



HEALING

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from Dr. Marino E. Carbonell

Ed.D., LMHC, CAP, ICADC

www.marinocarbonell.com

Get Back to Being You

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History of Factors That Influence Young Adult Substance Abuse

by Marino E. Carbonell, Ed.D., LMHC, CAP, ICADC

Addictions to alcohol, nicotine, and cocaine involve a physical or psychological dependence on the drug; any substance that can change a mood or state of mind is called a psychoactive or mood-changing drug. A physical dependence is manifested by withdrawal symptoms that occur when the person stops using the drug.

Moreover, young adults who are experimenting with illicit drugs may exhibit withdrawal effects. They may also begin exhibiting other negative behaviors such as hiding cigarettes, alcohol, and drugs. Additionally, they may experience swinging mood changes, temper flare-ups, and may engage in stealing money from family and friends to support drug use. School attendance and grades may drop, and young adults may begin to socialize with a drug-using crowd. Parents need to be vigilant about illicit drug use but especially vigilant about marijuana. For teens, parents need to be aware of the changes that become apparent as addiction becomes more serious. According to statistics, marijuana remains the most commonly abused drug in the United States and is usually the first drug with which teens experiment before graduating to harder drugs, such as cocaine, ecstasy, and even alcohol.

A new analysis from the University of Mississippi's Potency Monitoring Project, marijuana's potent effects have severe consequences due to its THC potency, the amount of psychoactive ingredient found in the drug has more than doubled since 1983.

Marijuana's growing potency not only affects the risk of addiction and increase experimentation to harder drugs such as cocaine and heroin, but also the risk of psychological problems among others. Another

very important statistic reported in the study must be taken very seriously as well—marijuana abuse increases the risk of developing mental disorders 40 percent. This is another serious side effect that rarely gets reported.

Breaking the addiction cycle depends on the drug of choice. Some addicts try to stop "cold turkey," meaning the addict stops all at once with no treatment. This type of method can be difficult to sustain. Another option is tapering off, meaning that the addict gradually stops taking drugs and may need some help to quit. Another technique is taking a substance to help with the addiction urge such as Antabuse (for alcohol) or nicotine gum. A 12-step program or other support group can help addicts deal with abstinence, and, finally, intervention treatments (whether inpatient, outpatient, community based, or private therapy) may be the only answer. The long-term goal of any treatment plan is to change the person's life so that drug use is no longer an option. However, addiction is a tough cycle to break and treatment is not a guaranteed option. Many addicts find the drug-free lifestyle and treatment environment hard to cope. Denial interferes with recovery.

Treatment specialization includes:

- Outpatient Addiction Treatment
- Substance and Alcohol Abuse
- Relationship Problems
- Work and Career Issues
- Stress Management
- Parenting and Family Issues
- Conflict Resolution
- Other areas: Behavioral Modification, Troubled Teens, Peer Pressure, School and Social Anxiety *

10 Ways to Get the Most Out of Therapy

Getting the most out of your therapy sessions starts with showing up! Below are additional ways to be proactive in your own growth and development.

- 1. Know your objectives.** How do you want to feel? How will you know you're improving and growing, or when you're ready to stop?
- 2. Write your history.** Come to your first session with the history of: your life, any problems, relationships, substance use, hopes, dreams, etc. You'll be able to focus on the therapy faster.
- 3. Be honest.** Yes, with your therapist. But most importantly, with yourself.
- 4. Write in a journal.** Journaling helps you process your sessions and bring new material to the surface.
- 5. Prepare for appointments.** What's changed since your last session? Reflect on any insights, and bring them with you.
- 6. Give details.** Just telling your therapist, "We had a fight," doesn't uncover the dynamics in the relationship.
- 7. Notice patterns.** When things recur in your life, they are big clues and shouldn't be ignored.
- 8. Act on your insights.** Putting new insights into action makes great therapy sessions stick.
- 9. Take responsibility.** Your therapist is there to support you while *you* do the work of healing and transformation.
- 10. Be patient.** Change happens over time. With patience, you CAN shift to a place of greater peace. *

A Letter From

Marino E. Carbonell
Ed.D., LMHC, CAP, ICADC



My expertise is in addiction therapy—specifically substance abuse, gambling, and other addictions. With over 15-years of experience, a founder and director of the South Miami Hospital adolescent addiction treatment program and now in private practice, my focus is helping adolescents and families deal with substance and alcohol abuse, parent/teen conflict resolution, stress, and anxiety. I also work with the adult population in dealing with all types of addiction disorders and treatment, family systems, and relationship dynamics.

