



Northwest Frontier

**ATTC**

Unifying science, education  
and services to transform lives.

# Addiction Messenger

SERIES 34 - April 2009 Volume 12, Issue 4

Ideas for Treatment Improvement

## Conflict Management

### Part 1 - Becoming Mindful of Our Words

This article begins a series on useful methods and tools for helping clients develop better conflict resolution skills. Much of the material has been taken directly from two new publications recently released by NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals. Developed by Cynthia Moreno Tuohy, the *Conflict Resolution Trainer's Manual* and a companion *Participant Workbook* present a skilled-based approach to conflict management that features talking points, exercises, role plays, and tips for handling difficult situations. Information featured in this series of articles will highlight:

- Strategies for healthy communication
- A model for improving impulse control in daily interactions
- Skills for conflict resolution and communication
- Stages of relationships and how they relate to conflict
- How wounds from past relationships contribute to the way we respond to conflict today.

#### Conflict and the Brain

The **limbic system** is the oldest part of the brain, dating back to the origin of the human species. Its primary function was to react to the environment and featured a fight or flight response. These two responses are still the reactions we commonly see during conflict or stressful situations today. Consider your reaction to tension-filled interactions. Can words alone elicit a fight or flight response? Indeed they can. Here are some examples:

*"Don't you ever do that to me again!"*

- What is your reaction to reading or hearing those words?
- What was your first inclination?

*"I like your work—but your client progress notes...!"*

- Again, what was your reaction?
- What was your first impulse?

What happens after we use the word "but"? The thoughts shared before that point are forgotten or diminished. Our attention goes to the words after the "but". The word "but" can elicit a negative reaction in a conversation and alter a person's personal thoughts. What if the "but" were changed to "and"? For example, "I like your work **and** how you've improved your writing in

*"You can't shake  
hands with a  
clenched fist."*

~ Indira Gandhi (1917 – 84) ~

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your progress notes. I know of a workshop that can offer you some additional useful tips that could make your writing even better”

The intention in the first example was to make the person understand, quite directly, that his/her skills in writing client progress notes were in need of improvement. The point could have been conveyed more effectively by making an affirmative comment and giving a helpful hint for the person to consider. Ultimately, change is the responsibility of the individual, and it's more likely that the person will “hear” what you are saying if you put it in a context so that the individual can hear it and decide what to do with the information.

How might the following words create a negative reaction in a conversation or in a client's own personal thoughts?

- How???
- Always...
- You'd better ...
- Never....
- Should...
- But!
- If you ever ...
- Won't...

**The cortex** is an area of the brain that enables us to solve problems, make judgments and decisions, be creative, and make discoveries. It is more fully advanced and less instinctual than the limbic system. Because of the cortex we can learn to be mindful of what we are about to say, the way we say it (tone and inflection), and the body language we use (for example, gestures, turns of the head, body movements). It is also the part of the brain that enables us to respond positively to options. When we use words that trigger a limbic system response, we are not usually presenting the responder with options. When we hear options it engages our cortex. When we use words and phrases such as: “I believe”, “often”, “consider”, “I wonder”, “I would like”, and “let's discover” it helps the listener to think through the ideas or options being presented.

Engaging our cortex usually requires more time and words at the beginning of a conversation, and less words and time on the other end. When we initiate a conversation with an agreement to listen, rather than giving orders or making demands it tends to engage the other person. When we have suggestions it is important to be sensitive and prepared to NOT share ideas if the other person is not ready or invested in hearing them.

Our cortex helps us learn impulse control, decision making skills, information gathering, judgment, and reasoning. It makes it possible for us to develop maturity, and integrate skills, behaviors, thoughts and beliefs.

### Conflict Management Skills

A helpful skill for clients to learn and develop is the ability to “stand still in the moment”. In standing still in the moment, they can learn to stop or slow down their thoughts and action by asking themselves three questions:

- Is what I am about to say (words and phrases) *and* the way I am going to say it (tone, inflection, and gestures) going to build the relationship up?
- Is it going to keep the relationship level?
- Is it going to tear the relationship down?

