



LifeRing

LIFERING SECULAR RECOVERY

**Empower Your Sober Self
with LifeRing Secular Recovery**

Mary Beth O'Connor



MARY BETH'S STORY

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MY STORY

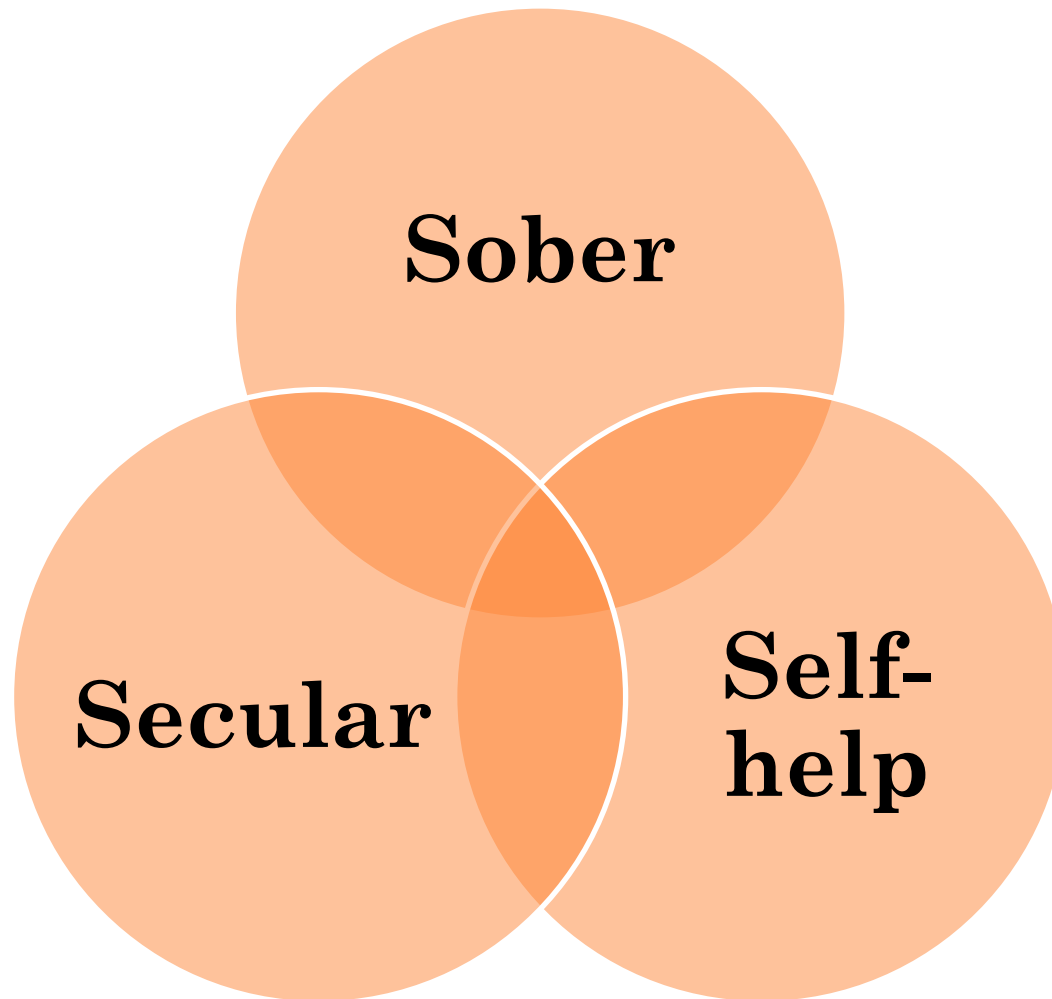
- Childhood
- Childhood drug history
- College
- Next 10 years
- Rehab
- 12-steps only
- My response
- Found secular options
- Recovery history
- Personal recovery
- Professional recovery



