

## CHAIR WORK IN RECOVERY COUNSELING



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*“Recovery counseling is a **process** focused **experiential approach** to helping individuals and families develop and use both **external** and **internal** resources to initiate and sustain recovery for alcohol and other drug problems.*

*This approach **optimizes** recovery through **emotional sobriety** and **encourages self-awareness and self-realization.***

*Recovery is defined as the discovery of **new possibilities.**”*

*Allen Berger, Ph.D. - 2019*

## Maslow Identified Two Types of Motivation



- 1) **Deficit Based Motivation** - I want the pain to stop (moving away).
- 2) **Growth Based Motivation** - motivation based on discovering new possibilities in relationship to our problems, our self or selves, and to others.

PRINCIPLES OF RECOVERY  
COUNSELING

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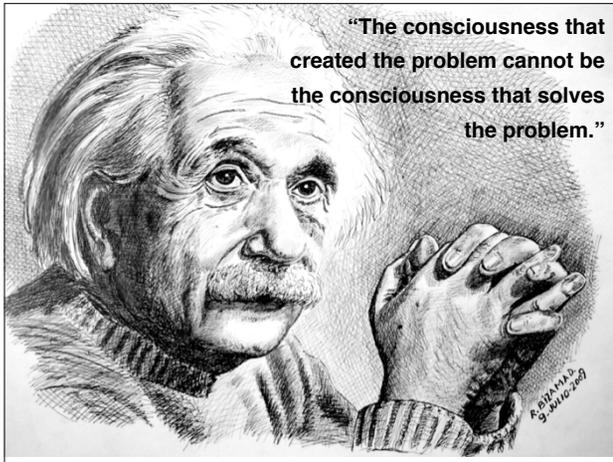
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Intimate personal experiences are the key to growth and recovery - bringing in their wake new awareness and new possibilities.

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## **How?**

Focus on process  
more than content.

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## **What is process?**

A process is composed of  
two points and something  
happening in between  
them.

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## **How do we identify the process?**

Observe the  
dynamic between  
the two points.

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Are description of what we observe becomes the **working point.**

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### **Redefining the Problem**

I attempt to characterize a person's problem in a way that puts **space between the person and the problem they are facing.**

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In that space a person can **discover new possibilities.**

In that space a person discovers their **autonomy.**

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# RECOVERY CAPITAL

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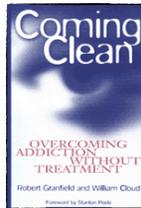
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Robert Granfield and William Cloud (1999) defined the concept of **“recovery capital”** as:

*“...the **volume** of internal and external assets that can be brought to bear to **initiate and sustain recovery** from alcohol and other drug problems.”*

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## External and Internal Recovery Capital

Family Involvement	Meeting Attendance	Professional Licensing Board
Relationship with Sponsor	<b>Awareness</b> Open Minded    Willingness	Fellowship
Psychotherapy	<b>Relationship with the Mystery</b> Self-Support    Honesty	Intervention
Medical Complications	<b>Emotional Sobriety</b> Relationship with Addict Self Nourishing Attitudes Commitment Surrender	Service Work
Impending Divorce	Pressure from Work	Legal Trouble

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# CHAIR WORK



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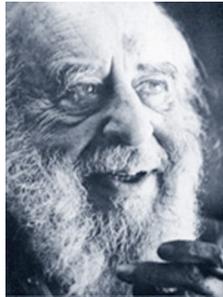
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## Origins of Chair Work

### Fritz Perls, M.D.

Co-founder of Gestalt Therapy introduced chair work into psychotherapy. His work was influenced by many prominent therapists of the times.



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## CLINICAL INFLUENCES ON GESTALT THERAPY

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## Chair Work: Fritz's Professional Influences

Unlike Sigmund Freud, Sandor Fernczi advocated a more active role for the analyst.

He believed the **"empathic response"** was the basis of clinical work and focused his attention on the **subjective experience** of the patient. He viewed the analyst as a **"co-participant"** in the therapeutic encounter.

He also experimented with having his patients **enact** situations in the office that they were having difficulty with in their lives.



Sandor Ferenczi, M.D.

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## Chair Work: Fritz's Professional Influences

Fritz's developmental concepts seem to have been strongly influenced by Karen Horney's theoretical orientation.

She opined that we all suffered from a **basic anxiety** which propelled us on a search. This search ended with establishing a **"false-self"** to resolve our worse fears - that we wouldn't be loved, accepted or belong.

This means we **fragmented** ourselves to find a solution for our anxiety. **Awareness** how the solution a person chose was influencing their current functioning was critical to the therapeutic process.



Karen Horney, M.D.

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## Chair Work: Fritz's Professional Influences

Wilhelm Reich originated body work. He believed we armored ourselves against the experience of painful emotions. This was called **muscular or body armor**.

His therapy was focused on **addressing the resistance to experiencing painful emotions**. **Resistance** needed to be addressed first before change could occur. This was called **"characterological rigidity."**



Wilhelm Reich, M.D.

