

# SUBSTANCE ABUSE an ever growing problem

## Signs and symptoms

Carl Jung once said, it is apparent that nor poverty, nor microbes, nor cancer will hold the greatest danger to mankind, it is however mankind itself that is his own worst enemy. The reason for this is simple; we do not have sufficient protection against psychological epidemics of which the result is greater than any natural disaster.

Although there are noticeable physical effects to substance abuse and addiction, it is the psychological effects which are most complex. Not only is it potentially devastating but it affects the people closest to the substance abuser in multiple ways. At least 14 people are directly affected by the effect of one person's substance abuse, be it alcohol, drug and/or medication addiction.

It is not always possible to stop a person from abusing addictive substances, but it is possible to be informed. To know the most common signs and symptoms of substance abuse is a step closer toward identifying the problem and to intervene, either personally and/or through professional assistance.

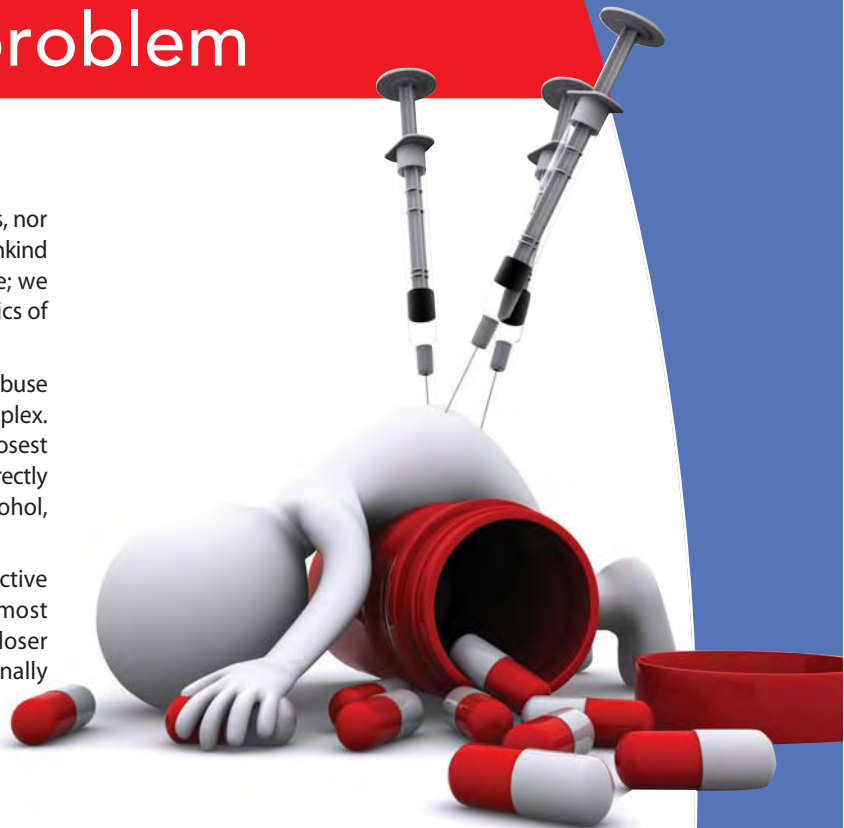
- 1 Lack of concentration
- 2 Slow thinking
- 3 Slurry speech
- 4 Impaired functioning on social, interpersonal and/or economic level
- 5 Uncontrolled mood swings and outbursts
- 6 Over talkative or isolation
- 7 Disturbance of judgement and impaired perception
- 8 Fatigue
- 9 Forgetfulness
- 10 Inability to think clearly and coherently
- 11 Irritability and hostility
- 12 Personality changes
- 13 Decreased appetite
- 14 Definite change in sexual drive
- 15 Insomnia
- 16 Rash and over confident behaviour
- 17 Hyperactivity
- 18 Drastic weight loss
- 19 Unnatural excitement
- 20 Quarrelsome and aggressive behaviour
- 21 Paranoia
- 22 Disruption of normal thinking and mental activity

- 23 Untidiness
- 24 Lack of interest in activities which normally gave pleasure
- 25 Regular changing of friends
- 26 Dishonesty
- 27 Lack in productivity at work or school
- 28 Stealing and pawning of personal belongings

The signs and symptoms should be looked at as a whole. Do not make an assumption on the basis of only one or two. A number of the signs have to be present over a period of time (6 weeks and longer). A thorough assessment of the signs and symptoms should be done in order to ensure that the problem is accurately identified. Look out for a clear change in behaviour.

