself; the more one gives those directed activities the power to control one's life. The objective in life is to balance personal mythology (inner Self) and ego complexes (outer Self) so that the soul/spirit can take command of one's life rather than having the heart be a stepchild to reality. June Singer [5], in *Boundaries of the Soul*, stated that, the soul makes us more than a pile of chemicals in a tangle of neurons. The soul is the essence of consciousness that recognizes what is unique in us as individuals and what each of us shares with the immense totality of what we are a part of [5].

Culture appears to be a vehicle one must travel through to find one's spiritual path and bring balance to one's life force [6]. For example, the symbolic death struggle of addiction is played out in consciousness by the terrible suffering and destruction of life and family (negative aspect). In recovery, this allows a new compensation of the conscious mind (positive part). Without the trauma of addiction, individuals would have difficulty taking responsibility for their existence and utilizing the power of recovery to transform their lives and achieve the spiritual awakening necessary for transcendence [7].

Positive Emotions and Constructive Thoughts

As one navigates through life, at least three (3) activities are threads to our spiritual expression. They have sometimes been identified as "adjunctive therapies." In many ways, they are expressions of an ordinary sense of spirituality which gets expressed through (A) art, (B) music, and (C) dance.

(A) Art Activities

Art activities are a non-threatening way of expressing an individual's unconscious processes. When unconscious archetypal themes are explored in consciousness, many new interpretations and personal awareness are added to one's expanding reality. Art allows individuals an experiential encounter with their personal and collective unconsciousness. Art brings an individual to understand their already existing consciousness better [8]. Since sight preceded voice, visual arts are closer to one's unconscious conflicts and have a more archetypal collective history than verbal expression [9]. Art is a type of communication that, when understood, helps the individual develop a broader perspective on everyday existence. It provides trauma-recovering people with images of situations lost through consciousness yet retained in the unconscious. Art is a self-healing technique that continues for years after formal counseling has ceased.

(B) Music Activities

The underlying assumption of music activity is based on the influence it tends to have over one's emotions and the ability of music to change the way the body and mind interact with each other [10,11].

(Music) changes include altering feeling states; rewarding self-experiences; reducing anxiety and tension; a distraction from pathological concerns; heightened attention and concentration; stimulation and expression of feeling experiences; and insight into one's thinking/feeling behavior [12].

Besides being a universal language, music has been linked to one being in control of one's life [13]. How often has an individual changed their mood and exhibited a significant change in attitude and behavior by listening to a particular type of music? We all need to foster music appreciation, singing, and playing musical instruments as activities that support and enhance trauma recovery and resilience.

(C) Dance Activities

The underlying assumption about dance activity is that the body and the mind are inseparable. Many people dance to experience the wholeness of body, mind, and spirit through the body movements of dance. Dance has been associated with a deep catharsis of tension as expressed in releasing emotions in action [8]. Bodily processes produce a certain amount of psychic (mind) life changes, similar to how psychic life changes affect our body's experiences. Espeniak wrote about the universal assumptions underlying dance as a therapeutic activity:

- Emotions are stimulated and released through body movements and gestures.
- Nonverbal dance activity is a form of contact and communication.
- Dance decreases anxiety for most individuals.
- Rhythmic motion allows the expression of emotions.

Dance complements music and Art because it allows for the nonverbal aspects of a recovering person's emotional expression. Participation in music, Art, and dance helps the individual become aware of the processes underlying conscious and unconscious experiences. Dance makes consciousness more sensual, thoughtful, emotional, and wise, making unconsciousness more proactive rather than reactive [14].

The above nonverbal activities (Art, Music, and Dance) tend to involve the following four transformative learning activities:

1. **Creation**- thoughts and feelings that formulate new interactions with symbols felt personally relevant to the individual.
2. **Reflection**- Intellectual thinking and conscious analysis of previously incorporated attitudes about the meaning of life events.
3. **Integration**- the evolution of a conscious attitude that is expansive, integrated, and differentiated from prior perspectives.
4. **Action**- changing one's daily life activities to reflect this renewed perspective.

If one can create, reflect, integrate, and act, the individual will be in an evolving transformative state of change.

Transformational Change in Recovery

All recovery is self-education and self-perfection. The individual develops a life pattern based on a comprehensive understanding of their relationship to the collateral source statute the environment. The individual must appreciate that the human condition is nurtured in particular social institutions but does not derive energy from them. People feel less isolated and lonely if they realize their trials illustrate a universal collective concern. Such recognition helps to put recovery and life in general in perspective; it allows the recovering person to

see themselves as an appropriately small but still integral part of an enormous universe rather than a target of persecution by a destructive "Fate" [15,16].