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## Chair Work: Fritz's Professional Influences

Dr. Moreno developed psychodrama which provided “an opportunity to **get into action** instead of just talking, to **take the role of the important people in our lives to understand them better**, to **confront them imaginatively in the safety of the therapeutic theater**, and most of all to **become more creative and spontaneous human beings.**”



Jacob L. Moreno, M.D.

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## Chair Work: Fritz's Professional Influences

Moreno recalls this encounter with Sigmund Freud in 1912. "I attended one of Freud's lectures. He had just finished an analysis of a telepathic dream. As the students filed out, he singled me out from the crowd and asked me what I was doing. I responded, 'Well, Dr. Freud, I start where you leave off. You meet people in the artificial setting of your office. I meet them on the street and in their homes, in their natural surroundings. You analyze their dreams. I give them the courage to dream again. You analyze and tear them apart. **I let them act out their conflicting roles and help them to put the parts back together again.**"



Jacob L. Moreno, M.D.

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## Similarities and Differences between Psychodrama and Chair Work

Psychodrama	Chair Work
Movement from talking about to enactment.	Movement from talking about to enactment.
Confront issues in the safety of the theatre (psychodrama).	Creates a safe emergency in confronting issues.
Promotes Empathy towards self and others.	Promotes Empathy towards self and others.
Promotes spontaneity, creativity and experimentation.	Promotes spontaneity, creativity, and experimentation.
Therapist is an active participant guiding, designing and creating an experiment.	Therapist is an active participant guiding, designing and creating an experiment.
Audience participation in role playing.	Patient plays all roles.

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## Summary of Clinical Implications

- Focus on **understanding and exploring the subjective experience** of the patient in the here and now.
- **Process is more important than content.**
- Move **quickly from talking about a problem to enacting and experimenting.**
- Experimentation to increase **awareness, redefine the problem, encourage creativity in problem solving, and spontaneity.**
- Pay attention to the **patient's body and other non-verbal information.**
- Resolve **intrapsychic and interpersonal conflict.**
- **Stay in close contact with the patient.**
- Identify the **working point** and **design interventions appropriately.**

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## WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

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Dr. Fritz Perls (1969)  
defined mental health as “*an appropriate balance of the coordination of all of what we are.*”

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Dr. Erving Polster stated that the goal of psychotherapy is “...to merge the disharmonious aspects of the person so that they [can] become joint contributors to the person’s wholeness.”

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## CHAIR WORK PROTOCOL

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### Protocol for Setting Up Chair Work

1. Lay the ground work for chair work - explain the purpose of this exercise.	2. Describe the experiment and starting point.
3. Negotiate consensus.	4. Enact the experiment.
5. Identify the <b>working point</b> by asking yourself “What is missing?”	6. Provide the patient with feedback to help him or her become aware of what is missing.
7. Monitor the working point.	8. Experiment with new possibilities.
9. Integrate the ones that work.	10. Debrief and closure.

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APPLICATIONS OF CHAIR  
WORK

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**Self-Part Conflict**

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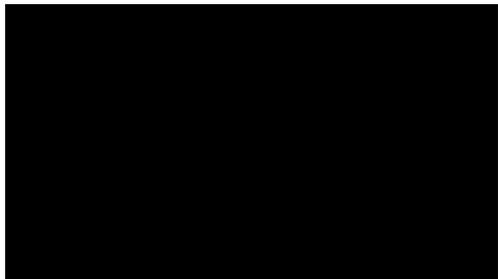
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# Emotional Sobriety

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## A Definition of Emotional Sobriety

*“Emotional Sobriety is when the best in you does the thinking and talking for all of you.*

*This state of mind is achieved when **what you do becomes the determining force in your emotional well being** rather than allowing your emotional well being to be overly influenced by external events or by what others are or are not doing.”*

*Allen Berger, Ph.D. - 2018*

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### Emotional Sobriety: The Next Frontier by Bill Wilson (1958)



*Suddenly, I realized what the matter was. My basic flaw had always been **dependence**, almost absolute dependence, **on people or circumstances to supply me with prestige, security, and the like.** Failing to get these things according to my **perfectionist dreams and specifications**, I had fought for them. And when defeat came, so did my depression.*

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Emotional Sobriety: The Next  
Frontier by Bill Wilson (1958)

..... If we examine **every disturbance** we have,  
great or small, we will find at the root of it some  
**unhealthy dependence** and its **consequent**  
**demand**. Let us, with God's help, continually  
**surrender these hobbling demands**. Then we can  
be set free to live and love: we may then be able to  
gain emotional sobriety.

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**Addict Self - Recovery Self  
Dialogue**

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**Characteristics of Addict Self - Recovery Self**

Addict Self	Recovery Self
Manipulative, Dishonest, Deceptive, Calculating, and Disingenuous	Honest, Transparent, Genuine, and Authentic
Unaware, Numb and Dead	Aware, Alive, Curious, Passionate, and Responsive
Closed, Deliberate, and Controlling	Open, Free, and Spontaneous
Disrespect for Self and Others	Respect for Self and Others
Distrust and Cynicism	Trust, Faith and Belief
Toxic	Nurturing

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The Shuttle Technique: In Early Recovery



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The Shuttle Technique: After 3 Weeks in TX



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**Resolving Trauma or Other  
Unfinished Business**

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Contact Information

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