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Creating hope: The key to effective addiction treatment

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Abstract

In addiction treatment, we talk a great deal about powerlessness, disease, and the terrible odds any individual addict faces in achieving long-term sobriety. We dwell on death far more than on hope –yet hope is perhaps the most critical element an addict can have or be given to create fertile ground for recovery.

What are the factors needed to create hope in the hopeless, particularly for addicts who most often are chief among those in despair? How can vulnerability and shame be used to create truth and courage? What role do stories have in recovery and how can storytelling both in and out of psychotherapy and self-help groups -be used to build feelings of hope, belief in the "impossible," and desire for recovery and a transformed life in addicts? Is there a role for psychotherapists and other healing professionals to play in developing hope among addicts, or is this area for spiritual advisors only? What is the relationship between hope and gratitude, and how does gratitude bolster hopefulness in times of trial?

This presentation will both answer these questions and outline methods for creating hope as a foundation for meaningful addiction treatment and lasting recovery.

Biography

Constance Scharff has a Ph.D. in Transformative Studies, specializing in addiction recovery. She is the Addiction Researcher and Transformative Studies Scholar at Cliffside Malibu Treatment Center and coauthor of the best-selling book, *Ending Addiction for Good* with Richard Taite. Her analysis of integrated, holistic addiction recovery methods is being heralded as "groundbreaking" and "life saving." Dr. Scharff writes for a variety of journals and speaks worldwide to healing professionals on the science and spirituality of addiction recovery –from the neuroscience of addiction recovery and depression and trauma as related to addiction, to the concepts of vulnerability and hope. She has also traveled extensively in Asia, Africa, and North America, learning how to help individuals evoke life-transforming experiences and use those experiences to heal addictions and trauma.