HOW LIFERING WORKS

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LIFERING'S “3-S” PHILOSOPHY



OVERVIEW OF LIFERING'S 3-S'S

Sobriety

- The top priority in our lives

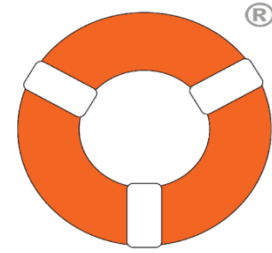
Secularity

- Respect for all faiths and none

Self-help

- I am the architect of my recovery

SOBRIETY



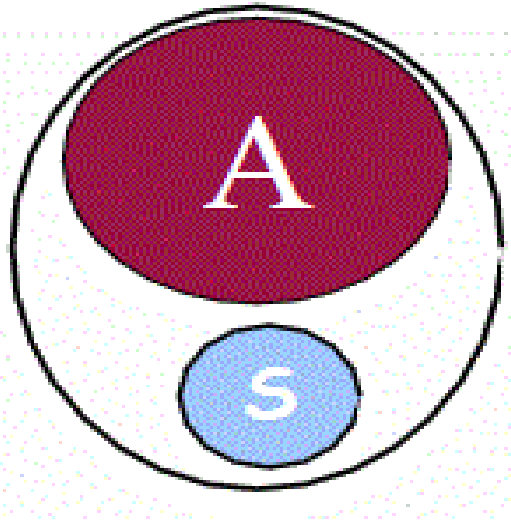
- The first S is sobriety
- Complete abstinence from all non-medically indicated addictive drugs, including alcohol
- LifeRing supports people without distinction as to which drug(s) they used

SOBRIETY & MEDICATION



- Abstinence includes taking medications that are:
 - Medically-indicated
 - Prescribed or approved by an informed professional
 - Taken as prescribed
- This includes Medication Assisted Treatment for substance use disorder
- And medication for pain management, mental health, or any other condition

“A” (Addicted Self) v. “S” (Sober Self)



Inside each person struggling with substances, there is a conflict between the urge to keep drinking or using, and the desire to stop and instead live a better life.

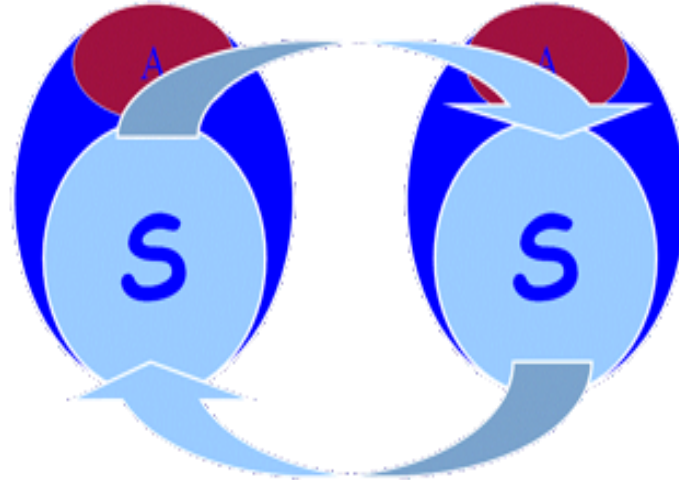
EMPOWERING YOUR SOBER SELF



As a person makes positive choices, the Sober Self gets stronger and stronger.

And, over time, the Sober Self defeats the Addicted Self.

S-TO-S CONNECTIONS



When one person's "S" connects with the "S" in another, they reinforce each other's sobriety.

The goal of a LifeRing meeting is to empower each participant's Sober Self.

SOBRIETY IS MY PRIORITY – I DON'T DRINK OR USE NO MATTER WHAT

Worksheet 3: Sobriety T-Chart (blank)

SOBRIETY DECISION TOOL

The issue: _____

How it would reinforce my addict self [A]		[S] How it would empower my sober self	

My decision: _____



SECULARITY

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SECULARITY:

We conduct meetings without religion or prayer

We rely on our own individual efforts rather than on a higher power

Many members have personal spiritual or religious beliefs



SELF-HELP

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KEY CONCEPTS



- Not powerless

- Need to fight for your recovery

- Personal Recovery Plan
 - I know what's best for me
 - Unique individual
 - Prioritize
 - Sources

- LifeRing alone or in combo with other programs

PRP BENEFITS

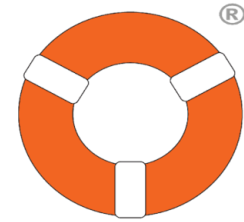


- Self-knowledge
- Ownership
- Resilience
- Efficacy
 - Guide self
 - Ask for help
 - Adjust plan



LIFERING MEETINGS

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MEETING FORMAT

- Peer-to-peer support
- Convenor
- All drugs together
- Smaller meetings
- Less regimented
 - Opening/closing
 - Identifier
 - Disease/disorder/habit
 - Track time

- “How Was Your Week?”
 - Last week
 - Upcoming week
 - Current life issues
 - No drugalogues

CROSSTALK OR DIALOGUE



- Interaction between members during meetings is encouraged

- Crosstalk
 - If member wants it
 - Positive or neutral
 - Questions
 - Ideas
 - Supportive feedback
 - Sharing your experiences

- Crosstalk breaks down barriers – everyone can learn something from everyone else

MEETING TOPICS (EXAMPLE)



- What happened/lead up to a relapse/slip?
- Does the group have any suggestions for ____.
- My partner isn't supportive of my recovery.
- My boss is near the end of his rope because of my behavior when actively using.
- I haven't reached the horrible bottom I hear about. Do I really need to stop? Do I really have a substance use disorder?