We all have choices to make as to how we speak and the words, tones, and gestures we use. We can probably predict the outcome of a conversation when our responses come out of the limbic brain, or if we “go limbic” on someone. It is also more likely that a person will remain calmer and more able to think through options if they are spoken to in a manner that engages their cortex brain.

We maintain an emotional bank account with people in our lives. Depending on the person and relationship a person might think they have a great amount of reserves in that account, yet any time we emotionally harm and/or don't take the time to repair the damage done from a conversation when misunderstanding, hostility, or anger has erupted, the reserve in that person's emotional bank account has probably been lowered. People can lose their tolerance for another's behaviors when the emotional bank account is low.

It's important to consider your account levels with the people close to you. We tend to automatically take from those accounts without thinking, even if the accounts are low. In times of stress, a full emotional bank account can provide a lot of good will. If you have not been thoughtful or you have not replenished the account, your emotional bank account will be low.

In crisis situations it's not unusual for people to learn to make haste or react quickly. Afterwards, people often have to clean up the damage done by hasty words and behaviors. Using the cortex teaches us how to think through a situation, stop ourselves,

and ask. "Is what I am going to say and the way in which I am going to say it going to build the relationship up, keep it level, or tear it down?"

When people use phrases like "Thank you," "Please," "I am sorry," and "I did not intend to ..." when communicating does it give them more power to communicate or does it diminish their power? When working with clients you can ask if they've heard or used some of the following words in conversations they've had. You can invite them to share some of their experiences and the reactions they elicited from others.

- I believe...
- I would like...
- I wonder...
- Often...
- Let's discover...
- Consider...

You might ask clients how considering their word choices might impact others (for example, work colleagues, family, and friends).

Clients can learn to develop and build improved relationships by:

- Developing and enhancing their ability to communicate with another person without judgment,
- Taking time to discover the needs or perceptions of others,
- Learning the value of not pushing, manipulating or forcing another person in order to get their own way, and
- Enhancing their ability to sense when they themselves or others are about to "go limbic".
- Clients may also benefit from discussing how they've reacted to or handled difficult situations in the past:
  - Is it usual for them to tolerate poor behavior until they feel like "exploding"?
  - Are they aware when they're being manipulated or are manipulating others to do something they really do not want to do?
  - Have they acquiesced to others due to a fear of the consequences or anger from the other person?

Clients can develop skills to remind themselves to use deliberate words or phrases in their

conversations and relationships through:

- Being sensitive to their own level of anger or passion in stressful situations,
- Remembering to ask themselves if their goal is to build, keep level, or tear down the relationships they're involved in,
- Being aware of how they would feel if the angry words they're about to use with another were directed at them instead.
- Writing the cortex-engaging words on their hand (or sheet of paper, sticky note) and practice saying and using them.

For information regarding the purchase of the trainer's manual and participant workbook, and/or being trained to present a course on conflict management contact Cynthia Moreno Tuohy at (800)-548-0497, ext. 119 or [cmoreno@naadac.org](mailto:cmoreno@naadac.org).

### Earn Continuing Education Hours

by reading the Addiction Messenger.

Visit our website at: [http://www.attcnetwork.org/regcenters/index\\_northwestfrontier.asp](http://www.attcnetwork.org/regcenters/index_northwestfrontier.asp) or contact [bryanm@ohsu.edu](mailto:bryanm@ohsu.edu)

### Sources

Conflict Resolution in Recovery - Trainer's Manual  
Downloaded from the World Wide Web on May 5, 2009 at [http://www.naadac.org/index.php?option=com\\_oscommerce&Itemid=79](http://www.naadac.org/index.php?option=com_oscommerce&Itemid=79)

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Send an e-mail to [bryanm@ohsu.edu](mailto:bryanm@ohsu.edu) to be put on the AM mail or e-mail list or visit our website at <http://www.attcnetwork.org/regcenters/subscriptions.asp?rcid=10&content=SUBSCRIBE> to subscribe.