## References:

- De Miranda, S. 1987. Dwelms en dwelmmisbruik in Suider-Afrika. J.L. van Schaik (Edms) Bpk: Pretoria.
- White, W.L. 1996. Pathways from the culture of addiction to the culture of recovery: A travel guide for addiction professionals. Hazelden: Minnesota.





## Editorial

Any new and unfamiliar experience, brings with it uncertainty, reluctance, anxiety and often fear. For most people recovery is new and uncertain territory. Leaving behind a life of drug, alcohol, and/or medication abuse requires courage and determination. Millions, if not billions, of people throughout the world are in recovery from addiction and for each of them the start of their journey was unfamiliar and new. While you read these words, at this very moment there is at least one person making that final shift towards recovery, accepting the path he chose and committing towards a clean and sober life, maintaining sobriety for the rest of his/her life.

I recently spoke to a friend in recovery, I asked him what he appreciates about being clean and sober. Firstly he mentioned the renewal of his relationship with his children, after many years of sobriety they have been able to build up a trusting relationship, this is only possible because he is clean and sober. Secondly he mentioned waking up in the morning, feeling good about himself, knowing he is clean and sober and for that day his aim is to stay clean and sober and nobody can take that away from him. What about tomorrow, I eagerly asked? *"Tomorrow is yet to come"* he said *"and when it comes it will be exactly the same as today. I will wake up, I will feel good about myself and my life, and know that by the Grace of God I can maintain sobriety one day at a time."* I admire his honesty and commitment, up to today he remains an inspiration to me.

Next I asked myself about persistence. Why persist towards maintaining



recovery despite obstacles, the aches and pains one may face? The answer came to me, once again, through learning from those who literally walk the talk.

### Vision!

Persistence is impossible without vision, vision of what you want to be, where you are going and the life you want to live. No one can reach any destination without a vision of where he's going and why he's going there. I came to a deeper realisation of the significance of persistence as an essential aspect of any journey

or process engaged in by man.

To move forward there must be a driving force. This thought prompted me to ask Ewald Schmidt to share with us his remarkable journey through the Northeastern corner of Spain. A few months ago he embarked upon one of the world's oldest Pilgrim's routes, dating back to before 1088 A.D. In this edition he tells the story of his personal pilgrimage on the route known as Camino de Santiago - The Way of St James. He undertook the tedious and demanding journey with a vision not only to reach the Compostela, but to re-evaluate his own life.

It is not everyone who can go on a Pilgrimage in another country or even in another province, but we can go on a personal pilgrimage of self discovery, healing and maintained recovery. There are several routes the pilgrims follow, not everyone's journey follows the same path, but at the end, we all meet at the same destination - a clean and sober life, a life free of the pain and ever consuming blaze of substance abuse and addiction.

Theresa Haarhoff-Petersen (Editor)

*Elim Clinic offers a safe and caring environment conducive to healing*

## The Camino of Life

For more than 1000 years pilgrims have been walking along the Camino de Santiago. The ancient legend has it that James the Apostle of Jesus, who was beheaded by King Herod in Israel, was buried in Spain by his followers, near the place the Romans called Finisterre, the end of the earth, where the Cathedral now stands.

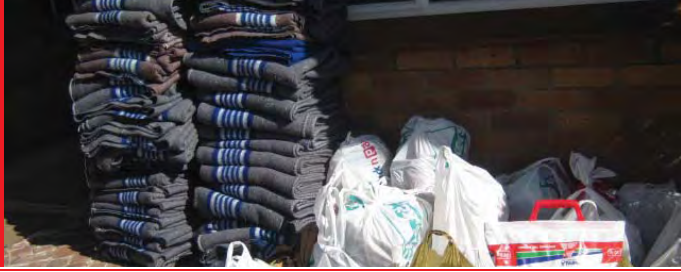
The Pilgrimage is still alive and well today, with over 800 people finishing daily at the Cathedral in Santiago de Compostela, the city Santiago was named after St James. People do the Camino for different reasons, some religious, some very personal, some for the adventure. There are many routes to Santiago, but the most famous of them all is the French Way, starting in St Jean Pied de Port in France. This is a distance of about 800 km. Pilgrims usually completes the route in between 33- 40 days.

