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# ADDIC/DIV NEWSLETTER

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News from the NYSPA Division on Addictions

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## “Twelve”

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“Twelve” is a recently-released DVD about recovery that is specifically-focused on the experiences and journeys of adolescents and young adults. The emphasis on the number 12 comes, on the one hand, from the fact that many young people have begun experimenting with substances by the age of 12, and, on the other, many will find healing and recovery through the 12-Step Fellowships. The intention of the film is to give hope to young people who are currently using substances and to those who are beginning their recovery.

This film is based on the experiences of young people in Oklahoma. Using no narration or shocking images, a group of young people (with a few older people intermixed) tell the stories of their use, addiction, and recovery. Predominantly White and Working- or Middle-Class, they are an engaging group of storytellers. (Warning: there is some profanity in the film.)

The road to addiction is portrayed in largely psychological terms as they report that their use began because they felt different from others, they wanted to create an identity, they were trying to medicate painful feelings, or that they were responding to peer pressure. In terms of family background, many, but not all, come from dysfunctional families.

With that background, they each talk about finding the “right” drug – alcohol, marijuana, ecstasy, opiates, cocaine, or methamphetamine – and the power of that experience. As the drug use continues, the dynamic of addiction begins to emerge, and stories of chaos, legal troubles, moral failures, and serious thoughts of suicide follow. They eventually “hit bottom” and go into

treatment. In many cases, this is followed by a relapse before their recovery is solidified.

Depending on one’s perspective, a strength or weakness of the film is that the recovery journey that is portrayed is highly influenced by the 12-Step Fellowships (although they are never directly mentioned). Other pathways – including medications – do not emerge in the narratives.

This DVD could be of particular value to psychologists and other professionals who are working with adolescents and young adults – especially those who come from suburban and rural areas. These compelling and attractive young people are likely to speak to the experiences of many of their peers.

At the end, it is quite striking to see how happy they are to have recovered. While acknowledging that it can be hard at times, they look good and seem to be living purposeful lives. We were definitely happy to see that they had made it.

Information about “Twelve” can be found at:  
<http://www.12recovery.com>