PEER ALTERNATIVES STUDY

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PEER ALTERNATIVES FOR ADDICTION (PAL) STUDY

- Sarah E. Zemore, PhD, Senior Scientist
Alcohol Research Group
- A Longitudinal Study of the Comparative Efficacy of LifeRing Secular Recovery, Women for Sobriety, SMART Recovery, and 12-steps for alcohol use disorder
- First study began in 2016 and concluded in 2018
PubMed Central® (PMC) at the U.S. National Institutes of Health's National Library of Medicine (NIH/NLM)

DR. SARAH ZEMORE'S PAL STUDY

- All 4 groups similarly effective
- “Members of the alternatives get about the same bang for their buck for their participation vs. 12-step”
- 91.2% of LifeRing respondents reported that they would recommend LifeRing to a friend
- Current follow up study is projected to conclude in fall or winter of 2023



ADD LIFERING TO YOUR TOOLBOX

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WHY IT WORKS:

LifeRing works through positive social reinforcement

The meeting process empowers the Sober Self within each participant

We offer information, understanding, and lots of support

REGARDLESS OF RELIGION



- Some seek a secular and/or less rigid approach for their sobriety journey.
 - Not just for religious Nones
 - Self-help attracts broad range of members
- Our meetings encourage creating a personal recovery plan through an ongoing analysis and by using group support
- LifeRing believes that the right recovery pathway is the one that's right for the individual!

OTHER KEY IDEAS



- Abstinence but can discuss initial concerns and challenges about this
- Relapses/slips are learning opportunities
- SUD isn't a character defect
- SUD isn't limited to certain personality types
- Encourage early intervention, not wait to bottom out

PARTICIPANT'S COMPARISON

LifeRing Secular Recovery

- **Individualized approach to build a recovery plan**
- **Empowered by personal decisions**
- **Crosstalk is encouraged**

Traditional Recovery Model

- **Prescriptive, step-by-step program**
- **Powerless over their addiction(s)**
- **Crosstalk is not generally practiced**

ONLINE AND IN- PERSON SUPPORT

+ online meetings

In-person meetings
growing again

Email groups

Forum



LifeRing Meetings

HWYW Meetings: How Was Your Week? is a weekly check-in meeting

Workbook Meetings: Using the "Recovery by Choice" workbook

Topic Meetings: As decided by the Convenor and/or participants

Focus Meetings: Meetings for people in recovery who are also in a variety of subgroups, such as women, veterans, LBGTQIA+, Spanish speaking

Co-Occurring Disorder Meetings: People who have substance use disorders, as well as mental health disorders and are diagnosed as having co-occurring disorders or dual diagnosis

Friends & Family: Meetings for people with someone they care about who is in recovery

INTERNATIONAL PRESENCE



- USA
- Australia
- Canada
- Ireland
- Mexico
- South America
- Sweden
- United Kingdom

Recovery by Choice

Living and Enjoying Life
Free of Alcohol and Other Drugs

A Workbook

Fourth Edition



Martin Nicolaus

"Clear ... engaging ... forceful" - William L. White

WITH
A NEW
SUPPLEMENT
BY THE
AUTHOR

EMPOWERING Your SOBER Self

The LifeRing Approach to Addiction Recovery

SECOND EDITION

By the author of *Recovery by Choice*
Martin Nicolaus

How Was Your Week?

Bringing People Together
in Recovery the LifeRing Way
- a Handbook

Second Edition

Martin Nicolaus



Humanly Possible

Stories of Secular Recovery

Kathleen Gargan, Editor
M.K., Co-editor



 **LifeRing**
Secular Recovery



LifeRing

QUESTIONS & COMMENTS



STAY IN TOUCH AND FIND MORE INFORMATION

Reach out to Mary Beth at
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LIFERING.ORG

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FACEBOOK.COM/LIFERINGWORLD
[WIDE](#)

Behavioral Health Awareness Series

If you are an Evernorth or Cigna customer and have questions about Substance Use treatment or about your benefits and how to use them, please contact:

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Wanda Russell – 800.274.7603 x342063

Kari Mack – 800.274.7603 x1034994

Jordan Nielsen – 800.274.7603 x382620