

Resilience in Overcoming Addiction

At the end of April 2011, Dr Cecile Gericke, renowned psychologist and hypnotherapist, visited Elim Clinic, where she facilitated a staff training session. The focus of the session was *'The treatment of sleeping disorders through the process of self-hypnosis'*. Sleeping disorders are a negative effect of substance abuse and addiction; more often than not patients experience major problems with insomnia. Since we do not over-medicate patients on sleeping tablets and tranquillisers, in order to avoid cross addiction, an alternative technique has to be applied. In this way the application of self-hypnosis, in order to reach a state of calmness and relaxation, is an effective way of dealing with sleeping problems. Therapists can guide patients through the process of self-hypnosis, in order for them to be able to apply the technique themselves. I asked Dr Gericke what her perception of resilience, in terms of recovery from addiction, is and how the process of hypnosis can aid the treatment of addiction. To this regard she shares the following with us.

Resilience in overcoming addiction

Numerous articles have been written on "how to beat addiction", but not all are workable in practice. In terms of recovery from addiction, it has to be said that resilience is undisputedly a crucial component of the recovery "armor". What then is resilience? Is it simply the way a person thinks or, is there more to it? Dr Gericke says that resilience is a matter of connecting with one's resourceful self. For Dr Gericke hypnosis is the most effective way of facilitating this process, and applies the technique in the treatment of patients at her practice.

Hypnosis as a tool

Hypnosis has been described as specific communication which can be used to facilitate the patient's access to his inner world. Contrary to common misconceptions the patient is not asleep during hypnosis, but rather in a state of heightened awareness, somewhat removed from the realities of the moment, and able to be in touch with his own inner reality. Hypnosis is an altered state of consciousness in which the patient can control his actions as well as the depth of hypnosis to which he wishes to go. The therapist's communication ability is vital to using hypnosis successfully.

Her view regarding addiction is that for many, mind-altering substances provide the escape route, while for many hypnotherapists, hypnosis provides the route back. Dr Gericke emphasises that understanding addiction from the patient's perspective is vital in the treatment of patients with an addiction problem. The following description of addiction, a patient's perspective, is quite significant.

"Addiction is like a person driving in a station wagon and throwing all their bills and unfinished business into the back of the car. Sobriety is like hitting the brakes and having

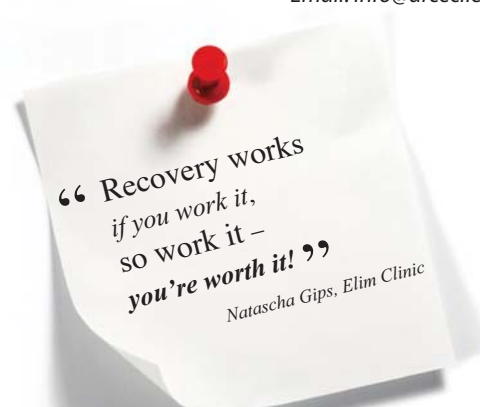


everything from the back of the station wagon hurl forward into your lap."

It is this avalanche of emotional problems that have over the years been shoved to the back, which the therapist must help the patient deal with. Hypnosis allows the therapist to assist the patient in developing resilience in order to deal with daily stress and challenges. It is the role of the hypnotherapist to facilitate the process through which the patient access a calm state, by guiding him through what will eventually become constructive self-talk. The therapist helps the patient to enter a resourceful state reflecting a time when the person coped successfully with a life issue. Finding this inner resourcefulness (resilience) provides a strongpoint.

Dr Cecile Gericke, Psychologist practicing hypnotherapy

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*"If you judge people,
you have no time to love
them"*

Mother Teresa



conjunction with a comprehensive understanding of the recovery process, with specific focus on stressful situations, triggers and other high risk situations. With the assistance of the therapist and through group discussions, patients focus on setting goals for recovery, planning towards establishing a healthy lifestyle and eventually incorporating all these aspects into a recovery plan. Why a recovery plan? Someone once said that; "if you fail to plan, you plan to fail" it could not be more true.

As one might return to a place of rest to fill up and replenish resources, in the same way the aftercare service at the Elim Clinic fulfills that role to ex-patients (more about aftercare later).

Now, when night descends there need not be fear for those who have seen the light know it is there even when it does not shine. Dark nights never last forever, at the given time day breaks, the sun shines, there is light, the path is clear and at last the journey can begin. Just as the seasons change, people's experiences and circumstances change, those who have faced the darkness, and despite that had the courage and commitment to stop and make a turn towards recovery, now walk the talk and see the light to a brand new day, a brand new way!

Theresa Haarhoff-Petersen, Editor

Editorial

The seasons are shifting. It's a grey autumn afternoon, dark clouds fill the sky; the air is cold, and the wind blows merciless. There are very little warmth and comfort left, a major contrast to a long period of bright, warm and sunny days. The warm glow of summer is over; another season has taken its place.

