

“It’s Not Your Fault” Oxygen 8 Addiction

Dr. Stephanie Marlow

Using Hyperbaric Oxygen as an adjunctive therapy for addiction recovery

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“*It’s not your fault*”, are the famous words that Robin Williams repeatedly spoke to Matt Damon in the nine time nominated Academy Award film *Good Will Hunting*, and may very well ring true in the quest for freedom from substance abuse. “There is a direct correlation between addiction and brain damage”, says Thomas Foster, Co-Founder of Oxygen 8 Addiction. Foster’s passion for helping families recover from substance abuse hits close to home. “I lost a daughter in 2010 and made her an oath to help her generation with addiction recovery”, Foster adds. His words would be fulfilled within the decade. Foster met counterpart Mark Jackson in December of 2016 and their passion for Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy for addiction recovery fueled an instantaneous combustion to ameliorate addiction issues.

Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT) is a FDA approved modality and most insurances currently pay for approximately 15 conditions. Many neurological conditions such as Dementia, Alzheimer's, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) are also being used but paid out of pocket as American research lags the rest of the world. Oxygen is a mandatory part of life. No oxygen means no life. Oxygen has vast healing components with no side effects. HBOT is non-invasive yet delivers significantly more oxygen to the body resulting in immense results. The process of administering HBOT saturates the body with 700 to 1,200 times the normal oxygen levels.

Rehabilitation centers can easily incorporate (HBOT) as an adjunctive therapy to their current protocols. Under appropriate protocols it detoxifies the body and will regenerate and repair damaged tissue-including brain tissue. “I don’t even use the word ‘Addict’ in my vocabulary”, Jackson says, “I tell therapist to give me their toughest cases, the ones that are continually relapsing and sit me in front of them. Most have experienced some form mild or traumatic brain injuries or some form of PTSD from life events ranging from contact sports to falling off of a swing at the playground to traumatic family events”, Jackson adds, “This is not a weak-willed or morally flawed problem-it is an education problem. HBOT needs to be implemented immediately and it’s simple to do. It is my opinion that we should stop blaming someone or something and start taking action. We were made to breath oxygen for a reason.” Both believe facilities that integrate HBOT into addiction recovery will set themselves apart and have noteworthy impact.

“After 40 years and a trillion dollars, the nation has little to show for its war on drugs”, sites Former Director of National Drug Control Policy Michael Botticelli in a 60 Minutes Interview on December 13, 2015. Scott Pelley, 60 Minutes Reporter, questions Botticelli about our nation's’ drug recovery efforts. **“We’ve learned addiction is a brain disease. This is not a moral failing.** This is not about bad people who are choosing to continue to use drugs because

they lack willpower. You know, we don't expect people with cancer just to stop having cancer”, says Botticelli, “the hallmark of addiction is that it changes your brain chemistry. It actually affects that part of your brain that's responsible for judgment”, he adds. An estimated 120 American die daily from drug overdose.

Foster and Jackson met with Ohio Attorney General, Mike DeWine in July about the addiction epidemic Ohio is facing as they lead the nation in death by addiction. When DeWine was asked what has helped the “death by addiction” epidemic his frustrated response was, “Nothing”. The state of Ohio has filed a lawsuit against certain Pharmaceutical companies as a counter to the “Tsunami” of drug deaths. Foster has hopes to join forces with drug companies to implement HBOT as a reformative approach to recovery.

The State General Assembly of Indiana in April gave \$1 million for an initial pilot program to treat Veterans with TBI and PTSD using HBOT, primarily due to the efforts of Brigadier General James L. Bauerle, USA, (Ret). He says that the use of HBOT for addiction will, “definitely work and the reason being is that it is used successfully in other countries like Russia, India, China, and the United Kingdom and the cost is very minimal”. General Bauerle agrees with the others that have implemented HBOT into a two part process. “The first step is to detox the body and that will typically take about 10 treatments at a higher pressure. Then you address the brain damage that is due to drug use by implementing lower pressures of oxygen”. He doesn't think that prescribing drugs like Methadone is the answer either stating, “then all you are doing is legalizing addiction”. Our hero Veterans know all too well the relationship between addiction and brain injuries.

Covenant Hyperbarics in Searcy, Arkansas is teaming up with Dr. Stephanie Marlow, COUNSELOR, LPC, CSAT, CMAT, EMDR, CTT, to further research relating to recovery and HBOT. “Dr. Marlowe has a specific interest in addiction recovery and research in particular”. Brain imaging scans can detect brain abnormalities. Post HBOT imaging can also be used to determine progress. The real progress lies with the outcome of individual progress. Proponents suggest when brain metabolism is restored to pre-addiction levels that the desire and attraction to the intoxicant is reduced and eventually eliminated.

Having experienced 5 traumatic brain injuries has given Foster a first hand glimpse of what the challenging journey looks like. Foster was dealing with the fog of Post Concussion Syndrome. “I felt more alert and mentally sharper using HBOT”. “The significant scourge of drug addiction we are experiencing in America needs every possible solution acted upon NOW! Delay will lead to more deaths, more tragedy, more broken homes, more grieving parents, more orphaned children, more addicted new-born babies, and unrecoverable damage to our society”, says General Bauerle. The guilt and pain that so many are carrying can be replaced with hope and the “It's not your fault” may very well fuel the hope for “The Comeback”.