I heard the Call of the Camino about four years ago, and seriously started thinking about it last year. It was quite a challenge for me, because I am not a good hiker, struggling with my weight, and being very prone to developing blisters on my feet. I am more or less halfway with my life's journey, and my first kid is leaving school at the end of this year. I needed time-out in my life, time to contemplate my own journey of life. I needed to think through some hurts in my past, I needed to evaluate where I am now, and to think about what I want for my future. The Camino provided the space and support to do exactly this.

I followed the route from Léon in France to Santiago, a distance of 317 km. I did this in 18 days. Even I was amazed that I could do this, it was one of the most rewarding challenges I ever met. It was difficult some days, the most notable being the day I climbed O Cebreiro. It is a hard day's climb to go over this mountain, being uphill all day long, climbing a road more than 10 km long. Normally this would not be my idea of fun, but I rose to the challenge. The secret of any mountain standing in your way is this: You can overcome it! You need a goal to reach and then, step by step, you keep on going, till you reach that goal. Even when it is hurting a lot, keep on going- every mountain has a top, and if you keep going, you will get there.

At the end of the pilgrimage one can get a certificate at the Pilgrim's Office in Santiago. It is called a Compostela, and it tells the world that you have successfully completed your journey. It was one of my life's greatest moments, receiving my Compostela. It really showed me that I can do anything if I believe, if I put all my mind and body into it, and keep on going to the end. This is what I also wish for you on your journey of life, that you will find a goal worth living for, that you will believe you can reach it, and then put all your heart, body and soul into it. The journey of life is worth it!

Ewald Schmidt, Clergyman at Nylstroom Oos NG Congregation



# Winter Thanksgiving 2011

What is the difference between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea, both being situated in the Jordan River Rift Valley. The difference is that the Sea of Galilee receives and gives, from the Jordan River which flows through it from north to south whereas the Dead Sea only receives. It has an inflow with no outflow of water. The resulting salinity makes for a harsh environment in which animals cannot flourish, hence the name Dead Sea.

With this metaphor I want to explain Elim Clinic's philosophy of "paying it forward". We believe that life and hope flourishes in sharing. As an organisation Elim Clinic is truly blessed. We make a habit of reflecting on our blessings. We do this in a formal way at least twice every year.

During our *Winter Thanksgiving* the employees of Elim Clinic decided to show their gratitude in a tangible way by supporting other organizations which are of service to our community.

The employees of Elim Clinic nominated the SPCA (Society for the prevention of cruelty to animals) and the Christian Social Services Council as the two beneficiary organisations. The staff of Elim Clinic opened their hearts and pockets and donated blankets and food to these deserving organizations. They in turn assist those who cannot speak for themselves or those who are not always heard...

**It is indeed true - it is better to give than to receive.**

Elize Smith, Managing Director, Elim Clinic

## Ashes beside the altar

**Leviticus 6: 10-13**

Leviticus portrays a picture of what was happening in the sanctuary during the times of the Israelites. The Priest was to burn the sin offerings on the altar, take the ashes and put them beside the altar. Every time the Israelites entered the holy place, they would see the ashes and that would remind them of how God forgave their sins. In verse 13 He says they must put on the new fire wood and keep the fire burning.

Coming to sit in the Elim Clinic pews every year of sobriety will be like the ashes beside the altar. It will remind you of where God has taken you from. Lighting your sobriety candle will be like putting the new fire wood on the altar. It will assure you of God's grace for the future.

Pastor Lovemore Mabena, Elim Clinic

## Anton - a father in recovery

**Anton is a father and a recovering drug addict. He has been clean for four years now. He freely tells his story, his approach towards recovery is an inspiration to many. I asked him to share his opinion regarding the current drug scene in South Africa and specifically the way it affects the youth.**

**As recovering drug addict and a father, what is your opinion regarding the youth and drug abuse currently in South Africa?**

*Drug abuse is a much bigger problem in South Africa than we would care to admit. Being a recovering addict the youth tend to open up and share their experiences and concerns with me. According to them at least 70% of their friends experiment with drugs. What makes it worse is that South Africa is a gateway for drug trafficking. There is basically no hope that the availability of drugs will decrease in years to come, and the youth is the main target group. Drugs are all over, my oldest son, a recovering addict himself, says... "There is no place for the youth to go."*

**What is it that you would like to contribute towards the lives of those around you?**

*I want my life to be an example of hope and to contribute, in whichever way I can, to people knowing and understanding*

- that it is possible to come clean and stay clean from drugs.
- that a sober life can be a great life.

