

Tools to Address the Addiction and Her Pain

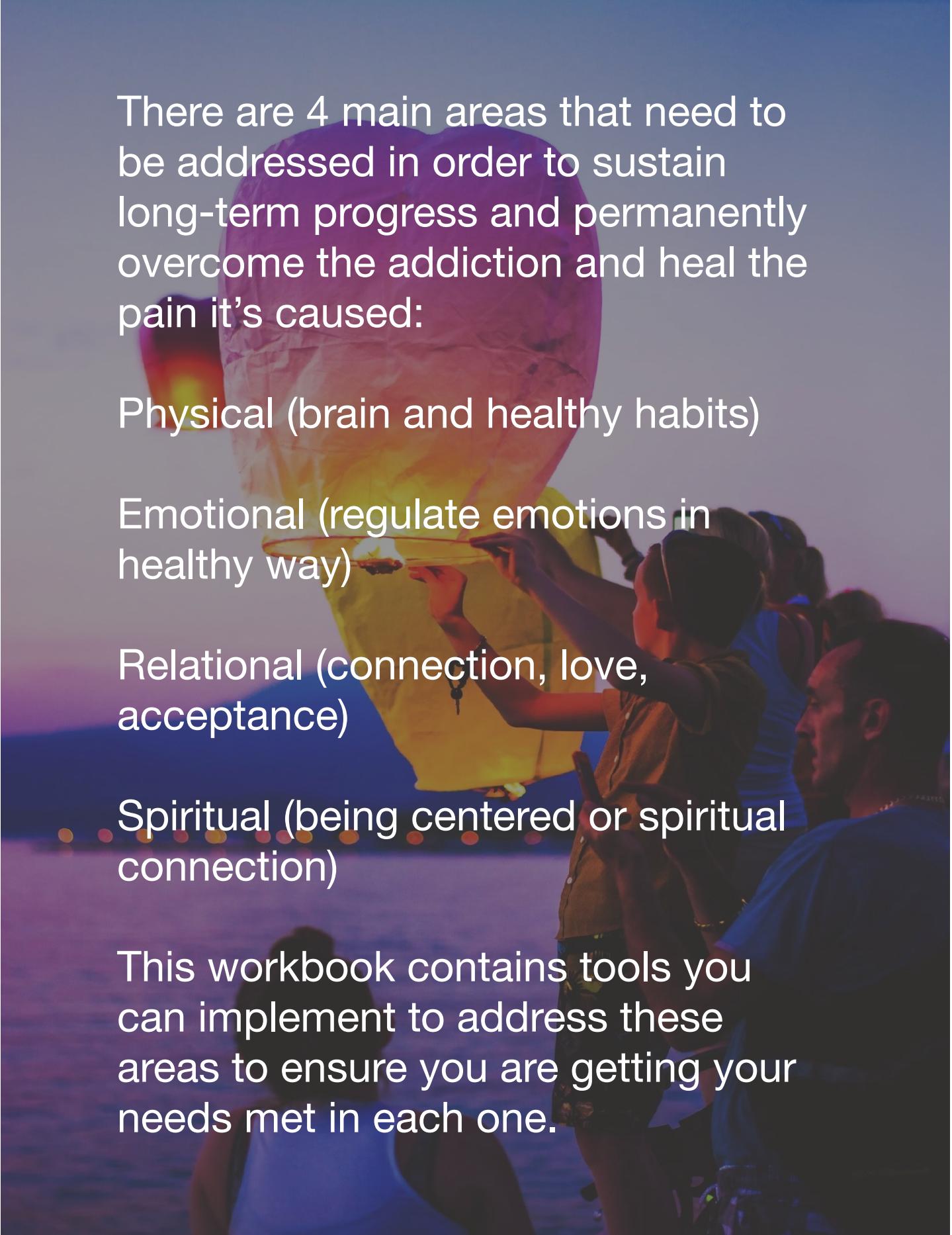




This workbook contains a set of tools to address each aspect of healing. Addiction and pain negatively affects all categories of life, so giving each category the attention it needs for healing, progress becomes sustainable.

You don't have to apply every tool at once, but by focusing on each area of life that needs the most attention, you'll see significant progress as you apply the tools that supports your progress

Introduction



There are 4 main areas that need to be addressed in order to sustain long-term progress and permanently overcome the addiction and heal the pain it's caused:

Physical (brain and healthy habits)

Emotional (regulate emotions in healthy way)

Relational (connection, love, acceptance)

Spiritual (being centered or spiritual connection)

This workbook contains tools you can implement to address these areas to ensure you are getting your needs met in each one.

PHYSICAL

An important focus in the healing process is rewiring the brain to create new neuropathways that support a healthy lifestyle, while eliminating usage of old pathways that lead to bad habits and disempowering choices. Below are some ideas that will create a new standard of living that brings energy, clarity, and peace. Try your best to be consistent!

Sleep

7-9 hours per night is recommended

Healthy Food and Nutrition

Exercise

Regular exercise helps to combat depression and increases dopamine and other endorphins in the brain that boost happiness and clarity

Relaxation and Fun

Engaging in a hobby or relaxation restores depleted levels of energy and can help us to be more productive and happy

Learn Something New

New skills and experiences keep your brain healthy. The mental work it takes to develop something new can slow signs of aging and may even delay Alzheimer's disease

Get Sunshine

A few minutes in the sunshine raises vitamin D levels, and that's good for your bones, your heart, and your mood.

