

R.E.A.L.I.T.Y.

(Renewing Entire Attitude to Life and Individually Transforming You)

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Preface

For quite some time now, it has been standard practice in the clinical profession to offer two-week or fourteen-day programs for habit wishing to escape their entrapment. The federal government has silently nodded its head and sanctioned courts to this rather ludicrous view and have in fact accounted for the vast majority of participants entering, leaving and re-entering the programs. For instance, courts such as the Somerville, MA courts have accounted for the many referrals facilities such as Worcester's Community Healthlink have treated. All this information is much to the amazing (relative) silence of the communication profession. In the somewhat intense political climate and the ever-heated debate surrounding healthcare and use of taxpayer monies, the debate surrounding health care and treatment for habit abusive persons has increased as well. Many outside the healthcare profession have challenged the government and the industry itself on the feasibility of the period of detoxification that many have been allotted and of course the incredible number of participants that return time and again.

Numerous non-profits and non-governmental agencies around the globe have argued that there is no logic and no sense in a compressed treatment design that merely covers festered and continually festering sores. That is the same position this paper aligns itself with and seeks to illustrate. In fact this paper will ultimately present to you, the reader, a proposed format or design that serves to illustrate how the many issues that abusers face are directly related to communication, or lack thereof. It maintains that in facilitating communication with others and with oneself, one (namely the abuser) can make his or her way to full recovery and to reconstructing of his or her life. The design is named

REALITY (Renewing Entire Attitude to Life Individually Transforming You) and is based on the premise that through provision of communication lines to the abuser, self-esteem and self-worth are found and the mind is ultimately renewed through a transformation that is emotional, spiritual and bio-physical (Parham, 1997).

Introduction

REALITY is a program specifically designed and tailored to habit and behavioral control units in hospital settings as well as halfway houses. It is designed to use communication as its core. That is to say, it operates on the premise that much of the chemical abuse that is found in both the homeless and otherwise population is a result of a malfunction in communication between individuals and their surroundings. REALITY employs communication in varying forms to facilitate a healing process that can be maintained for more than a few hours or days. The success of the program does require more than one moderator depending on the number in attendance and its defining characteristic can be found in the way it breaks down its treatment processes (Rothschild, Marcus A. MD ed).

Objective

REALITY mission is to equip each participant with the skills with which to care for his/her psychological and physical well-being. To aide in identifying why, engaging through the tackling of issues and understanding the solutions.

REALITY does not in anyway attempt to “pump-‘n-dump”. It gives each person a clear picture of the world they are stepping out into and offers her ways in which to deal with the REALITY of the world and society.

Method

The program is three-pronged: *identification, engagement* and *reality check*. Again, in all these phases communication is the driving force. It is no secret that large groups tend to hamper effective conversation. As such REALITY breaks down a larger group (which can be up to sixty persons) into smaller groups of no more than seven people. Groups are to actively discuss with one another and with the class as a whole. Facilitators encourage each group to propose solutions to each other thereby solving the problems themselves. The objective here is to encourage an environment in which - even if for a brief moment - the intimidation of a larger group is eliminated and therefore individuals are able to open up to one another talking about issues that many think to be only their own. They walk away empowered and with some a sense of self-control over their lives along with a different way of thinking through and addressing what is beyond the walls they are presently sitting in.

Now one might argue the health of opening up to one another: that it is not ideal for a patient seeking help to assist another in the same situation. If a physician needs another physician or a therapist a fellow therapist in order that health and objectivity be maintained, why is it so far fetched that a person might need another's help in overcoming any obstacle, be it physical or otherwise? In fact it has been proven time and again that when dealing with the emotional, teaming up with those that are attempting to overcome the same or similar tendencies can speed up the healing process. The reason is that when one is under emotional strain, it seems he/she is the only one in that position. It is a major discovery when another shares the same; therefore, experience is always preferable to book learning! This is how support groups and friendships are formulated

and at the very least, a different thinking pattern is created in the individual that allows them to see other alternatives to dealing with “the” problem (besides habit). All Mending Broken Spirits (MBS)¹ and REALITY are doing is to reinstate a tradition lost to migration and modernity: **talking things out** ((Parham, 1997).