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*The Northwest Institute of Addictions Studies & the  
Addiction Studies Program at Lewis & Clark College*

*present*

**Recovery in Practice: Tools for Success  
July 22 - 24, 2009**

With presenters:

Lisa Najavits            Bill Fals Stewart  
Bonnie Badenoch    Ken Winters  
Steve Martino        Dennis Daley

*Monarch Hotel and Conference Center, Clackamas, Oregon*

For more details visit our websites after February 25:

**[nwias.org](http://nwias.org) or [lclark.edu/dept/ccps](http://lclark.edu/dept/ccps)**

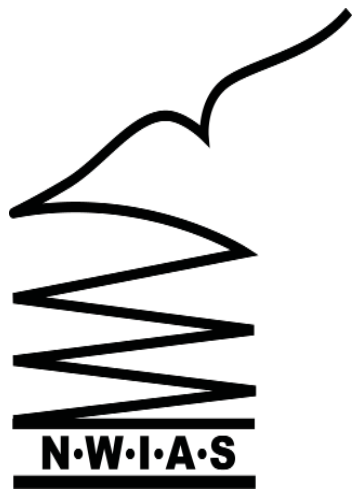
Watch for conference information in the  
ACCBO Newsletter & Addiction Messenger



# Recovery in Practice: Tools for Success

July 22 - July 24, 2009

Monarch Hotel and Conference Center  
Clackamas, Oregon



## Northwest Institute of Addictions Studies

in partnership with  
The Addiction Studies  
Program at the Graduate School  
of Education and Counseling,  
Lewis & Clark

with support from  
DHS Addictions and Mental Health,  
Problem Gambling Services,  
Oregon Department of Corrections,  
and Northwest Frontier ATTC.

*For full workshop descriptions  
go to:*

*[lclark.edu/~ccps/nwais/index.html](http://lclark.edu/~ccps/nwais/index.html)*

*To register: see reverse*

## Wednesday, July 22

**Plenary: Learning Sobriety Together: Marital & Family Treatment for Addictions**

**Bill Fals-Stewart, University of Rochester, School of Nursing  
Breakout Sessions**

- Learning Sobriety Together: Bill Fals-Stewart
- Motivational Interviewing with Dually Diagnosed Patients: Steve Martino
- Group Motivational Interviewing with Dually Diagnosed Patients: Steve Martino
- Gender-Responsive Treatment for Adolescent Girls with Substance Use Problems: Fred Dyer
- Sirens' Song: Empowering Women to Get Out of the Sex Industry: Stephanie Schaefer
- Treating Eating Disorders in Clients with Comorbid Substance Use Disorders: Rebecca Seifert

## Thursday, July 23

**Plenary: The Mindful Road to Recovery: The Neurobiology of Addiction and Regulation**

**Bonnie Badenoch, Center for Brain-Wise Living  
Breakout Sessions**

- Treating Sex & Internet Addiction: Dean Charles
- Placing Mindfulness at the Heart of Treatment: Addiction, Attachment, and a Path to Regulation: Bonnie Badenoch
- Double Recovery: Integrated Treatment for Clients with Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders: Dennis Daley
- Strategies for Reducing HIV Risk: Fransing Daisy
- MOSAIC or Melting Pot?: Using Evidence-Based Cultural Diversity Practices in Addictions Treatment: Deborah Haskins
- Clinical Issues in Assessing and Treating Problem Gambling: Ken Winters
- Effective Evidence-Based Relapse Prevention with Adolescents: Fred Dyer

## Friday, July 24

**Plenary: Habits of Highly Effective Counselors who Treat Drug Abusing Adolescents**

**Ken Winters, University of Minnesota-Fairview  
Breakout Sessions**

- Adolescent Treatment: Clinical Strategies and Approaches: Ken Winters
- Seeking Safety: A Present-Focused Treatment Model for Trauma and Substance Abuse: Lisa Najavits
- A Past-Focused Treatment Model for Trauma and Substance Abuse: Lisa Najavits
- Establishing and Maintaining Healthy Boundries: Ross Ginkel
- Treating Families Struggling with Addiction & Bipolar Disorder: Marvin Clifford
- Dealing with Codependency in Addictions Treatment: Dennis Henderson
- Mr. Rogers Neighborhood or Texas Holdem Neighborhood?:  
The Changing Neighborhood of Problem Gamblers and Problem Gambling Counseling: Deborah Haskins
- How to Weather the Downturn: Keeping your Agency Viable by NFATTC

# 2009 NWIAS Conference Registration

## Fees:

### Early Registration Prior to July 8, 2009

\$235 - Three day conference, 18 CEUs

\$125 - Single-day, 6 CEUs

Agency Discount: \$210 per person for three or more individuals from the same agency registering at the same time.

