

Calming the Storm – Anxiety Management

Orientation Group: Understanding My Problems

In this group we will look into (explore) our own lives to figure out how to improve our lives.

Especially how to manage our stress and anxieties or worries.

To do this we need to look at 5 areas of our lives:

1. Our ENVIRONMENT or life situations -
 - What's happening?
 - What's changing for us?
2. How is my BODY reacting to life around me? (Physical feelings)
3. What is my MOOD?
 - How do I feel?
 - Emotions?
4. What am I doing PHYSICALLY?
 - Urges?
 - Cravings?
 - Crying?
 - Shaking?
 - Getting fidgety?
 - Etc.
5. What am I thinking?
 - What thought just popped into my head?

Let's look at an example of all this and how each part of us interacts with other parts.

A Story:

Vincent is a 35 y/o manager/supervisor at HonDah Casino. Vincent has been sober for 2 years and attends AA meetings whenever he can. He finds these meetings helpful.

Vincent is almost 6 ft. tall and enjoys athletics – especially Basketball. He likes to dress well and enjoys wearing a suit and tie at work. When he is off work, he also likes to look sharp and stylish.

Despite frequent opportunities and urges to drink, Vincent has not touched a drop of alcohol in 2 years. His urge to drink comes and goes thought – especially when he is feeling lonely, sad, and/or stressed out. At these times, he thought: “Alcohol will make me feel better and get rid of the loneliness, sadness, and/or stress. “I work hard and support my family.” “ I deserve to feel better.” Sometimes, Vincent would “give in” to his thinking, and sometimes not.” Staying sober was tough.

Vincent also began to feel depressed at times. He would have trouble staying asleep at night and often got up real early in the morning. He was grumpy and irritable with his family and workers. Vincent began to lose his appetite and he lost 10 lb. Vincent decided that he did not have time to go to the AA meetings, and he dropped out of his regular Basket Ball games. He became “jumpy and nervous” at work and was afraid that he would be fired from his job. This worrying about being fired – even though he received A+ performance appraisals became more frequent and caused him to be nervous and anxious. He always “jumped” when his phone rang and broke out in a sweat.

Vincent finally decided to get some help from RTC. He told his counselor that he has always felt inadequate and not as smart or good as others. He always felt that something “bad” was going to happen to him – that it was just around the corner. Vincent told his counselor that alcohol (first beer, and then whiskey) helped him to feel better and “in control.” With his sobriety, he has started to feel nervous and anxious about his abilities to hold a job and supervise other people. Vincent stated that “I’m just no good.” My Dad used to tell me that, and

m it's true! "I usually didn't think those kinds of thoughts when I was drinking." Dad also used to tell me "if you're going to do something, do it absolutely right the first time." Vincent told his therapist that "if I'm not perfect, then I'm a failure."

Now, Let's use our model and figure out what Vincent's issues are:

1. Our ENVIRONMENT or life situations -

- What's happening?

Facts:

- *2 years of sobriety,*
- *lifelong pressure to be "the best" (by parents and himself).*

- What's changing for us?

2. How is my BODY reacting to life around me? (Physical feelings)

Facts:

- *Insomnia*
- *No Appetite*
- *Weight loss*

3. What is my MOOD?

- How do I feel?

Facts:

- *Nervousness*
- *Jittery*
- *fearful*

- Emotions?

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4. What am I doing PHYSICALLY?

- Urges?
- Cravings?
- Crying?
- Shaking?

Facts:

- *Increased urges to drink*
- *Avoidance of AA meetings*
- *Perfectionism in his work*

5. What am I thinking?

- What thought just popped into my head?

Facts:

- *"I'm no good."*
- *"I'm worthless."*
- *"It's just a matter of time before I'm fired."*

This method is how we are going to look at YOUR anxiety issues – and help you figure out how to manage them:

- **Cognitively – How you THINK**
- **Emotionally – How you FEEL**
- **Behaviorally – How you ACT (behave)**