

to their own agency and the Lord's timetable.

- (4) There are no leaders or highly trained teachers in this program. Groups meet to study approved materials such as *He Did Deliver Me from Bondage* and other official Twelve Step materials, as well as the scriptures and writings of modern prophets.
- (5) As mentioned earlier, we do not recommend or encourage explicit disclosure of personal experiences during meetings. We encourage confession be made to one's bishop if the participant's behavior falls within church guidelines for ecclesiastical involvement.

How does activity in Heart t' Heart bless and help family life?

Heart t' Heart is an individual program of recovery. Participants are encouraged to "take their own inventory" and to focus on their own repentance rather than attending meetings to "fix" another family member. God's respect for our agency teaches us that we cannot force another to do what we feel would be helpful.

A family may be best served when several members are each working on their own spiritual recovery and also applying the principles of the traditions (which focus on group unity) in their family life. However, the spiritual progress of even one member can make a great difference in the family. Example is our best invitation for others to progress along spiritual lines.

An Introduction to the Program *Questions & Answers*


An LDS 12-Step Recovery Resource

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An Introduction to Heart t' Heart

Thank you for your interest in the *Heart t' Heart* recovery program, designed especially for members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. If you are reading this pamphlet, it is probably because you have discovered that you or someone you care for is suffering from the bondage of compulsive or addictive behavior, and you are looking for a spiritual, Christ-centered path to recovery. That path is a journey towards Jesus Christ, our Savior, following the principles found in the Twelve Steps which originated with Alcoholics Anonymous. May we recommend a prayerful reading of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions mentioned in this pamphlet as an overview of the basics of the program. In addition, the following are answers to several frequently asked questions.

What is Heart t' Heart?

Heart t' Heart is a Twelve Step support group patterned after the Twelve Step groups originating with Alcoholics Anonymous in 1935. We are a fellowship of women and men who have come to recognize that there are behaviors in our lives, or the lives of loved ones, that fall under this definition of addiction: A behavior can be considered as an addiction or compulsion when the person doing the behavior desires desperately to stop but has found no permanent way to do so.

Does Heart t' Heart benefit those without an identifiable addiction?

Heart t' Heart's foundational principles have proven helpful to people who are struggling with adversity or trials of any kind—divorce, death, loss of employment, childhood trauma, depression, anxiety, or any physical or emotional disability in self or family. Greater serenity and the divine ability to heal or endure are found through applying these spiritual principles.

How did Heart t' Heart start?

Heart t' Heart began in the hearts of several Latter-day Saints who were attending existing Twelve Step programs, such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Overeaters Anonymous and Codependents Anonymous. While they were experiencing success in these programs, they longed to speak of their experience, strength and hope in LDS terms. (In other Twelve

Step groups all references to distinctive religious beliefs or practices are discouraged in order to respect each other's spiritual beliefs.)

Other existing LDS support groups felt they needed to keep their focus primarily on drug and alcohol addiction. Latter-day Saints who struggle with compulsions such as overeating, anorexia and bulimia, workaholism, perfectionism, sexual addiction, and codependency needed a place to address these issues in an LDS setting. *Heart t' Heart* provides the answer which addresses compulsive addictive behavior in all its forms.

Does Heart t' Heart charge dues or fees for membership?

Heart t' Heart is strictly a volunteer effort. There are no dues or fees in official Twelve Step programs. The only requirement for membership in *Heart t' Heart* is a desire to practice a God-centered solution to our problems. Our seventh tradition states that we are self-supporting through voluntary contributions from members only. These donations can be whatever the individual feels he or she can afford. Money received from donations is returned to the effort to carry this message of recovery to others.

Is Heart t' Heart a substitute for professional counseling?

Heart t' Heart does not presume to be a professional or medical resource. Like other Twelve

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Step programs, it is intended to supplement professional care and to fill the need of individuals who do not require intense professional care, but who are nevertheless struggling with behaviors and problems that are causing greater and greater disruption in their lives.

Heart t' Heart neither encourages nor discourages professional counseling. We do not have intensely trained facilitators or leaders in our meetings. Groups meet to study scriptures and approved Twelve Step materials. Our emphasis in *Heart t' Heart* is on supporting our members in the kind of recovery that can be realized from focusing on the spiritual dimension of life. Whether or not one is including professional counseling in an effort to recover, we have found increased success by including the scripture-based concepts of *Heart t' Heart*.

Is Heart t' Heart a "Church program"?

Heart t' Heart is a community resource, not a Church program. While not affiliated with the Church, *Heart t' Heart* upholds and supports all of its doctrines and teachings. We are a faithful and doctrinally sound program that encourages and facilitates true conversion and full activity in the programs and fellowship of the Church.

