



Bio for Alex Mandikos

Alex's recovery story:

In 2013, my life was falling apart. I was unemployed, facing significant legal difficulties, had little to no skill development, and my familial and interpersonal relationships were profoundly impaired. I made a decision to get clean and continue to make positive active lifestyle changes. I became involved in the programs of AA and NA, and began seeking out healthier relationships with people who were supportive of my recovery. I also started working full time, volunteering at several social and human service agencies, seeking out new hobbies and leisure activities, eating healthier and exercising more, and re-enrolled in school. My life in recovery has become a dream come true, more than I could have ever imagined or hoped for before stating the journey of recovery.

How Alex came to Next Step:

I was seeking out an internship where I could have a positive influence on my community and truly make a difference in the lives of others. I feel that next step is truly a wonderful match for me and participants in the program because I come from a similar background as many of the individuals. In addition to having a history of addiction, in the past I have also struggled with emotional, behavioral, and lifestyle challenges. I feel that my life experiences in combination with clinical education can serve as a valuable asset to the next step team in helping men reclaim their lives and fulfill their goals and dreams.

Alex's advice for recovering addicts and their friends & family:

My biggest piece of advice for recovering addicts is that in addition to working a program through AA, NA, refuge recovery, or another recovery model or community it is essential to find a personalized method of self expression and a healthy outlet for emotions and feelings. For me, my methods of self expression are martial arts and cooking. For others, it may be painting, playing a musical instrument, joining a theater club or dance group.

I truly feel that it is imperative for all individuals to have an artistic outlet in which they can express their selves in order to lead a healthy and happy lifestyle in recovery. I also place importance on regular exercise, adequate sleep, and a healthy and balanced nutrition plan. As individuals in recovery, we should always be striving to improve ourselves on a daily basis through continual goal setting, with both short and long term goals.

A little known fact about Alex:

I enjoy teaching martial arts, mindfulness, and yoga in combination with traditional therapeutic approaches such as cognitive behavioral therapy and motivational interviewing. In my free time, I enjoy rock climbing, hiking, listening to music, visiting art galleries, and trying out new foods from different cultures.