The above transformative function is particularly relevant to trauma recovery because it helps people recognize the larger worldview one must create and make a part of their new reality [9]. This new recovery system brings a different perspective to an otherwise myopic addictive life. Singer [17] reflected on individuals' transpersonal perspectives as a view of people and their relations to the larger world compatible with the new worldview that sees the universe and everything in it, including human beings, as a series of interconnecting, interacting, and mutually influencing systems. Transpersonal psychology approaches human beings in the broader context, including the invisible world of spirit. In the transpersonal view, the only way the spiritual world can manifest is through ordinary people in the visible world. Without the trauma of addiction, individuals would be unable to take responsibility for their existence and utilize the power of recovery to transform their lives and achieve the spiritual awakening necessary for transcendence. In many ways, one's history of trauma and recovery is the Jungian paradox of enantiodromia; any action or trait thesis taken to an extreme will become its antithesis [18,19].

The Hindu philosophy of Karma is the belief that we each create our lives through our actions and, ultimately, must accept our behavior's consequences. It gave credibility to Jung's notion that our consciousness is shaped by events more meaningful than what occurs in one's lifetime [9].

The Buddhist influence of self-healing and the path of life represents a process or journey of trauma recovery from suffering. Evans-Wentz [20] and the Tibetan Book of the Dead reinforced the idea of spiritual transformation through ritual diagrams known as Mandalas. The Zen concept of experiencing one's individuality through the "now" of life was considered the Western principle that the past is gone, the future has not yet arrived, and only the present is significant.

What is ultimately therapeutic for many people is not so much the narrative construction of their past to explain theory suffering but the direct experience, in the therapist's office, of the emotions, emotional thoughts, or physical remnants of inspirational ideas with which they are stuck [21].

The Eastern influence of Buddhist and Hindu thoughts and the Western psyche of rational thinking created a polarity needing psychic integration [22]. Gestalt Psychotherapy and the introduction of Yoga into Western therapeutic approaches expanded our understanding of spirituality in therapy [23]. The synchronic concept of acausal activity linked psychotherapy with modern physics and holistic medicine [24]. According to Jung, synchronistic events are a way of thinking that does not separate physical occurrences from an individual's inner psychic life. It views life as both subject/object as different sides of the same reality.

The loss of supportive communities is one of the significant losses of modern life. Since 1930 recovery groups have

provided peer support and understanding of substance use and abuse. Recovery groups have provided peer support and understanding. Support group members have always been willing to confront each other and give encouragement when needed. Many support groups borrow heavily from the A.A. model of Twelve Steps. The slogans and traditions and the concept of spirituality are related but differ from the organized practice of religion.

Responsible Action: The Spirituality of Ordinary People

There are many definitions of spirituality and recovery. It generally refers to something that is transcendent and ultimate and becomes known to an individual in an extrasensory manner [25]. It is sometimes called the "life force" or the "essence of life." An organized way of expressing one's spirituality can be observed in Western culture as practicing one's faith within a structured religion. Artress [26] suggested that religion is the container and spirituality of the essences held within it. Although religion and spirituality are interconnected, religion tends to define a more concrete cultural-specific expression, while spirituality represents a universal concept [27]. Some individuals resist an organized religious state, probably based on early childhood experiences. As adults, these individuals appear more receptive to a spiritual space on earth devoid of an organized perspective (religion). In both cases, one's commitment to a higher power is still maintained by how one organizes the process of finding a spiritual process. What is significant is that both groups share a worldview that believes in the following:

- The goodness of human beings.
- The unconditional love from the creator of life.
- The concept of "free will" is that humans are responsible for their actions [27].

The Hebrew, Christian, and Islamic traditions share these three universal beliefs expressed by their respective prophets, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed. The highest expression of an individual's spiritual awakening is communicated through compassion, understanding, and peacefulness. Clinebell suggests several areas of healthy spiritual needs:

- The need for a viable philosophy of life.
- The need for a relationship with a "higher power."
- The need to develop a sense of Self.
- The need to feel connected (belonging) to the universe.
- The need for a community that nurtures spiritual growth.

A. A. experience, although not a formal therapy group, usually provides significant therapeutic exposure and is regarded by many clinicians as a substantial part of an individual's recovery management plan. Many mental health professionals recognize that the A.A. approach can be a strong incentive to produce maximum support and healing. Gorski [28] refers to the Twelve Steps Plus approach of therapy and attendance at A.A. as significant contributors to high retention rates at meetings. Gorski believes that higher relapse rates occur when alcoholics only attend A.A. meetings [28].

