

Addiction Treatment and Relapse Prevention through Commitment to Body Oriented Self Soothing (BOSS)

The **BOSS** method developed by Arturo C. Andrade MA, MPH and Penelope Young Andrade LCSW

Executive Summary: "Feel good now/hurt later" is the hallmark of the addiction process. (Gorski 1989) When addicts seek out mood altering substances for stress reduction and pleasure; we believe they are, unknowingly, half way to the solution. The problem is in looking for pleasure in all the wrong places. Our research project, **Body Oriented Self Soothing** or **BOSS**, channels this healthy impulse away from unhealthy outlets and toward the instinctual soothing mechanisms the human organism offers.

Current addiction treatment, research and literature has under explored the myriad resources body oriented approaches offer for non drug relief of emotional pain, trauma, and stress. Most people in general and addicts in particular haven't learned that emotions are part of a charge/discharge cycle designed to balance hormones, blood pressure, fluid levels in tissues and bring the body back to a state of 'streaming' pleasure and pulsation typically in two -- twenty minutes. (Boyesen 1969, Boadella 1987, Young Andrade 1992,) There is a similar lack of understanding of the body's natural restorative laws for coping with the agitation and immobilization associated with trauma and post traumatic stress. (Levine 1997).

BOSS concentrates on using a short term (8 week), small group format with an ingenious learning aid, **Oral Focus™** to instruct addicts how to respect their impulses for pleasure by discovering and making a commitment to using the body's natural self soothing abilities. **BOSS** teaches addicts how to reconnect with the body's ever present drive for restoration; giving them a coping strategy to manage that 'feel good now' demand without 'hurting later'.

What is novel about the **BOSS** approach? We are liberating addicts' impulses to seek relief and pleasure from the shame of their addictions. We are shifting the focus of attention of treatment away from the psychology of stress events (the stories we tell ourselves about what's happening) to the physiology of stress events (what is actually happening in our neuro-biology moment by moment). While the psychology of trauma and wounding may be never ending loop tapes of misery (imagine the movie, "Leaving Las Vegas", on endless replay), the physiology of trauma and wounding includes the drive to recover, restore, heal (more like the "Rocky" series).

Teaching addicts how to use and commit to the body's natural highs with no side effects will provide 'right here, right now' resources for dealing with stress and significantly increase motivation for sobriety. Why?

One reason is that a major factor addicts weigh while contemplating quitting addictive behaviors is the "the amount of effort, energy and loss it will cost to overcome the problem." (Prochaska, Di Clemente et al 1992). Showing addicts how reasonably easy it can be to use resources right in their own bodies can diminish the perceived cost factor and increase likelihood of moving toward sobriety .

We also know addicts change in stages, with particular processes more helpful in some stages than others.(Prochaska, Di Clemente et al 1992). The **BOSS** method offers processes for each stage of change: from Increasing Information, to Reframing Problem, to Commitment Enhancing, to Substituting Alternatives to Reinforcement Management, to Helping Relationships, to Dramatic Relief.

Finally, and most importantly, in 35 years of clinical experience with both addict and non-addict populations, we have observed it is axiomatic: when clients are relieved of shame about their basic impulses and discover they have resources within themselves to cope with life; they gravitate naturally toward healthy behaviors. We have seen again and again, when people discover there is a force for healing and health intrinsic in our human design; notions of higher self, living with dignity become real and accessible. It is almost as if discovering this instinctive force for healing opens the door for faith in life/god/spirit again. Energy is freed up for commitment to change.

We are under no illusions that **BOSS** is a magic bullet. Addictive patterns have a devastating, treatment defying grip. Our method adds resources to the arsenal of strategies and skills ultimately needed to achieve sobriety. Although we believe **BOSS** will work well as a stand alone program, we also envision it may increase the effectiveness of **12 Step**, **CENAPS**, or any of the other excellent addiction treatment and recovery programs currently available. In any case, **BOSS** research will increase our understanding of the feasibility of body oriented approaches for addiction treatment and relapse prevention.

