

## **WHAT IS TREATMENT AT EmPower ALL ABOUT?**

In the simplest of terms, treatment is the beginning of a journey. We usually call this journey “recovery.” It doesn’t really matter what it’s called, but it is the journey toward a life that has positive purpose, a sense of direction and fulfillment. And because each person has different needs and wants, each person’s journey will not take him or her to the same place as another.

A person enters treatment because someone has identified that their life has been moving in a negative self-defeating direction. This treatment time is an opportunity for a person to re-examine their life. This process by itself is never harmful. Many of us wish we had the time and help to take a closer look at our lives. Whether a person is here by their own choice or someone else’s, we encourage them to use the time for their own benefit. They may choose to return to the lifestyle they were living prior to coming here. That’s their choice, but then it will be a more educated choice and their life will be more completely theirs.

Let’s take the “journey” metaphor a little further. A person decides they want to go on this journey of recovery. They come to the EmPower treatment staff for directions. The staff have a map of the world of recovery, but with just a map we cannot give them directions until they identify: 1. **Where they are** and 2. **Where they want to go**. Then to assist in making a successful journey we need to help them: 3. **Identify obstacles along the journey**, 4. **Learn skills to make the journey**, 5. **Create a plan for the journey**. The first task in treatment is to identify exactly where a person is. The next is to identify where they want to go. This sounds easy, but it usually isn’t. Human nature and addiction tend to complicate these tasks.

### **WHERE ARE YOU?**

Each of us typically sees the world only through our own eyes. To get a better understanding of what one’s life has become it is helpful, though rarely pleasant, to see oneself from other people’s point of view. Human nature has gifted people with a thing called “denial.” Its purpose is to protect a person from experiencing an overwhelming amount of trauma at one time. The problem is that it can also allow a person to not see their situation clearly. It is not that they don’t know, but that they have denied it to the point that they cannot see the reality- only what they “want” to see. It is the opposite of the experience amputees get when they feel pain in a limb they no longer possess. A person doesn’t feel the pain their life is causing. The pain is there and it is felt, but it is denied or ignored as if it wasn’t there. In order to identify where they really are in their lives, we need to break through the denial. Like the map, the more specific they can identify where they are, the more specific the “map guys” can be with directions.

We have several assignments that will help a person more clearly identify where they are. They may have you go back and take a closer look at where they have come from, their life history, so as to get a better idea of how you got where you are and just where that is.

### **WHERE DO YOU WANT TO GO?**

Rarely does a person spend the time to think about where they want to go. Most people hope their lives turn out well, but they never stop to plan it out. There is a story about the lumberjack who tried to set a new record for chopping down the most trees. Each day he chopped fewer and fewer trees because he never took time to sharpen his ax. He was too

busy trying to set a new record. In treatment individuals have the opportunity to “sharpen their ax.” They will be asked to think through what they really want their life to look like. We challenge them to create a vision and goals for their lives. To make this easier, we have come up with an acronym FISHES.

- The “F” stands for family
- The “I” stands for income- this also includes education and career
- The “S” stands for social life
- The “H” stands for physical health- exercise, diet and general well being
- The “E” stands for emotions. How we feel, celebrate, grieve and so on
- The “S” stands for spirituality. Spirituality is our higher power and from which we derive our sense of purpose.

Defining “recovery” is like being given a blank check. A person will only get what you aim for- what you believe and work for. It is well worth the time that it takes to decide where you want your life to go. We have assignments that can help you in this area, too.

### **IDENTIFY OBSTACLES ALONG THE JOURNEY & LEARN SKILLS TO MAKE THE JOURNEY**

Once a person knows where they are and where they want to go, then the work of figuring out how to get there begins. A person has to recognize what blocks them from getting where they want to go and begin to learn skills that will be helpful for making the journey. We find that the number one problem that gets a person blocked is their thinking. A person gets so caught in the shame of the past or fears about the future that they cannot make healthy choices in the present. We help people learn how to live in the “NOW.” We have also found certain skills that help the journey go easier. They include:

- Stress Awareness
- Cost/Benefit of Recovery
- Building Relationships
- Conflict Management
- Emotional Health
- Physical Health
- Spiritual Health
- Goal Setting/Goal Achieving
- Personal Motivation
- Positive Recovery Behaviors
- Building a Support Network
- Relapse Prevention

### **CREATE A PLAN FOR THE JOURNEY**

By the time someone completes this program, they will have written up a plan to obtain and maintain “Recovery” as they have defined it. We will help them with this process, but the more ownership you take for this the more completely yours it will be. A plan can help them get to the destination, in terms of lifestyle, that you have identified. It is a sort of “life blueprint.”