The Healing Power of Laughter

“Laughter is the shortest distance between two people”
~Victor Borge, Danish Humorist and Musician

“Laughter gives us distance. It allows us to step back from an event, deal with it and then move on”
~Bob Newhart, American Comedian and Actor

Whole-hearted laughter teaches love, inspires hope, preaches tolerance and encourages contact and communication. True humor inspires true humanity, or to put it another way, "when people are laughing, they're generally not killing one another"- Alan Alda. Whole-hearted laughter is a re-creation, a celebration, a creative impulse that encourages us to take the moment playfully. Laughter can transform an ordinary moment into something extraordinary; it can energize us and optimise us; it can conjure up a blessing from any burden. Most importantly, laughter can heal us not only in a spiritual way, but also in a physical way.

The Road to Recovery

The Road to Recovery is not easy, but it also doesn’t have to be impossibly hard. Treatment Centers provide that all too crucial assistance during those trying beginning steps where it can be so easy to tumble back into the depths of addiction. Treatment Centers and Sober Living Facilities help the recovering addict learn that hope for a new life is not only possible but very attainable.

Hope After the Pain

Upon completion of treatment and given the right amount of time in recovery, many addicts can look back upon the past with a healthy sense of humor and see that even in the darkest of times they can find moments that they can laugh about. Finding something funny about the past is not malicious and is not disrespectful of the pain and suffering that the addict goes through. Instead, the humor that comes from mistakes of the past help to heal those deep wounds; to understand and move on with life. Everyone has heard the saying, “some day we’ll be able to laugh about this” and “tragedy plus time equals comedy”. We all intrinsically know that when the laughter has begun so has the healing process.
The Physical Benefits of Laughter

Laughter releases endorphins and appear to reduce serum levels of cortisol, dopac, adrenaline and growth hormone, thereby creating a reverse effect to the classical hormone response during times of stress. Both physically and psychologically, it is as if laughter acts as a “safety valve” for the discharge of nervous energy. Laughter can help us to wipe the slate clean in that it can inspire a fresh perception, a new way of thinking, a change of belief, and the revelation of previously unimagined possibilities. Laughter is also a good antidote for the over-seriousness that swells during times of stress and anxiety. Over-seriousness blows up problems; laughter blows them away! The psychologist, Alan Watts, once wrote, “The whole art of life is knowing how to transform anxiety into laughter.”

The Story of Laughter as a Teaching Tool

Why is it so hard to remember the 14th digit of Pi, but so easy to remember a joke that you heard at the office the other day? Stories can make learning more effective, more memorable, as true learning requires interest which abstract principles and impersonal procedures rarely provide. Stories provide a living, breathing example of how to do something rather than telling people what to do, hence people are more open to their lessons. Stories therefore often lead to direct action and can help someone to move from knowing something to actually doing it. Making a story funny increases the interest level of that story. A comedian in recovery recounting funny stories about their past addictions can inspire the newly clean and sober. The simple act of seeing a comedy show is powerful proof that living a life without substance abuse is not only possible but can actually be fun.

Getting Involved

All the comedians at Recovery Comedy are actually in recovery. They are talented funny individuals who have actually been through the pain of addiction and the freedom of recovery that many of your clients have gone through or are going through. The comedians at Recovery Comedy have funny material about what it was like when they were an active addict and how they found a way out through recovery. They are inspirational and accessible. Real individuals who not only love to perform, but also want to connect with the audience after a show. Recovery Comedy provides hilarious, compassionate shows about the struggles with addiction as only an addict is able to relate. We want you to have us come to your facility and entertain you.
Conclusion

Using comedy in recovery gives the person in recovery a look at a new possibility of life without drugs and alcohol and through the artform of comedy inspires an audience to hold their recovery sacred.

“At the height of laughter, the universe is flung into a kaleidoscope of new possibilities.”
~Jean Houston, American Scholar, Lecturer, Author and Philosopher

Learning More

To learn more about having a Recovery Comedy Show at your next alumni event or fundraiser please check out our featured comedians page or contact us at rich@recoverycomedy.com or 415.317.6030