



**Neurobiology and Willpower**

**Sue Diamond, M.A.**  
 Founder/Director Good Life Recovery  
[www.goodliferecovery.ca](http://www.goodliferecovery.ca)

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**ASAM Addiction Definition (2020)**

*"Addiction is a treatable, chronic medical disease involving complex interactions among brain circuits, genetics, the environment, and an individual's life experiences. People with addiction use substances or engage in behaviors that become compulsive and often continue despite harmful consequences."*




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**ASAM (2011)**

Addiction is a primary, chronic disease of brain reward, motivation, memory and related circuitry characterized by:

1. inability to consistently abstain
2. impairment in behavioural control
3. cravings
4. diminished recognition of significant problems with one's behaviours and interpersonal relationships
5. dysfunctional emotional responses




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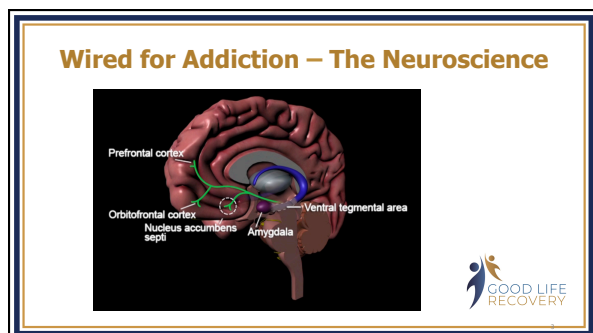
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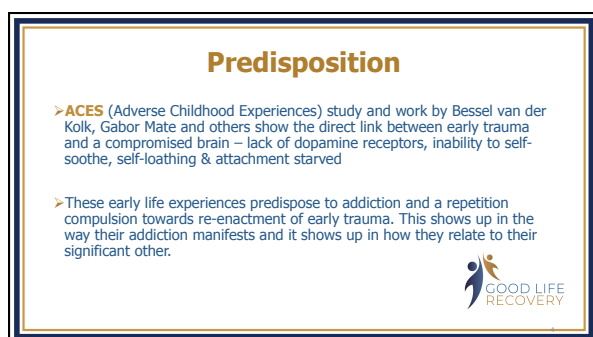
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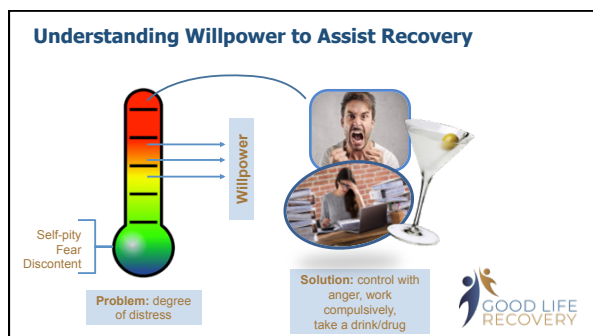
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## Emotional Sobriety: Where it Began

"I think that many oldsters who have put our AA "booze cure" to severe but successful tests still find they often lack emotional sobriety. Perhaps they will be the spearhead for the next major development in AA – the development of much more real maturity and balance (which is to say, humility) in our relations with ourselves, our fellows and with God.

Those adolescent urges that so many of us have for top approval, perfect security, and perfect romance – urges quite appropriate to age 17 – prove to be an impossible way of life when we are at age 47 or 57."

Bill Wilson, Emotional Sobriety: The Next Frontier




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## Defining Emotional Sobriety

- **It is the ability to know what you are feeling**
- **the ability to experience your feelings deeply without becoming overwhelmed by them**
- **The ability to regulate your mood without the use of substances or unhealthy behaviour**

Tian Dayton: Emotional Sobriety: From Relationship Trauma to Resilience and Balance




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## How Do We Sidestep Willpower?

- 1. Acceptance**
  - How easy is it for you to accept the things you cannot change and find peace?
- 2. Surrender**
  - What does it mean to you to surrender to your addiction?
- 3. Connection**
  - How easy is it for you to reach out for help and connection?




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**What other strategies do you have that help you to remember that you are wired differently?**

**What routines do you implement to ensure you stay “on the beam” and do not get too far off track?**



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