

Rehabilitation, not Treatment

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“Drugs and alcohol weren’t my problem. Reality was my problem. Drugs and alcohol were my solution.”

Comedian Russell Brand

The statistics are alarming.

Every day in America:

- 6,500 people are hospitalized for substance abuse;
- 114 die as a result of drug overdose, and 205 more die as a result of alcohol abuse;

Plus:

- 9,000,000 Americans misuse prescription drugs every year;
- Costs related to abuse of tobacco, alcohol, and illegal drugs total over \$700 billion annually. (*\$700 billion is enough to pay every nurse’s salary in America for the next 9 years.*)

For more than 100 years Salvation Army has been helping men overcome substance abuse in our 119 **no-fee** Adult Rehabilitation Centers (“ARCs”) located throughout America. This is more rehabilitation centers than any other program in the United States. (*for a map of those in the Midwest, click on the link below:* <https://centralusa.salvationarmy.org/usc/adult-rehabilitation-centers/>)

We believe substance abuse is a spiritual affliction and therefore, requires a spiritual solution. The essence of the solution is acceptance of the fact that we’re not the ultimate authority in life. Each of us has choice, but in many areas of our lives, we’re bound by the rules of society. Daily participation in our in-house work therapy for 6 months gives men plenty of time to practice this simple truth.

The aforementioned work therapy is the cornerstone of our rehabilitation program. For 40 hours per week, program beneficiaries participate in various tasks including sorting of goods donated to the Salvation Army. Sales of these donated goods cover all program costs, so beneficiaries don’t need insurance or income to join our program.

We believe work therapy is an especially effective therapeutic tool. That is, many of the

issues that keep men trapped in their substance abuse come to the surface in a working situation - just as they do in the “real world.” This allows our staff the opportunity to work with participants in identifying and practicing healthy responses to these potentially disruptive life issues. We like to think of it as the “re-habit-ing” part of rehabilitation – in other words practicing healthy responses to life’s challenges.

Additionally, program beneficiaries are evaluated by their work therapy supervisors in 9 core workplace competencies, such as: attitude and respect for authority; conflict resolution and problem-solving skills; and ability to work as a team member and/or to work without supervision. This information is very valuable to prospective employers in assessing hiring risk.

The bottom line is men learn how to become a giver to a community rather than a taker. It helps them to “get back in the flow” towards a productive, meaningful life. Interestingly, many of the men who greatly disliked the idea of work therapy in the beginning of their rehabilitation program completely changed their minds - they ended up saying they thought it was the best part of their program.

Lastly, it’s a generally accepted belief that transformation requires information **plus** application. Many traditional *recovery* programs are long on information but short on application. However, individuals with a long history of the habit of substance abuse don’t generally change their life due to new information. It takes practice, practice and more practice – in other words, application. That’s what work therapy does – allows the opportunity for practice, for re-habit-ing, for 6 months. Our hope is to help men become more productive citizens in their communities, faithful fathers and husbands in their homes and valued employees in their workplace.