Many recovering professionals believe it is only through the spirit of life that one can chart a recovery path, which provides

the positive energy to overcome mental health and addiction problems [29]. Jung talked about the soul of a man and said, What we call civilized consciousness has steadily separated itself from basic instincts. However, these instincts have not disappeared; they have merely lost contact with our consciousness and are forced to assert themselves indirectly. This may be using physical symptoms in the case of neurosis, unacceptable moods, unexpected forgetfulness, or mistakes in speech [18].

This spiritual road map of recovery and resilience allows one to find their consciousness through a set of guidelines that helps one focus on what is essential in their life. This spiritual road map entails surrendering one's life to a commitment of personal responsibility. An individual's surrender to their addiction is not a flaw in character or a mental illness; it is merely an individual's choice to admit that one is powerless over their addiction, and one must take steps to develop a more organized life pattern that helps an individual move toward a productive, positive place.

Mel Ash expresses the paradox of being alone together when he states:

Standing alone on our own two feet with our arms around the people next to us, we close our meetings in a very physical demonstration of being alone together. Squeezing each other's hands at the close of the prayer, we affirm our great need and love for one another. Alone together, we save each other from our active diseases. Alone and jointly, we can befriend this lonely, splintered world. Like separate chapters in the same book, we need each other to see how the story turns out [30].

Added to Art, music, dance activity, and a holistic health approach, an individual must also take personal responsibility for living; one must develop a positive mental attitude, a healthy diet, an exercise plan, and a support system. If one's body is healthy, it has a dramatic positive influence on the way we think and feel. Jung believed the mind (mental) and physical (body) were mutually dependent on each other and that human development is teleological, directed to an end, and governed by purpose. Jung assumed the mind constituted a set of rules governing how people experience the world. Avens [31] stated.

Reality is covered, as it were, with a veil of language, symbols, and myth, and only through mediation is knowledge possible. Furthermore, this veil is not static and timeless but the product of history and cultural evolution.

Low levels of vitamins and minerals within our bodies may be preventing us from achieving optimal health. Vitamins and mineral supplements can provide valuable nutrition that may be lacking in one's diet. There is also a belief that energy can be blocked in the body, not just in the mind. Working with one's body will release tension, reduce stress, and enhance energy flow throughout the body and mind, facilitating a better body/mind connection. The infusion of alternative explanations of health, such as traditional Chinese medicine, compliments and expands a person's perspective on optimal health. Activities related to this intervention are nutrition and diet programs, exercise programs (Yoga, etc.), breath work, muscle relaxation,

meditation, massage therapy, acupuncture, pharmacological and medicinal treatments, and herbal remedies.

Everything else will exist in the right place and way when we have our bodies and minds in order. However, it is only possible to organize things if you are in order.

Zen Master Shunryu Suzuki

(<https://zenquotes.io/authors/shunryu-suzuki>)

The evolving field of recovery and transformation requires not only an individual who possesses a comprehensive therapeutic worldview but also, as White and Kurtz [32] indicated, a constellation of knowledge and skills that counselors and recovery coaches need to perform integrated community-based services. Those critical skills include:

- Developing and sustaining a supportive, non-exploitive, recovery-focused relationship with each individual and family seeking services,
- Assessing each client, family, and community's recovery capital and recovery resource needs,
- Remaining aware of all national and local recovery support resources,
- Empowering each client to make choices related to their recovery pathway/ style,
- Maintaining relationships with key individuals/groups within local communities of recovery,
- Matching the needs and preferences of clients to particular recovery support resources,
- Linking (guiding into a relationship with) each client to an identified person/ group,
- Monitoring each person's response to a chosen pathway/ style of recovery. Moreover, there is a need for amplified clinical or peer-based recovery support resources,
- Offering feedback and support related to recovery pathway/style choices,
- Providing, when needed, early re-intervention and recovery re-initiation services,
- Facilitating the development of needed recovery support resources.

Summary

The path of recovery from addiction and trauma to resilience and transformation is rooted in the evolving principle that all life is a balance between spirit and matter. Caring for the spiritual and physical selves requires self-reflection regarding life experiences and personal constructs. Favorable resolutions of life problems, such as alcohol or drug addiction, gambling, and abuse, are partly vested in a robust recovery management system that impacts an individual's cultural and social support system [3]. The loss of supportive communities is one of the significant losses of modern life. The 20th-century self-help movement of Alcoholics Anonymous and other 12-step programs provide social support and encouragement to reflect upon behaviors, motivations, and patterns and make healthy changes. While it is not necessary for a recovering person to be religious, the movement may draw parallels to various spiritual and religious doctrines that recovering persons subscribe to. Therefore, removing these parallels strengthens a person's chances for long-term recovery.

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