Blending talk therapy with conventional and alternative approaches, I draw on a variety of styles and techniques to incorporate what will be most helpful for each client. I offer individual, family, and/or group therapy and work with each client to help them build on their strengths to identify and achieve life goals.

I am a Licensed Psychotherapist, National Certified Counselor (NCC) and Board Certified in Professional Counseling with a doctorate in Child and Youth Studies from Nova Southeastern University's Fischler Graduate School of Education and Human Services and a master's in Mental Health Counseling; a specialist in the field of addictions, I am certified in Addictions Counseling from the University of Miami and am a Certified Addictions Professional (CAP) since 1994. I am a Lifetime Member and Fellow of the American Psychotherapy Association and a member of the American Counseling Association.

How Well Constructed Are Your Boundaries?

Boundaries are those invisible lines around yourself that let people know the limits of what they can say or do around you. Make your boundaries too solid and you build walls, too weak and you allow others' actions to harm you. Take a few minutes to find out how well constructed your boundaries are.



True False

- 1. I start statements with "I" rather than "you" or "we." This lets me own what I say and is less defensive than "you," and cleaner than "we."
- 2. My boundaries are specific and clear: "I don't accept phone calls after 10 p.m.," rather than the vague and mushy: "Don't call me too late."
- 3. I'm consistent when I create boundaries. If I say "no phone calls after 10 p.m.," I don't make exceptions unless the situation is exceptional.
- 4. When people attempt to cross my boundaries, I don't assume the worst (they don't care, they weren't paying attention, they're selfish and inconsiderate); I simply restate my position.
- 5. As soon as I realize I'm in a situation that might be headed for trouble, I quietly announce my boundary: "I won't continue talking with you if you raise your voice at me."
- 6. I try to avoid situations and people where I know my boundaries will be continually tested.
- 7. I don't take responsibility for how others respond to my boundaries. If someone feels resentment because I didn't wait when she was 20 minutes late for our appointment, I don't try to make it okay for her.
- 8. I respect others' boundaries and ask for clarification when I'm not certain of limits. "May I talk to you about business after hours?"
- 9. When people refuse to respect my boundaries, I walk away rather than get into a situation that could escalate. I say why I'm leaving.
- 10. I let people know when I have reconsidered a boundary. "It used to be okay for you to be late, but now..."
- 11. I believe that everyone has to create his or her own boundaries. What's okay for me might not work for someone else.

Boundaries held firm can help make life easier, reduce conflict and improve relationships. Plus, they're a real self-esteem booster. If you answered true to fewer than six of these questions, you might need some help with boundaries. Please don't hesitate to call. *

The Do's and Don'ts of Dating After Divorce

Angie is 47 and recently divorced. She married her high school sweetheart and hasn't been on a date in 25 years. Toward the end of her marriage, there certainly weren't a lot of romantic sparks, so she feels completely out of touch with her sensual side. She's dabbled in online dating and been on a few fix-ups, but couldn't enjoy herself. She felt so nervous about doing or saying the wrong thing, she was convinced she would never get a second date. Her low self-esteem showed, and she wasn't able to make a strong connection with anyone.



Whether you're male or female, if you can relate to Angie's struggles with dating after divorce, try these tips to dip a toe back into the dating pool. Before you know it, you may be diving right in.

DO Explore Your Playful Side

After divorce, your self-confidence may be low and you may not feel attractive. A great way to reawaken your senses is to explore your playfulness. Put yourself out there, engage with your social network in a light way. Focus on eye contact and open body language. Laugh readily and re-learn how to have fun.

Boost your confidence by making an extra effort with your appearance. Most of all, think of this as an experiment and the whole world as your laboratory.

DO Leave Your Baggage at the Door

Approach each new person as a beginning. Don't ignore warning signs (see below), but do take the time to find out who someone really is.

Focus your attention and conversation on your own interests and the positive aspects of your life. Avoid talking about the divorce or your ex.