Addiction Relapse Prevention through Body Awareness, Oral Anchoring, and Skillful Will

The BOSS method developed by Arturo C. Andrade and Penelope Young Andrade

Introduction: Research indicates the single leading cause of addiction relapse is maladaptive response to stress triggers. This research project (**B**ody **O**riented **S**elf **S**oothing or **BOSS**) concentrates on teaching subjects in recovery to shift from states of agitation and anxiety to states of calm, relaxation, relief within minutes of triggering events, or within minutes of the awareness of stress buildup. We believe **BOSS** will provide recovering addicts the confidence and skill to face inevitable life stressors without relapses or with fewer relapses of less intensity and duration.

Background: When substance abusers give up the protection addiction affords for reducing stress they are easy targets for relapse. They have not learned enough self soothing, mood management techniques to replace the quick, immediate stress reduction drugs and alcohol provide. Traditional psychotherapeutic techniques which importantly increase overall insight and self esteem are inadequate to the task of providing immediate relief in the face of stress triggers. Recovering addicts need to be given specific, concrete directions for using body awareness as a vehicle for self soothing in response to stress. They also need rituals and powerful anchors for newly learned self soothing resources. Training in skillful use of willpower will provide recovering addicts a characterological foundation for continued use of these new resources. Armed with such resources, we believe recovering addicts can substantially increase their motivation for conquering the addiction pattern in the long run; and decrease the number and duration of relapses in the short run. Increasing addicts' subjective sense of resourcefulness in coping with stress is of equal importance to immediate relapse prevention as a measure of success in long term recovery. The recovery process often requires negotiating relapse events as opportunities for strengthening commitment and refining stress reduction strategies.

Goals:

- I. Determine if subjects exposed to BOSS have decreased number and duration of addiction relapse incidents.
- II. Determine if subjects exposed to BOSS have increased subjective experience of personal resourcefulness and confidence in coping with stress incidents.
- III. Determine if subjects exposed to BOSS have increased subjective sense of personal mastery and ability to resist addiction patterns and make healthy choices in response to stress.
- IV. Determine if subjects exposed to BOSS and Oral Focus have greater success than subjects exposed to BOSS without Oral Focus anchoring.

Objectives:

- I. Small group presentations to shift subjects perspective on stress incidents from habitual thinking about stress (i.e. "Bad things always happen to me because I'm a screw up" to actual bio-dynamics of stress arousal and resolution ("My body has a built in program for coping and soothing any stress")
- II. Small group presentations on myriad resources available in the Bodymind for stress reduction and "getting high naturally" regardless of life circumstances.
- III. Small group presentations on the Will, shifting focus from "failures of willpower" to focus on strategic use of Purpose, Intention, Alignment, Values and Skillful Will. "It's easier to make healthy choices when I'm in line with my true values and clever in outsmarting my unhealthy patterns." Focus on need for "no blame" attitudes concerning mistakes and relapses as blame and self hatred increase stress.

IV. Small group presentations on dynamics of habits and changing habits, with focus on triggers and anchors in general: shifting perspective from “I’m a helpless victim of my addiction triggers” to “I have the power with BOSS and Oral Focus to develop new, healthy habits and healthy triggers”.

V. Small group demonstration and practice of using BOSS and Oral Focus to give subjects “here and now” experience of self soothing, “natural highs”; ripple effect for group soothing.. Protocol will be taught for coping with stress incidents in real life using BOSS and Oral Focus.

Possible Measurements: Biological and Psychological

- I. Saliva test for Cortisol to measure stress levels.
- II. Urine Tests to measure incidence of relapse.
- III. SCLR 90 (or similar measure of symptoms, resourcefulness and confidence)
- IV. Available Will Profile (to be developed)

General Design Parameters:

Control group: Recovering Addicts receiving regular drug treatment programs at Community Agency (TBA).

Experimental group I: Recovering addicts receive regular drug treatment program plus two extra groups per week of only BOSS methodology.

Experimental group II: Recovering addicts receive regular drug treatment program plus two extra groups per week of BOSS and Oral Focus methodology.

All groups are administered all biological and psychological test measures pre and post treatment.

Experimental Group Design:

12 week program consisting of two, two hour group meetings per week for groups of 9 – 12 members and 3 group leaders. Each group will consist of one hour of lecture/presentation on new perspectives/skills and one hour of demonstration practice of BOSS and Oral Focus.