(See attachment A)

IDENTIFICATION

This can also be referred to as phase one. Identifying the problem is indeed noble yet more grand is identifying the source of the problem. It is common knowledge – or at least common sense – that most abusers become such as a result of personal issues. They do not become addicts overnight! Rather, their “hesitating steps down the path quickened to a run.” (Harris, Joshua) In other words, it was not abuse before it was abuse; therefore what was there before the run? What factors to and perpetuated the habit dependency? Many intricate issues involved in habit have been overlooked in favor of science and technology. Unfortunately white walls, straightjackets and morose faces cannot ensure prolonged recovery. REALITY looks at how each participant arrived at their current destination. These are called the “Why’s:

- Family has problems (personal and/or financial)
- Fired from the job
- Expelled from school
- “Somebody I cared about moved away or died”
- “We keep movin’ so I can’t make friends”
- “ I can’t find a job”

¹ Mending Broken Spirits is a division of Skills Group Inc. under which REALITY came into being.

- Retired from the job “ I feel useless”
- “Other people have it better because of their color”
- “I’ve been through awful things that I can’t get over”

It is absolutely crucial that this phase take place if REALITY is to have any sort of impact on its participants. It is at this stage that REALITY ensures that the detoxification process does not become a mere cover-up that will result in increased percentages in re-entries.

ENGAGEMENT

The second phase is one in which facilitators take communication of problems one-step further. It is no good to identify a problem but not engage it. At this point REALITY moves participants out of the “discovery zone” (i.e. out of discovering that they are not the only ones with a problem or with a particular issue). Still in their groups of seven or less, they are encouraged to embrace each other’s topics in the form of a discussion. The idea behind this stage is to create a viable and relatively validated basis for proposing solutions to each other.

In facilitating this stage it is imperative that four main points be made very clear through the discussions. They are:

- Stop making excuses
- Come out of denial
- Make a self-inventory
- Enter into accountability

These points may seem rather harsh at first glance; however, they tend to have a sobering effect. However sympathetic and empathetic staff might be, we do them no good in having them leave the clinical facilities with false concepts of what awaits them beyond the security of the white walls. The world in which they will be released into is high tech and demands independence. This translates into a society that has no time for excuses, delusions and lack of accountability for one's actions... even the law itself demands that of its citizens. This phase aims to help each participant in embracing and talking through the problem until a solution is reached and degrees of liability realized, which for many of the participants, is something they have never attempted to do (Frocheska, J., DiClemente, L. and Norcross J.). Allowing them to tackle their issues independently and within micro-groups one finds that:

- They feel that someone cares enough to spend time on them.
- They deal with wounds that were covered up in the past.
- They are able to start cleaning up the festered sores and are able to see more clearly where the problem lies.

REALITY CHECK

In this third and final stage, the REALITY program seeks to continue the introduction of a realistic view of the “new world” that the each participant is about to step out into. It is at this stage that participants are entering equipped with the skills with which to identify their potential skill levels. The idea here is not to send people out with false concepts of what is out there after fourteen days of being “hyped up.” It is also at this stage that participants are equipped with the means with which to support themselves and each other.

As they leave, they are permitted to take with them the program booklet as a way of reminding themselves of the issues they discussed in the seminars and the obstacles they had already identified in the course of talking with their peers. In their booklet they would have also noted possible solutions, commitments and designed their own guide to long-term recovery.

They will have worked to reorganize and rebalance one's life and one's priorities:

- Civically – G.E.D
- Culturally – Time Management
- Domestically – Adult Basic Education
- Intellectually – Job Readiness, Interviewing Skills, Resume Preparation
- Morally – Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation
- Physically – Computer Skills
- Practically – Post Program Employment Support Services
- Realistically – Self-Perception
- Spiritually – Motivational/Inspirational
- Socially – Family Preservation
- Vocationally – Preparing and Organizing for Work
- Worldly – Evaluating Your Job Skills

(See attachment B)

CONCLUSION

A defining characteristic of REALITY is its hands-on nature all the way from the booklet to the discussion groups and to the post-treatment options. MBS offers a practical program that allows for self-evaluation and does not conceal the true nature of the

situation. It is a program that restores an individual's trust in God and self in addition to empowering through a realistic view of the world in which each participant lives.

In addition, the participants of this program are always given the option to continue with MBS and Skills Group Inc. as they progress on their sobriety path (Hammond, Rovert).

There are employment options available to them within MBS and within other agencies in partnership with MBS and in the city of Worcester. This is to combat the grand issue of idle time that leads to regressions. Each man and woman leaves with a certificate of completion, a visible and tangible record of achievement/accomplishment that propels them to strive for more.

