

## What This Brochure Is About

LifeRing self-help groups are based on the recognition that there is the potential to get clean and sober within every addicted person. If we find it, bring it out, and strengthen it, we can recover from addiction and lead happier, more productive lives.

Too often the alcoholic/addict is seen as a person who is unwilling and powerless to change. On closer examination, we find that the typical person who continues to use alcohol/drugs despite harmful consequences is deeply conflicted about this behavior. Addicts are often torn between the continuing, self-destructive urge to keep using and the self-protective urge to quit using and regain control of their lives.

LifeRing Secular Recovery offers people a chance to listen to and strengthen this self-empowering voice. We stress methods that give encouragement and support to the person's positive sober qualities and beliefs. We offer a simple approach to recovery that is understandable by anyone, no matter what their education or how recent their sobriety. Don't drink or use, no matter what; all else will follow. Avoid doing things that lead you back to drinking or drugging. Do more things that reinforce your sobriety and lead you to a happier life.

If you are interested in more about how the Life-Ring approach to recovery works, read this brochure.

### To find out more about LifeRing:

Browse to [www.unhooked.com](http://www.unhooked.com), the Internet voice of LifeRing Secular Recovery. Join LifeRing **email lists** and **chats**.

Read ***Recovery By Choice: Living and Enjoying Life Free of Alcohol and Drugs, A Workbook***. A 300-p. self-help workbook that helps you build your personal recovery program.

Read ***How Was Your Week?*** A handbook for LifeRing meeting facilitators and others wanting an in-depth look at the LifeRing approach.

Read ***Presenting LifeRing Secular Recovery (3rd ed)***. *Articles about LifeRing written for treatment professionals, in magazine format.*

Read ***Keepers: Voices of Secular Recovery***, a paperback with motivational anecdotes, stories and poems.

Read ***The LifeRing Bylaws***. How LifeRing is organized and self-governed.

Buy these books at LifeRing meetings or online from [www.lifering.com](http://www.lifering.com), the website of LifeRing Press.

**LifeRing will be happy to send a speaker or speakers to address your audience.**

#### Contact LifeRing:

**LifeRing Service Center**  
**1440 Broadway #312**  
**Oakland CA 94612-2023**  
**Tel 1 800 811 4142**  
**Fax 510-763-1513**  
**service@lifering.org**  
**www.lifering.org**

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### You can find a LifeRing meeting at:

# Self-Help Is What We Do

**To get clean and sober,  
and stay that way,  
empower  
your Sober Self**

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**LifeRing Service Center**  
**Oakland CA**  
**1-800-811-4142**  
**www.lifering.org**

## Self-Help Is What We Do

**R**ecovery begins with the desire to get clean and sober. Often this desire is feeble at first, the product of harsh experience or the fear of an untimely death. But while this survival instinct may be faint and weak, it can be strengthened. Addictions are powerful, but they are not omnipotent. David defeated Goliath. We can defeat our addictions and free ourselves from them. With work and support, we can empower our best selves, our "sober selves," and reclaim our lives from our self-destructive using.

LifeRing recovery meetings exist to empower the sober self within each of us. Sometimes we do not recognize that we even have a desire for sobriety until our peers mirror it for us. Interacting with others like ourselves breaks down the hopelessness we may have felt when we tried to deal with our problem in isolation. Companionship with others in recovery kindles hope within us, and inspires us with the winning "Yes I can!" attitude.

LifeRing recovery meetings are safe places where we can let our hair down and be ourselves. They help us surmount crises in our lives without drinking or using. They are places for sober celebration of our victories. In our meetings we may come to look at ourselves in a new light. The groups are informal classrooms, where we each learn and teach what has worked to keep us sober. They are workshops where, bit by bit, we put together the elements of our personal recovery program. We encourage members to try several approaches and to master a variety of methods. We learn from each other's experiences and explorations.

**W**e encourage sharing and cross-talk to promote supportive participation by everyone. In our meetings we may improve our social skills, deepen our empathy and develop our capacity to feel and to accept our emotions. We form bonds with other sober people. We give ourselves credit for our sober time, and applaud one another for staying clean and sober. With the support of the other participants in our groups, we turn our desire to stay clean and sober into a living reality.

At the same time, our meetings work to disempower the voice of addiction within us. We deprive our inner addict of its essential fuel by maintaining abstinence from alcohol and drugs. We try to keep the focus on our current sobriety and on our sober future instead of dwelling endlessly on our past intoxication. We choose companions who support our sobriety instead of socializing with people who will encourage us to drink or use. By such means we deflate the power of the addicted self within us.

Eventually the imbalance of power shifts within us. Our sober self becomes stronger than our addict self. There is an inner revolution. We become transformed from drunks and addicts who had a sober self imprisoned within us, into clean and sober people with a locked-up inner addict. We recover the sober self that we used to be, before addiction hijacked our systems; and we build or rebuild on that foundation, with sobriety as our priority.

**C**onsistent with our self-help philosophy, we encourage each LifeRing participant to construct their own sobriety program. We take ownership of our recovery by deciding for ourselves what we need to do to remain abstinent. The most effective recovery program is one we freely choose. Just as there is no one way to grow

up, there are many ways to achieve sobriety. We each need to find our own road to the common goal.

The LifeRing Recovery meetings and literature attempt to provide a rich and diverse selection of recovery tools. No ready-made recovery formula can fit everyone. Reinforcing motivation is more effective than enforcing conformity. We are a support environment, not a capital-P Program. We have as many programs as we have participants. We are not a vehicle for any school of psychology. We are not disciples of any guru. We keep an open mind about the ultimate causes of addiction. Our approach is secular and eclectic. We know there are no panaceas. The only thing that always works is not to drink or use, no matter what.

**L**ifeRing Recovery participation is compatible with a broad range of abstinence-based approaches. We encourage participants who feel the need for professional help to seek out medical and other treatment professionals with addiction expertise. But ultimately the best defense against relapse is for every recovering person to take responsibility for their own sobriety. Long-term progress means turning our initial desire for recovery into mastery of the art and science of keeping ourselves sober.

The basic work in any self-help group is always within ourselves. But the existence of the group enormously facilitates our inner efforts, and many of us feel grateful to the meetings and to the organization that sustains them. We feel that by helping others we are able to close and to strengthen the circle of support within which our own self-help became possible.

Some of us become enthusiastic builders of new LifeRing recovery meetings -- secular missionaries for self-help recovery. If you feel you would like to be part of this effort, please contact the LifeRing meeting and/or the LifeRing Service Center at the address given on the back of this brochure.

