

Alcoholics Anonymous



Mark Kinnanan spoke at the Treynor Optimist Club meeting on February 22. He is a Chemical Dependency Counselor at Jenny Edmundson Hospital.

Mark said that alcohol kills 40 times as many people as all other drugs. The majority of people in psychiatric wards are alcoholics.

Mark talked about the Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) twelve step program. This program can be used for all types of addictions, including gambling, drugs, pornography, etc. He has found that people have more power to overcome addictions when God is at the center of their recovery. For people who do not believe in God, they can substitute "good orderly direction" for God.

Isolation is a huge part of alcoholism. Sponsors are required to help someone in recovery. Part of the recovery process is also helping others.

Mark said that there are at least three parts to a disposition for someone to become alcoholic: environment, genes, and personality.

Asked about marijuana, Mark said it is a gateway drug. Marijuana is fat soluble, unlike alcohol. Therefore it stays in your system a long time. Lab tests can detect it for at least 30 days. The obvious effects last 4-6 hours, but since it stays in the body, it builds up over time. It is costly to determine the actual amount in the body, so most tests just determine if it is present or not.

Most AA counselors are volunteers. Most people that come to AA on a court order continue after the court order expires.

The origins of Alcoholics Anonymous can be traced to the Oxford Group, a religious movement popular in the United States and Europe in the early 20th century. Members of the Oxford Group practiced a formula of self-improvement by performing self-inventory, admitting wrongs, making amends, using prayer and meditation, and carrying the message to others. The roots of AA were planted in December 1934, but June 10, 1935 is celebrated as the founding date of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Mark said that the younger people start drinking, the more likely they are to become alcoholics. AA also discourages recovering alcoholics dating other alcoholics. That is called 13 stepping.

More information about Alcoholics Anonymous can be found at www.aa.org.