Group Method:

Addicts are often not aware of the actual state of stress or ease in their bio-organisms at any given moment. Developing awareness of body sensations is an essential part of the **BOSS** model. Using small group processes, recovering addicts will be taught how to direct their attention to the actual physical sensations of discomfort or stress in their bodies as soon as they become aware of their reaction to stress triggers. They will then be taught how to stay focused on those sensations and not the thoughts about those sensations. Addicts and other victims of post traumatic stress disorder often aggravate initial stress responses with catastrophic thinking and/or by replaying traumatic experiences over and over in their minds.

Group members would be taught that no matter what the stressor, they will be able to decrease their physical distress in two to twenty minutes. They will learn to identify the subtle cues the body gives to indicate the shift from sympathetic nervous system arousal (fight, flight or freeze), due to the trigger, to

the parasympathetic calming due to focused awareness on the body. Once the parasympathetic effect is activated, subjects will be instructed to place an oral anchor (a scented wax substance) in a specific location in the mouth for one to ten minutes. The subjects will be taught to concentrate on the experience of relief and relaxation as they focus on the parasympathetic soothing. We know certain ritual sights and sounds trigger substance abuse craving. In this study, the stress reduction response will be ritualized with the sights and sounds associated with using the oral anchor. As one member of the group completes the calming process, we predict the ripple effect will take over. Other group members will also experience calming and soothing. At that point they will be instructed to use their oral anchoring substance as well.

Finally, the group will learn techniques for aligning will power with the act of choosing to use this self soothing method, rather than returning to addiction patterns. This involves identifying dysfunctional belief systems: i.e. “Nothing could be as good as crack, smack, booze. . .”; “The craving is stronger than I am”. Subjects will also discover their individual reasons for wanting to recover, “I promised my mother, child, lover I would stay clean”, “I’m sick of street life”, “I don’t want to die or go to jail”. Focusing awareness on the specific idiosyncratic stress triggers for each group member will help each subject develop unique strategies for recognizing and avoiding stress. Subjects will be encouraged to make contact and develop stronger connections with their “ Higher/Stronger/Wiser Self” as a source of willpower. Additional techniques include Visualization, Affirmation, Journaling for strengthening will.

Theoretical Background:

The **BOSS** method is based integration and expansion of theory and research from: Gerda Boyessen’s Biodynamic Model, Peter Levine’s Somatic Experiencing Model, Roberto Assagioli’s Psychosynthesis, Neuro-Linguistic Programming’s Anchoring Theory, Chinese Medicine’s Meridian Theory.

Comments:

When addicts seek out mood altering substances for self soothing, stress reduction, and pleasure, we believe they are half way to the solution for themselves. Addicts need to be supported for their impulse to seek relief and pleasure. We hope to channel this healthy impulse away from unhealthy outlets (drugs, alcohol, etc.) and towards the instinctual soothing mechanisms the human organism offers. We believe a major part of our nation’s current addiction problem is lack of education, familiarity, and alignment with the kinds of “natural highs” the body is designed to provide as way of helping people cope with the vicissitudes of human experience. Promoting these “natural highs – no side effects” will increase motivation for shifting addiction patterns and provide concrete resources for dealing with stress triggers.

About the Authors:

Arturo C. Andrade, BA, MPA received his B. A. from San Bernardino State University in 1973. He received his MPA from National University in 1976. He had 10 years experience at Juvenile Hall in San Bernardino County from 1963 to 1973. Mr. Andrade retired from the U.S. Probation Department after twenty years of service in 1990. His post-retirement focus has been on the BodyMind connection through the study of massage, Chinese medicine, Homeopathy and Naturopathy. Mr. Andrade has been researching and developing the basis for his Oral Focus™ method for over 30 years.

Penelope Young Andrade, LCSW received her B. A. from San Francisco State College in 1965; her LCSW from Fordham University in 1971. Early Social Work experience in Brooklyn N.Y. at the Department of Social Services, the Wiltwyck School for Boys and the Family Service Center initiated her into the ravages of the addiction process. She founded the S.D. Center for Psychosynthesis in 1985. Ms. Young Andrade has been studying the BodyMind connection for the last 35 years in her private practice

and through post graduate study in Family Systems, Psychosynthesis, Bio-Dynamic Psychotherapy, and Peter Levine's Somatic Experiencing. She is the author of numerous articles on the BodyMind connection. Ms. Young Andrade is currently on the faculty of the San Diego University for Integral Studies.