



## WORKSHOP FOR PROGRESS AND GROWTH IN SOBRIETY

The first steps in recovery include seeking help and stopping the use of alcohol and/or drugs, but they are just the start of a longer journey. Along the way, many individuals encounter sticking points in recovery that have their origins in old patterns of thinking or behavior. These areas of resistance and defensiveness keep us from growing in recovery and can lead to relapse.

While these problem patterns manifest differently in each person, they can be identified generally. Some behaviors and reactions that set back our personal growth in recovery include avoidance, denial, minimizing, rationalizing, and blaming. The roots of these problem patterns extend deep in the history of our addiction and continue to spread if not addressed. Here is an example:

John is a lawyer in a medium-sized firm. His drinking began in college and continued through law school. He still managed to get good grades and pass the bar exam. John got married and had two children. He drank frequently, usually after work or in the evening. As time went on, he realized that his drinking was damaging his relationship with his family. He was angry and impatient at home. John felt his drinking did not affect his work, although he knew that some mornings he was not functioning at his best level because of a hangover. At the urging of his wife, John visited a counselor who suggested he attend an outpatient treatment program. After ten months of sobriety, John feels better now that he is not drinking. However, his frequent comment that his problem "wasn't so bad" indicates that John is stuck in a pattern of **minimizing**. As time goes on, he cuts back on recovery meetings, reminding himself, "It wasn't so bad." When his aftercare group discusses the challenges that occur during the first holiday season in recovery, John thinks, "I don't need to worry about that." He even keeps beer and wine at home to be "hospitable." One night, after dealing with a cantankerous client, John sees the alcohol and thinks, "I could have one beer. After all, my problem was never *that* bad." John's relapse began with an old pattern of thinking.

Fortunately, these sticking points don't have to become major obstacles. Once identified, problem solving can begin by clarifying the pattern, recognizing how it manifests in one's life, and developing healthier and more rewarding ways of thinking and acting.

To assist with this process, the OAAP will facilitate a ten-week workshop in Portland to identify, examine, and challenge the patterns that keep us from growing in recovery. The workshop, based on a model designed by Terence T. Gorski, will be facilitated by Meloney Crawford Chadwick, JD, CADC III. If you are interested, call Meloney Crawford Chadwick at 503-226-1057. The workshop is limited to ten participants and will start in January.