- that it is never too early or too late to stop using drugs.
- that with a clean and sober body and mind it is possible to start over and face the challenges life presents.
- that nothing is impossible if you believe in yourself and allow GOD to change the way you think.

**What advice can you give to parents who are concerned about their children being involved with drugs?**

*Get as much information on drugs as you can. Learn about the body language and other tell tale signs of drug users. Work on an open relationship with your kids. If you suspect or know that your child is using drugs and they deny it, do a drug test to confirm either by using a urine sample or blood test (at the closest lab). Seek professional help for both you and your child. Taking into consideration the world we live in, I believe that all parents need to be drug wise and know that drug abuse is not class related, it makes no distinction and can happen to anyone. Last but not least, never give up. Remember drugs control the mind and therefore affect the way a drug user thinks, no user (no matter how young or old) can think straight while using.*

Anton Botha

# 67 minute outreach

On Nelson Mandela's Birthday, the 18th of July 2011, a national call was made for a 67 minute community outreach. All over the country people committed 67 minutes of their time engaging in community service. The Elim Clinic Athletic Club is no different, they made their 67 minute contribution by working at Ikhaya Lothando Home Care in Tembisa (a care centre for toddlers and orphans). Once again they reached out in representation of Elim Clinic. We thank you girls and guys for touching the lives of vulnerable young people in your community and in that way also "paying forward".



## Career Success – the changing landscape of the 21st century

Once in recovery, many things change. A life once fractured is now rebuilt to a life of meaning and balance. One's career is a significant aspect of life and inevitable part of recovery.

Experts agree that the one constant in modern career development is change. If you look around you, you will notice that with the advent of technology, telecommuting and E-commerce means that the way work is performed is in a state of reinvention. In order to keep abreast and be up to date with development within the landscape of work require effort and commitment, but it is indeed not without reward.

In the new landscape of work, self employment and the development of small business is becoming the norm. Furthermore career changes are becoming more frequent due to swiftly changing organisations and industries.

That being said, it seems as if the line between one's professional and personal life is becoming even more blurred. Most of us spend the greater part of our adult life at work, to be content in one's career can contribute a great extent to personal fulfillment. The question is, how do we surf the wave without being drowned. Remember these five points.

### 1. Develop resiliency (the ability to bounce back)

It is imperative that you develop the right attitude towards career change in order to bounce back from setbacks, sudden changes in industry and other surprises on your career path. Move on from the thought that being successful implies working for the same

company for 40 years. Being made redundant is not the end it can be the beginning of the rest of your career.

### 2. Take a proactive approach to your career development

Constantly be on the lookout for new ways to apply your talents, skills and experience within the new economy. This involves thinking creatively, actively promoting yourself/your business and being responsible for your own career development. It is important to establish your own networks, surround yourself with like-minded individuals, people in the same and related fields as yours.

### 3. Create first rate marketing materials

The worth of a well written, up-to-date CV can never be overestimated –you never know when your networking may lead to an opportunity. If you have your own business, ensure that your business cards reflect professionalism and make use of the power of the Internet to develop an interactive website. (Even if you are employed full-time, a professional business card is non-negotiable.)

### 4. Commit to lifelong learning

In order to keep earning, one has to keep learning. It is as simple as that. If you do not keep abreast of developments and continue to develop new skills, you will fall behind and become less and less marketable as time goes on. In the current career landscape top skills include: communication, computer-knowledge, creativity and customer care.

### 5. Find your unique life balance

There are four crucial elements to life: love, labour, leisure and learning.

Remember that work is only one aspect; be sure to have an overall balance that will lead to the most fulfilment. The greatest advantage of a changing career landscape might be the development of a mindset of self-empowerment: the new worker does not wait for opportunities to present themselves; he or she creates those opportunities!

Source: [www.employment360.com](http://www.employment360.com)

## Donations - Thank You

- Mr Bill Lamont
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