DO Use Your Common Sense and Be Safe

Find out as much as you can about the person before you meet. Plan a short, daytime meeting for your first date, and arrange for your own transportation. If anything about the person or the date makes you uncomfortable, cut it short and move on.

DON'T Ignore Red Flags or Warning Signs

If your self-confidence is low you might think you don't deserve a fulfilling relationship or that you

won't be lucky enough to find someone who likes you. Don't let those feelings gloss over any red flags about a new romantic interest.

If you find yourself thinking, "Well, I guess I can live with that," or "I can change him/her," stop and consider whether you would want to be with that person exactly as he or she is. Remember, those traits will only be amplified as that person becomes more comfortable with you.

DON'T Take Everything Too Seriously

Don't put too much importance on any one date (especially at the beginning). Focus on having fun and deciding if you like this person enough to get to know him or her better.

DON'T Involve Children Too Quickly

Don't introduce your children right away. Of course you shouldn't keep them a secret, and you can answer any questions honestly, but focus more on who you are as an individual and how the two of you might fit. If there's no fit, the rest won't matter.

How to Meet Someone New

1. Follow your interests. Volunteer or take a class. You'll make new contacts in a circle of people who share common interests and values. Plus, you may add fulfillment and purpose to your own life while helping your community.

2. Ask for referrals. Let family and friends know that you're dating. An introduction from someone you both know doesn't guarantee a fit, but it takes away some of the risk, and there's greater potential that you'll have something in common—if only the person who

introduced you!

3. Go online. There are plenty of websites—free and for a fee—specifically for dating. Or, explore your shared interests with people on other sites. This can lead to new friends who could be potential romantic partners or introduce you to one.

This is an exciting time, and you're bound to have some fears. But if you keep things light and use these experiments as a way to improve your fun-loving abilities, dating after divorce may just be your next great adventure. *



THINGS TO SAY TO YOUR PARTNER

Too often, communication between long-term couples can devolve into the logistics of life: Can you pick up the dry cleaning? Did you take out the trash? Loving relationships need—and deserve—so much more. Deeper communication may require an intentional shift or willingness to expose vulnerability. But isn't your happiness—and your relationship—worth the risk? Here are some ways to begin:

Thank you for... Everyone likes to be acknowledged and appreciated for what they do. Thank your partner for more than just what you asked him/her to do. For example, you might thank him or her for being a great parent, for always making time for the children.

Would you please... Expecting your partner to read your mind is expecting the impossible. Say what you want and need.



When you articulate your wishes clearly, resentments don't have time to build up, and you can also work together to find win-win solutions.

How do you feel about... Ask, and then listen to your partner's response, withholding judgment or any need to change or fix the feelings.

I feel... State your feelings and tell the truth. Notice the difference between "I think" and "I feel" statements.

I'm sorry... Admit your mistakes and apologize for them. You may feel vulnerable, but your honesty is likely to inspire the same in your partner and open the door for closer connection.

I forgive you... Accepting apologies for mistakes your partner makes is a way of letting go of resentments, and that frees you both.

I appreciate your... Shine the light on your partner's qualities. You'll create an arena of goodwill that shines back on you.

What I hear you saying... Listen, really listen, and let your partner know he/she has been heard.

I agree with you because... Validating your partner's point of view and perspective helps him/her feel heard and understood.

What are you reading? Open up communication on an intellectual level and you may feel the warmth of common views—or sparks of difference—that drew you together in the first place.

Where do you see yourself in five years? Listen to your partner's vision, and then share your own. The question may inspire a new, shared plan or uncover the need to build a bridge between your dreams.

I love you... Find your own variations on the words; you can't say them too often. *

Marino E. Carbonell is a licensed psychotherapist specializing in the field of addiction treatment for the adolescent and adult population. He maintains a private practice in Miami, Florida. Dr. Carbonell has vast community involvement and has served as consultant to several private schools in South Florida. He travels locally to public and private schools lecturing about the symptoms and consequences of substance and alcohol abuse to students and parents. He is a member of the advisory board of directors of Informed Families and recently received the Special Speakers Recognition Award. Additionally, he has written extensively about the subject of addiction and cognitive moral development in young adults.

www.marinoarbonell.com

Miami, Florida 33155
7344 SW 48 Street, Suite 104
MARINO E. CARBONELL, ED.D., LMHC, CAP, ICADC