When night falls, darkness stretches to all four corners of the earth, far very far with no clear indication of where it begins and where it ends. At this point most of us will stop to rest, recuperate, re-orientate and redirect. To my mind, except for recuperating, the most critical point in stopping is the decision to continue, and the direction to take. Do you continue on the same path, heading in the same direction as before, or do you change direction and follow a new path?

Elim Clinic is a place where people stop, they stop when they have lost direction, are depleted and can no longer go on. At this oasis, place of rest (as the meaning of the name Elim indicates) people not only redirect their lives, but they find refuge, healing and gain skills in order to deal with daily challenges and maintain sobriety. To stop using addictive substances and to change the direction of one's life is by no means an easy or effortless process. "Walk the talk" is a term often referred to in recovery, it implies the willingness to do what it takes no matter what, every step of the way, day by day in order to maintain sobriety. To walk the road to recovery requires a great deal of grace, resilience and commitment, ask those who "walk the talk", they know.

No one can stay forever; at the end of inpatient treatment it is time to leave, but this time not without direction, resources or hope. Once on the "outside" various challenges, triggers, and stressful situations are a given. That is precisely why the aim of the in-patient treatment programme is to facilitate a clear understanding of the process and dynamics of addiction. In



Second Chances

You are struggling with addiction, battling cravings and ducking triggers. You might be clean for months or even years, but the battle rages on in your mind and heart. You are aware of the people you have disappointed, the broken promises to others and self and the wrong you have done. You feel disappointed and angry with yourself, and forever tainted by guilt and shame.

If you can identify with that, then this message is for you:

Jesus carried your sins, guilt and shame on the cross and died in your place so you may live.

Now it is up to you to claim the gift of grace and forgiveness by handing your life over to Him, and allowing Him to take control. His grace is completely sufficient to cover all your sins, and relieve you from guilt and shame. This is the start of your recovery journey. This is what countless ex-patients of Elim Clinic testify to, every time they light their sobriety candles. All of them cannot be wrong in this.

Through His grace we have a second chance. There is no limit to God's grace. No matter how many times you have failed, how many times you tried, you can count on God's grace to be sufficient and to give you another chance.

Won't you embrace it? Won't you really make it count this time? Embrace God and His grace. Work hard and focus on establishing a workable sobriety plan. Put it to the test, and see how His grace then helps you to stick to it, then you too will testify about God's amazing grace when you light your sobriety candle.

*"He got us out of the mess we're in and restored us to where he always wanted us to be.
And he did it by means of Jesus Christ" Rom 3:23-24 (The Message)*

Rob Meintjies, Life Coach and Pastor, Kaleidio Church



Judge Eberhard Bertelsmann

Herdenk Nugterskap/ Celebrate Sobriety

Elimkliniek het al jare lank die instelling dat ex-pasiënte op Sondagaande tydens die Kapeldiens (op die Kliniek se gronde) hul nugterskap herdenk. Vir die ex-pasiënte is dit 'n besondere geleentheid om op die wyse hul nugterskapsverjaardag te herdenk. Hul ondersteuners, familie en vriende, woon ook die geleentheid by.

Die Kapeldiens op die 10de April 2011 was besonder spesiaal. Regter Eberhard Bertelsmann, lid van Elimkliniek se Raad van Direkteure, en ex-pasiënt van Elimkliniek het met die geleentheid 25ste jaar van nugterskap herdenk. Dit was vir almal teenwoordig 'n besondere en inspirerende ervaring. Hy deel meer oor die geleentheid en sy ervaring daarvan.

**Die Redakteur het versoek dat Eberhard se inset in Engels geskryf word, sodat 'n wyer spektrum van ons lesers in sy ervaring kan deel.*

Eberhard se inset:

'This patient is a high-risk individual practicing a stressful profession - the probability of a speedy relapse is considerable' read the therapist's final report on my discharge.

'You'll see me back often, but never again as a patient' was my reply, uttered with a chutzpah that could only be explained by total ignorance of what lay ahead. Nobody thought of two-and-a-half decades at that stage.

I knew that I would need support to remain standing. This meant that I would have to remain involved in Elim and its activities, even though there was no aftercare at that stage. I remember how I, with sweaty palms and a pounding heart, held my first morning devotion (at the Clinic's Chapel) about a year after my treatment. I remained involved, and after a few years I was appointed a director, which cemented my involvement with the Clinic. 25 years passed almost unnoticed. Through all these years I have been blessed by the continued presence of the Lord's love and blessings, who has given me a devoted wife and family and wonderful friends and partners in the management, staff, co-directors and fellow patients who have walked the road with me.