### Late Registration After July 8, 2009

\$250 - Three day conference, 18 CEUs

\$135 - Single-day, 6 CEUs

Agency Discount: \$225 per person for three or more individuals from the same agency registering at the same time.

## Register by mail or fax:

Center for Community Engagement and Professional Studies

Lewis & Clark, MSC 85

0615 S.W. Palatine Hill Road

Portland, Oregon 97219-7899

Fax: 503-768-6045

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

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Employer/Agency \_\_\_\_\_

## Payment Options

Check enclosed (Make payable to Lewis & Clark)

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The Monarch Hotel offers a special conference rate. Call 1-800-492-8700 for reservations, use the special conference code NWIAS.

\$111 per night, the reservation deadline is **June 19**.

If you require a special accomodation or have dietary restrictions please contact our office.

## Select the workshops you will attend.

Please choose Option 1, full day seminar **or** Option 2, two half day seminars, for each day you are attending. Go to [lclark.edu/~ccps/nwais/index.html](http://lclark.edu/~ccps/nwais/index.html) to see detailed descriptions of each session.

Check in opens at 7:45 a.m. each day

## WEDNESDAY, JULY 22

Plenary: 8:45-9:45 a.m.

*Learning Sobriety Together*

*Fals-Stewart*

**Option 1:** One all day session 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_ *Learning Sobriety Together*

Fals-Stewart

\_\_\_\_\_ *Gender Responsive Adolescent Tx*

Dyer

**Option 2:** Select one AM and one PM workshop

Morning 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_ *Helping Women Get out of the Sex Industry*

Schaefer

\_\_\_\_\_ *Motivational Interviewing with DDx Clients*

Martino

Afternoon 1:30-4:30 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_ *Treating Eating Disorders*

Seifert

\_\_\_\_\_ *Group Motivational Interviewing with DDx Clients* Martino

## THURSDAY, JULY 23

Plenary: 8:45-9:45 a.m.

*The Mindful Road to Recovery*

*Badenoch*

**Option 1:** One all day session 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_ *Double Recovery: Integrated Tx for Clients*

Daley

\_\_\_\_\_ *Issues in Assessing & Treating Problem Gambling*

Winters

\_\_\_\_\_ *Effective Evidence-Based Relapse Prevention*

Dyer

**Option 2:** Select one AM and one PM workshop

Morning 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_ *Treating Sex & Internet Addiction*

Charles

\_\_\_\_\_ *Strategies for Reducing HIV Risk*

Daisy

Afternoon 1:30-4:30 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_ *Placing Mindfulness at the Heart of Tx*

Badenoch

\_\_\_\_\_ *MOSAIC or Melting Pot?: Using Evidence-Based Cultural Diversity Practices*

Haskins

## FRIDAY, JULY 24

Plenary: 8:45-9:45 a.m.

*Habits of Highly Effective Counselors*

*Winters*

**Option I:** One all day session 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_ *The Changing Neighborhood of Problem Gamblers and Problem Gambling Counseling*

Haskins

\_\_\_\_\_ *How to Weather the Downturn*

NFATTC

**Option 2:** Select one AM and one PM workshop

Morning 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_ *Adolescent Tx: Clinical Strategies & Approaches*

Winters

\_\_\_\_\_ *A Past-Focused Tx Model for Trauma Abuse*

Najavits

\_\_\_\_\_ *Establishing & Maintaining Healthy Boundries*

Ginkel

Afternoon 1:30-4:30 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_ *Family Tx Struggling with Addictions & Bipolar*

Clifford

\_\_\_\_\_ *Seeking Safety: A Present-Focused Tx Model*

Najavits

\_\_\_\_\_ *Dealing with Codependency in Addictions Tx*

Hendersen

**For more information: [lclark.edu/dept/ccps](http://lclark.edu/dept/ccps)  
or call 503-768-6040**