REALITY truly is unique and has the potential to revolutionize the strictly factual designs that have been used for decades to treat habit. The debates surrounding religion and spirituality have done more damage to people than the drugs themselves. REALITY does not pound any one with any one doctrine, but it does emphasize the fact that each person is a spiritual being and based on that, experiences more than science can ascertain with the use of chemicals. "How do you suffer your people ill educated with no choice but to steal, and then punish them? What is to be said, sire, but that you first make thieves and then punish them?" as Sir Thomas Moore once stated in his book *Utopia*.

(See attachment C)

Many of society's greatest problems have a foundation in behavioral issues. The most fundamental answers to many issues—poor schools, violence in the streets, unhealthy behaviors, safety are in the behavioral. We don't purport to be able to solve all of the planets problems in a decade. What we hope to do is to provide a foundation from which

those problem can begin to be addressed. I don't thin we can yet imagine all the opportunities that will present themselves.

R.E.A.L.I.T.Y.

Personal essay

Q: What has **R.E.A.L.I.T.Y.** done for me?

A: In my life, the R.E.A.L.I.T.Y. method of communicating has enabled me to choose words carefully. Before I learned how R.E.A.L.I.T.Y. was being used on me, I did not realize how powerful one's choice of speech can be to the person that is receiving your message. Indeed, REALITY has change the way I express myself verbally. At the same time, it is also through carefully choosing your words in written form that your message can be conveyed more effectively. For instance, when I am writing letters or cards to my friends, I receive different reactions from them. This is due to the words I chose to write on the letter or the card. One thing I have noticed is that words by themselves are not enough to convey a clear message. I think that it has to be accompanied by some action. Therefore, the REALITY method of communicating is one that is straightforward, direct, and can transform ones life.

As a model, it is one that acknowledges that there is a better need for communication between people. Today, we see that there are many people that frustrate their lives over events or happenings that could be avoided with adequate communication between both parties. Also, there seems to be much chaos in the world, as a whole, within the workplace, family, home life, and school or just with friends that communication is necessary. At times, many people do fail to realize that what they say affects people in either a positive or negative manner. In addition, we can identify these reactions as *positive responses* and *negative responses*. These responses will be referred

throughout the paper as side effects of the REALITY model, where words are used to seek responses by human beings that are due to emotional, physical, and mental or spiritual triggers.

In each one of these categories, one can explain what happens to a person who is addicted to something, or has a habit that has not been adequately treated or the person has not come to the realization that it can be controlled. Therefore, if it is not a condition that is not seen by the person itself, then I believe the REALITY method is one that can be utilized. For instance, if someone feels like the entire world is against him/herself, this personal condition can cause unhealthy habits. The person can become antisocial or be afraid of expressing him/herself. Therefore, the REALITY method of communicating can ameliorate the personal condition. How you ask? Well, the first step is to identify the root of the fear. Why does the person feel this way? What event or happening triggered this phobic outlook towards him/herself?

Moreover, there can be other ways in which people can communicate by using the REALITY method. In cases of high trauma, many people experience moments that are categorized by hardcore emotional strains. These moments are usually called *downers* or *uppers*. Ironically enough, many of the most common and most addictive illegal drugs inhibit these reactions in individuals. Also, these replications of emotions are not solely done through the use of the drugs, but they can be caused by emotional feelings that can be triggered by outside sources. These sources can be other people, places, a hobby or daily activity or lack there of activity. Hence, there can be genuine situations where persons are crying for help, and need healthy communication techniques. This is not to

say that REALITY is for every disturbed soul out there, but I believe that adequate and careful communication goes along way.

How reality has changed my life?

In terms of this paper, reality has changed my life. Reality, it is the method of speaking, where the receiver is being focused on by what is spoken to him/her by the sender of the message. It is a message that is not communicated through conventional ways. Many people have tried traditional ways of speaking to one another, but we truly miss out on the listening part. I think that many people are lacking the skills to listen to one another. REALITY is a method where it makes communication between two people easier. The REALITY method emphasizes how people speak words, and how these words transmit messages to the person that is the receiver. For instance, if I were to speak to someone about their life, I would have to carefully choose my words depending on the person. I think that REALITY has helped me connect what is happening with my life with what is happening with in my surroundings, which have helped me make decisions. For instance, communicating with someone using the REALITY method can make someone redirect the way they see the issues that plague their life.

In terms of how I feel the REALITY communication method can help other people, I think it can help people realize their inner flaws. By doing so, people can help remove the aspects of life that bog them down. For instance, since REALITY emphasizes the use of words, people will respond more favorably, let say, if you spoke to them using healing words. For instance, people respond according to what you say to them. It can be a word of kindness; or an act that expresses the word that you want to say—like love. This is why certain words are meant to be expressed to others.

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