On 10 April 2011, to the day, a quarter of a century after my time as a patient at Elim Clinic, seven other patients and I could light our candles celebrating 87 collective years of sobriety. The celebration were attended by over two hundred family members, friends, Elim staff past and present, and fellow patients. Together we thanked and praised the Lord for his mercy and His manifold blessings in all our lives. If ever living proof of the presence of God's love at Elim Clinic was sought, it was strikingly evident during the course of that evening. To Him who keeps us from falling be given all praise. With our hand in His we will have many more years in His service.

Athletics Club representing Elim Clinic

The members of the Elim Athletics Club represent Elim Clinic at every road race where they participate, they run in Elim colors, they are proud ambassadors. As recent as the Easter weekend some of the club members participated in the Two Oceans Marathon.

At a recent workshop with the club members, we discussed their role as representatives of Elim Clinic and the issues they are confronted with. They shared how time and again people (especially their peers) would approach them, and except for asking what Elim Clinic is all about, ask for information regarding alcohol and drugs and the effects. These young people make a difference where we cannot reach. For that we thank you, members of the Elim Clinic Athletics Club.

One of the club members approached me a while ago; he shared with me his perspective regarding substance abuse, and the

effect it has on the lives of people around him. This is his account of substance abuse in his environment.

"People use substance as a reliever, they think it brings joy, but they do not know how bad it is. I see how dangerous it is, it is a killer. The killer takes away people's lives. I see it steal what people have been working for and how it damages their lives. Many people do not see, but soon they will see it as a killer and take a stand for the fight against substance abuse."

Mandla Ndlovu



Mandla Ndlovu



Aftercare - Does it make any difference?

Recovering from addiction is a lifelong process. Terence Gorski explains it as *"The ghosts of this disease haunt the recovering patient for life. Full remission can only be maintained by recognizing the lifelong need for a strong maintenance plan consisting of a daily program of ongoing recovery and personal growth."*¹

In order to support ex-patients in their recovery, Elim Clinic offers an aftercare service as an essential part of our treatment program. Aftercare group sessions take place each Wednesday evening.

What value does aftercare add to the lives of our ex-students?

For any person to recover from addiction and do so in isolation is extremely difficult. Aftercare offers a support system where ex-patients meet with others who strive towards the same goals. Fellow group members staying sober and finding joy in their new life is an inspiration to those who feel despondent and wonder if it's worth the struggle. **The power of the group is a strong motivational factor.**

Aftercare group sessions provide the opportunity to discuss problems related to recovery. Through these discussions and with the therapeutic input of the therapist, group members learn more about themselves and how to deal with challenging situations. Aftercare affords each person, who attends, the opportunity to integrate the content of the inpatient treatment program with daily recovery, and to clarify problems they experience in this regard.

is an opportunity for personal growth, through aftercare a person may discover 'deeper personal problems', which need to be addressed, in order to fully recover.

Aftercare is an effective way of encouraging family members of the recovering addict to seek the help they need in terms of their personal recovery. It enables them to work together on issues which affect the family unit, and to understand the dynamics of addiction and how to deal with it. Through the interaction in group sessions significant others come to understand their own behaviour and how they were affected by addiction. They have the opportunity to share their own hurt and feel less isolated when they hear the 'stories' of others who have had similar experiences.

Significant others learn about co-dependency, 'to let go' and allow their loved one (who is in recovery) to take responsibility for his\her own behaviour. When spouses and life partners attend aftercare they have the opportunity to work together on their dependence and co-dependence and to heal their relationship.

*"Recovering from addiction is very much like walking up a down escalator. There is no such thing as standing still."*²

Let us use the aftercare groups to walk the escalator and in the process develop strong legs!

Margaret Augustyn, Clinical Manager

References:

- 1 Counseling for relapse prevention. Terence Gorski and Merlene Miller. Herald House Independence Press 1982 p 53.
- 2 Counseling for relapse prevention. Terence Gorski and Merlene Miller. Herald House Independence Press 1982 p43.

Results – Elim Clinic Athletics Club

Old Mutual Two Oceans Marathon - 23 April 2011

Congratulations to every single one of you. Keep on running; we are behind you all the way!

Anthony Mondlane in 4h:06 (missed silver with 6 minutes)

Mpho Makumisane in 4h:29

Thembile Golega in 5h:38

Judge Eberhard Bertelsmann (patron of the Club) did his best time yet on the 21km in 2:53:56. Well done Eberhard!



Donasies – Dankie

- Me Louise Nykamp
- Mnr Kallie Schoeman en Kobus Fourie

Regstelling: In die Januarie 2011 uitgawe van die Nuusbrief is "Actuator Technical Services" bedank vir 'n donasie. Ons vra om verskoning en maak graag die regstelling dat die donasie deur Mnr Fanie en Mev Barbara Opperman in hul persoonlike hoedanigheid geskenk is ter nagedagtenis aan hul seun, Stephan Opperman



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