

The A B C's of Getting Clean and Sober

A Primer for Adolescents and Young Adults
with a Substance Use Disorder

Dr. Alvin D. Lewis

Cover by Louise Bietendorf

The A B C's of Getting Clean and Sober

If You Want To Make The World A Better Place,
Take A Look At Yourself And Make A Change.

Michael Jackson, 1987

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Foreword

In July 2008 I had the pleasure of attending a concert in which Tito Jackson, from the famed Jackson family, was headliner. Tito and his band, former members of Cameo and several other groups, played some of the Jackson 5 songs. One of my favorite songs has always been ABC. Luck was on my side as the group sang it. I went home on a natural high after the concert.

I sat down at my computer and began singing the song ABC. Within two (2) hours I had written the ABC's of Getting Clean and Sober. I immediately began to share them with my college students, clients, colleagues and family members. Everyone seemed to like them.

In November 2011 I shared the "ABC's of Getting Clean and Sober" with one of my Social Welfare classes. A female student seemed intrigued by them and stated she thought I should turn the handout into a book. The inspiration for this book came from that student and the many adolescents and young adults I have treated with a substance use disorder.

I hope this book will be helpful to young people with a substance use disorder and to those who treat this population.

Dr. Alvin D. Lewis

Acknowledgements

Writing any book takes a lot of hard work, tenacity, and fortitude. This book came about as a result of a concert I attended and a student suggesting that I turn a handout into a book. So, I first want to thank the student who urged me to write the book. Through the years I have learned so much from my college students and they have helped me be my best. This was especially the case in the substance use disorder classes I taught.

I want to thank my sons, Affindi and Azlan for their encouragement and support throughout this project. Their opinions and suggestions were very much appreciated. They are my rock and foundation even though they might say it is the other way around. Cristal, thank you for your support too. Now that you and Affindi are married I will finally have a daughter.

My colleagues at Pima Community College and Pima County Juvenile Court Center were very helpful in that they inquired about this book periodically which kept me focused and grounded. I especially want to thank Lisa Fontaine who contributed a beautiful poem that is included in the book. She also typed the manuscript and did some editing. Additional editing was done by Melissa Martinez, the daughter of Paula Burns. Paula is a friend and colleague with Juvenile Court. Thanks to both of you for your support of this book.

I have learned so much about adolescents and young adults in my work with youth at the detention center. Part of my inspiration to write this book came from my work

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with them. I felt there was a need for an easy read that could help them get clean and sober.

No book is complete without numerous revisions. I want to thank the following reviewers; Dorothy Clark, M.Ed., Carol Rawls, MA, Amy Bass, MSW, John Dommissse, M.D., and Margaret Higgins, Ph.D for their critiques and reviews. Also, thanks to a dear friend, Keith Shelman, M.D., who provided much of the technical assistance for this project. Bob and Fran with Educational Publishers, thank you too for your work on the actual book.

Finally, I want to thank my family and many friends who were incredibly supportive of this project and understood that I had to be less available while it was being written. This book reflects their sacrifices as well as mine. Thank you, brothers, Arnold, Calvin, and Clayton. Also, many thanks to my five sisters, Ellen, Dot, Vickie (died before the project was completed), Alice and Carol. Dr. Deborah Foreman, you know how special you are to me and your helpfulness on this book was very much appreciated.

About the Author

Alvin Lewis has been writing books and articles since 1991. He is recently retired as a faculty member at Pima Community College in Tucson, Arizona where he taught social services courses and was director of field placements. Currently he is adjunct faculty there. He also works part time as a clinician at the Juvenile Court Center, Tucson, Arizona with youths who have a substance use disorder.

Dr. Lewis has worked in the addiction field for over forty years in various settings in different parts of the United States. He has been the clinical director at several different agencies and served in the Peace Corps in the 1980's.

Dr. Lewis holds a bachelor's degree from Norfolk State University and a master's degree in social work from Temple University. His doctorate is from Nova Southeastern University in Florida. Additionally, he holds an advance certificate in healthcare management from Old Dominion University.

Dr. Lewis is a Licensed Therapist in Arizona and Virginia. He also is a Licensed Independent Substance Abuse Counselor in Arizona. Additionally, he has several other specialized certificates.

Over the past forty years Dr. Lewis has presented at numerous workshops and conferences throughout the United States. He has presented at conferences in Canada, Mexico and Asia. Additionally, Dr. Lewis has been on many radio and television programs through the years.

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Other books written by Dr. Lewis include: *Cultural Diversity in Sexual Abuser Treatment* (1999), *Multiracial Children: What Parents and Professionals Need to Know* (2002), and *Things that Go Bump in the Night: and Other Little Life's Stressors* (2011). He has chapters in several other books and is frequently asked to be a peer reviewer for books and journal articles.

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Introduction

The DSM-V recently was released. It redefined how we look at alcoholism and other drug issues. The field of substance use and treatment is one that continues to evolve. We have come a long way in how we assess and treat adolescents and young people with a substance use disorder. The ABC's of Getting Clean and Sober is an attempt to help young people take charge of their life and deal with their substance use disorder. It is a road map to recovery.

The book is aligned with a harm reduction model as well as recovery approach. Some adolescents and young adults are not willing to give up drugs but are ready to reduce the harm that drugs may cause them.

How to use this Book

This book's focus is on adolescents and young adults who have a substance use disorder. It begins with the obvious which is the admission that a problem exist. Once the admission is made the young person, with the help of others, can then decide what the next steps will be. For some it might be 12 step meetings, working with a sponsor, and working the steps. For another young person it could require outpatient or intensive outpatient counseling. Still some may need an inpatient or residential treatment.

There are many case examples and case excerpts included in this book. They are contemporary, practical, and insightful. As a result, the hope is that the young