EMOTIONAL

Addiction is all about mismanaging our feelings. Our emotional state affects our behavior and often triggers the impulse to numb out or escape if we don't have healthy ways to cope and process. Our feelings are feedback – they let us know what we need, so learning to notice and listen to them will empower us to get our needs met and stay in full control.

Reaching out

Feeling understood and not alone brings a sense of confidence and feelings of belonging. The fastest and most effective way to regulate our emotions is to reach out to someone else for support. We were never meant to be alone and disconnected, so honoring our wired-in needs for connection to help us feel better emotionally is a skill that must be learned.

Mindfulness

This is one of the most important skills you can develop! Research study after study confirms the validity and value of mindfulness meditation. It increases happiness, decreases stress and aggression, improves focus, and increases kindness. Contrary to what people often think – meditation isn't about sitting quietly and not having any thoughts, rather it's simply the practice of being aware of our internal experience. This gives us power over the impulses of the addiction or negative emotional state and helps us to regulate our emotions significantly better. Download the app [Headspace](#) and spend just 10 short minutes and start seeing benefits quickly.

EMOTIONAL

Change Your State Exercise

The brain is the most powerful computer in the universe. We are the only creatures who can think a thought and get mad, sad, happy or grateful, etc., Immediately change your state by leverage the strength of the brain by doing this short exercise:

Immediately Change State

Breathing

Slowing down our emotional response by deep breathing can bring clarity and help us to regain total control over our choices and reactions.

Self-Compassion

We would rarely speak to a friend the way that we speak to ourselves. Harsh language and being hard on ourselves in an attempt to motivate us or change our behavior doesn't work and is unproductive. Rather, the exercise of self compassion helps us to make better choices, improves our mood, and calms our nervous system.

Here are the steps to self compassion:

Self Compassion

RELATIONAL

We are social beings! We need connection and belonging, acceptance and support. When we don't get it, we feel alone and isolated. Make sure you work towards developing a strong social network and at least a few significant relationships with people who you trust and go deeper with because it adds a layer of fulfillment to our lives and it's the strongest buffer against addition and the pain of trauma.

Reach out

Letting others in on an emotional level, being seeing (flaws and all) is one of the most healing experiences we can have. Most of the couples affected by addiction want to develop a deeper connection with their spouse, so taking it slow and beginning to open up at least with the exercises in this program can be a jumping-off point to letting your partner discover more about you.

Find support in friends or a group of people

Vulnerability

Vulnerability is the superglue that bonds people together. By seeing the softer, more raw side of people, it naturally triggers an empathetic response in the listener. Being able to risk opening up strengthens our relationships and helps us feel more understood

Coming Out of Isolation

So many people struggling with addiction and the pain of betrayal end up isolating and shutting everyone out. Use the [FB group](#) as a resource for support and help! Everyone in the group can relate to you on some level, so you have a built in network of support there. Use it, and you can also be a person someone else can lean on for support.

SPIRITUAL

Spirituality is an important component that many people overlook, but by focusing on this aspect of healing, you'll find a greater sense of peace and inner calm.

In this section, as we speak about spirituality, it's referring to the sense of inner calm, balance, and feeling of being centered. For some people, spirituality is connected to God or a Higher Power, the Universe, Source, etc., and for other people it's completely separate. Whatever it looks like for you, ensuring you create this peace is crucial since there is so often inner turmoil and stress due to the chaos of the addiction.

Meditation

Being in nature

Getting sunlight on our skin and away from the distractions of daily living provides important opportunities to center again and carve out time for ourselves in stillness.

Unplugging from electronics

Unplugging from electronics give your brain the needed time to be idle and rest. Mary Helen Immordino-Yang, a professor of neuroscience at the University of Southern California said, "If you're stuck in this feed-me stimulation loop, we know that this is associated with the feeling of being out of control," she says. "It's associated with anxiety and disconnectedness, and a feeling of, what's really real?"

Taking time throughout the day to completely unplug allows your brain to recharge, and it allows you to evaluate where you are emotionally and what you might need.

SPIRITUAL

Forgiveness

Forgiveness is not something you do for your partner, it's something that you do for yourself. It doesn't involve giving permission or acceptance of bad behavior, forgiveness is simply releasing anger and resentment, allowing you to clear your heart and body of these emotions that build up and erode away internal peace and happiness.

Prayer

Journaling

Taking the time to journal and identify and process through the thoughts and emotions of the day or a particular event helps you to identify how you experience things. The more clarity you have regarding your internal experience and how you might have been impacted by something, the more feedback you'll get regarding what you need and how to resolve struggles. Journaling gives people a chance to reflect and slow down, which helps to increases our control and emotional well being.

Yoga

Creative expression

Creativity, whether that's in the form of art, music, painting, building, etc., has significant benefits. It's show to reduce stress and anxiety, promotes problem solving and critical thinking, improves our ability to focus, and increases happiness.

Now that you have a set of tools you can use for each category of life, decide which category you'll focus on and which tool you'll implement this week by focusing on what needs the most attention at this point in your life.