



## The 10 Ten Principles of the Escalator Change Process

- 1- The key concept of “Recovery” and/or “Upward or Positive Change” indicates an improvement in functioning and a degree of personal development. This improvement in functioning may differ from person to person, dependent upon one’s perspective, one’s experience and one’s personal goals. It is an individualized path toward self-improvement and goal attainment
  
- 2 - A person may be driven to engage in the change process for many reasons, all of which fall into one or more of the following three categories:
  - **External** (outside) forces are primarily driving one to make life changes (such as pressure from family, employer, school, etc.)
  - **Internal** factors are the primary reason for change. For example, change is driven by an inward desire to stop a bad habit.
  - **Most frequently a mix of both internal and external factors work in combination to drive change**
  
- 3 - The change process is often like a long winding road through the wilderness as opposed an easily traceable path or course. The path often changes both as life situations change and in relation to the way one gains understanding, insight and motivation over time.
  
- 4 - The concepts that most directly influence one’s path toward positive change are threefold:
  - **Insight** – Insight involves the depth of one’s understanding including one’s ability to accurately identify and define the reasons and the problems indicating a need for change. Insight is variable as opposed to being constant and therefore can be gained or lost at any time.
  - **Internal Motivation** – This involves one’s personal reasons for wanting to address and change a problem. Internal motivation can be closely linked with the inward development of a hope and a desire for change. Motivation also varies over time and as circumstances change
  - **External Motivation** – External motivators are those people and other entities that come from outside of an individual which push that person toward change (whether wanted or unwanted by the individual) External motivation in the form of coercion is often replaced by support with time and progress
  - **Positive sustained change in these areas manifests itself as a combination of inspiration and progress often referred to as Inspired Progress**
  
- 5 - Internal motivation, of the three, is the most influential factor with regard to a lasting inspired progress, yet it can be the most challenging to develop and sustain. One’s personal values and sense of purpose are key aspects involved in the process of increasing and maintaining internal motivation.
  
- 6 - The Escalator takes into consideration that the change process is not a “one size fits all” course but rather the path one takes toward progress that is directly influenced by one’s current (and often changing) levels of insight, internal motivation and external motivation.
  
- 7 - The 12 Steps are one of many paths to recovery and positive change. The 12 Steps have been a highly effective method for many individuals and the steps will continue to be an option for many who are seeking recovery and change. However, the 12 Steps should not be considered the only path. 12 Step programs for many will be part of their own path however, 12 Step group involvement is **not a requirement** for success or progress.



8 - The unique process of change involved with overcoming substance use issues must also take into account coexisting issues such as emotional and behavioral issues, environment, health, family, one's belief system, one's sense of purpose and one's personal history, as well as current stressors, values, goals and personal circumstances.

9 - A large portion of people who abuse substances lack motivation for action on some level, therefore it is critical that there is a plan for this issue. The Escalator takes into account those who may lack motivation by accepting individuals at a level that they are willing to and able to start to work at. In other words, ***the Escalator is about "meeting people where they are at" and then helping people to move forward and at their own pace.***

10 - Abstinence remains a key consideration with regard to the change process and can be the most direct path toward inspired progress and goal attainment in many situations. The journey toward abstinence can be variable, unpredictable, and gradual with many peaks and valleys, as well as highs and lows. Others, however, may not choose abstinence and instead may select a path of harm reduction or incremental change. Every individual must come to their own conclusion as each person will learn from their own experiences and choices as well as from the guidance and experiences of trusted others with regard to this essential matter. Safety should always be the key consideration for counselors and others helping individuals who are finding their own path. Legal mandates also often play a role in this selection process when applicable as many legal entities require abstinence, regardless of personal choice.