Why do people who are not suffering from drug or alcohol addiction need a program that was originally designed for those kinds of problems?

It is our experience that there are many behaviors that can become addictive—overeating, overspending, overworking, internet use, sexual behaviors, perfectionism (an obsession with appearing perfect or performing perfectly and being admired by others), and codependency. Though they appear very different, these behaviors can all be addressed as addictions.

Seeing these behaviors as addictions is actually a very hopeful perspective. It opens the way for a spiritual approach to "recovery" (elimination

of the behavior), which is exactly what the principles of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions offer. These principles are abundantly supported in the scriptures and the teachings of modern prophets. The Twelve Step approach takes a real-life challenge—one that is gradually or swiftly destroying a person's sense of worthiness and ability to feel the Spirit—and applies these principles in a systematic way. A participant experiences a deeper level of humility, honest repentance, and redemption because life becomes more centered upon the Savior and His atonement.

What is the difference between Heart t' Heart and the LDS Family Service recovery program for substance abuse?

The original Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions as established by Alcoholics Anonymous was, and still is, a very God-centered program. Though it is "generic" and not affiliated with any religion, it encourages reliance on God, deep personal examination, and honesty in order to overcome addictive behaviors. *Heart t' Heart* continues these same values and principles, translating them into LDS terminology and concepts, basing each principle squarely on the scriptures.

One major difference between a *Heart t' Heart* group and an LDS Family Services group is the way we are organized. *Heart t' Heart* is governed by the Twelve Traditions—the principles of group interaction developed by Alcoholics Anonymous to govern their groups throughout the world. These traditions identify us as autonomous, though supportive of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Also, *Heart t' Heart* is self-supporting through our own financial donations and volunteer leadership.

A *Heart t' Heart* group is started and supported by those who have experience with addictive or compulsive behavior in their own life and are now desiring to maintain their own recovery by encouraging and supporting others who are

still struggling. Those who are trying to recover are helped by those who have applied these principles to their own lives (sponsors).

In contrast, the LDS Family Service Substance Abuse Recovery Program is under the direction of professionals and the leadership of the Church. Groups are supervised by missionaries (usually couples) and conducted by church members called to facilitate the groups. These groups focus specifically on drug and alcohol abuse recovery.

In *Heart t' Heart* it is possible to form a group that has a special focus, such as recovery from alcoholism, drug addiction, compulsive eating, sexual addiction, or overspending. However, most groups do not specify a particular problem. We have found that while addictive behaviors may seem very different from the "outside," they can all be eliminated by one single solution: a heart-deep process of repentance and a change of heart that places a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as the only lasting answer.

The basic belief which *Heart t' Heart* shares with Family Services recovery groups is that healing from compulsive addictive behavior in any form is a spiritual process. The process of recovery is the correct application of gospel principles as embodied in the Twelve Steps. The power to recover is found in and through the atonement of Jesus Christ.

What is the importance of sharing in a meeting?

At *Heart t' Heart* meetings, participants are encouraged to share their experience, strength, and hope with each other, with an emphasis on the growing strength and hope cultivated by the application of scriptural principles to our daily lives. Participants are not prompted or encouraged to disclose explicit intimate things in group meetings. Once again, our focus is the solution rather than the problem.

While it is true that some people find sharing is not helpful to them, these few are the exceptions. Most of us who are willing to attend at least six meetings have found that we are strengthened by the testimonies of those who have practiced these spiritual principles. We are lifted and blessed in our efforts to repent and come to the Lord as we hear each other's accounts of how life's challenges are powerfully met by these principles and simple steps. Sharing and listening at meetings helps to break through the tendency to isolate and to feel that we are alone with our challenges. We find that through honest sharing, our problems are put in perspective and our weaknesses are turned to strengths.

Of course there are times of sharing when someone's sorrow and frustration outweighs their strength and hope. Each person is allowed to share or not, according to his or her own timetable. In the meantime, however, most are encouraged by the sharing and example of others who are healing. In addition, those who are healing are continually reminded of the potential power of the atonement in the lives of all our Father's children.

What is the difference between Heart t' Heart and the groups that concern Church leaders ?

Some of the ways that *Heart t' Heart* is different are:

- (1) We absolutely do not promote secular humanism, the reliance on one's own self without acknowledgment and connection with God.
- (2) We use the basic principles of the Twelve Steps to put God squarely in the center of the participants' lives, acknowledging that all recovery and healing comes through our personal connection to Him.
- (3) We do not recommend intense, day and night therapy used by other programs, nor do we practice confrontational therapy. *Heart t' Heart* participants recover according