

BC3 introduces “New Eyes” after success of initial program addressing opioid addiction

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Steve Treu, a licensed therapist with Quantum Revolution Counseling, conducts one of Butler County Community College’s “Hope is Dope” classes on June 18, 2018.

(Butler, PA) Butler County Community College’s introduction of “New Eyes,” a spirituality-centered program born in response to the success of BC3’s “Reset Your Brain: A Revolutionary Approach to Opioid Addiction & Recovery” initiative, may benefit those like Ken Clowes, now a Butler resident who once used up to \$200 of heroin a day “just,” he said, “to feel normal.”

Clowes was among 70 participants who in April or June attended BC3’s four-class “Hope is Dope,” an educational program based on Steve Treu’s natural endorphin-resurrecting ideas to overcome opioid addiction and represents an objective in the college’s 2017-2022 strategic plan that focuses on quality of life.

The programs follow “Hope is Dope: Achieving Chemical Balance” and “New Eyes: A Unifying Vision of Science & Spirituality” – 2016 books by Treu, a licensed therapist with Quantum Revolution Counseling who also instructs the sessions.

BC3’s initiatives, said Clowes, 38, are “greatly important. They are offering a fresh perspective on what this is. Unless you have been an addict or are in recovery, or you work with this directly, a large part of the public is unaware of what is happening inside the minds of addicts. And we believe with the proper education and a proper perspective on this, more people will be able to help with the opioid crisis.”

The “New Eyes” program merges the disciplines of science and spirituality and, Treu said, goes 10 times deeper than does “Hope is Dope.”

“‘Hope’ is about our bodies,” he said, “while ‘New Eyes’ is about our souls. ‘Hope’ is the starting pitcher while ‘New Eyes’ is the closer.”

Participants: “We want to learn more”

Seventy-five percent of his thousands of clients over 15 years have opioid addictions, said Treu, who believes that developing physical, mental or spiritual skills can trigger the brain’s reproduction of endorphins and create “a natural high.”

While open to those who did not attend “Hope is Dope,” “New Eyes” is a 12-week course for those who completed the program and asked “What’s next? We want to learn more,” said Tracy Hack, BC3’s coordinator of community leadership initiatives.

“New Eyes” will be held from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Tuesdays in Room 110 of the Science and Technology Building on BC3’s main campus from Oct. 2 through Dec. 18.

A third session of “Hope is Dope” will be held from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Mondays at the Alliance for Nonprofit Resources, 127 S. Main St., Butler, from Oct. 29 through Nov. 19.

Clowes, who says he self-medicated with the use of heroin sporadically over a 10-year period to battle depression and anxiety, will have been clean of opioids for four years Dec. 21.

Through “Hope is Dope” he said he believes that “achieving neurochemical balance is attainable through ordinary everyday events. This is the same experience that people in active addictions seeking help are looking for, that they can duplicate that experience without substances.”

Endorphins affect spirituality

Those ordinary everyday events can include meditation, art, music, yoga, exercise and pet therapy.

“People were asking some really good questions,” said Clowes, a support staff supervisor at a Butler County men’s halfway house. “A lot of people would comment that they had no idea about any of this, about what was going on inside the brain. They were completely unaware.”

Participants in “Hope is Dope” also found that opioid addiction is basically an endorphin problem in the brain, Hack said.

“You have a chemical imbalance and that chemical is endorphins,” Hack said. “One of the things that builds huge amounts of endorphins is spirituality. Spirituality comes in different forms for different people.”

That, Clowes said, “is where New Eyes comes into play. Having a sense of spirituality or connectedness to our world and to our experience.”

“Go on an inner journey”

The goal for those who attend “New Eyes,” Treu said, is to “recognize that a natural high is possible and, indeed, preferable to the artificial high that one gets from using drugs. But it requires a lot of work on the inner world of mind and soul, something that all of the major spiritual traditions teach as well.

“In order to unleash the hidden treasure of endorphins inside yourself, you must go on an inner journey of self-discovery about the true nature of who you are, why you are where you are and where you need to go.”

“New Eyes,” he said, is comprehensive yet concise, “merging complex quantum physics and the major religions into one simple concept – that you are an “energy being” having a physical experience – that is explained in relatable, understandable terms for the layman to grasp.”

Gov. Tom Wolf in January declared the opioid epidemic a statewide disaster emergency, a first of its kind proclamation for a public health crisis in Pennsylvania. The Drug Enforcement Agency reported the number of fatal drug overdoses in the state in 2016 to be 4,642, a 37 percent increase over 2015, Wolf’s office said.

“New Eyes” costs \$96 to attend. While not mandatory for use in the program, copies of “New Eyes” will be available Oct. 2 for \$20. “Hope is Dope” is free to those who register. Registration is required for both classes.

To register, visit bc3.edu/reset.

For more information, contact Hack at 724-287-8711, Ext. 8172 or email tracy.hack@bc3.edu.