Supporting Recovery in the Workplace

Quick Overview

- Common Stages of Recovery
- The Science of Substance Use Disorder & Recovery
- Post Acute Withdrawal
- Science of Addiction
- Creating Recovery-Friendly Workspaces

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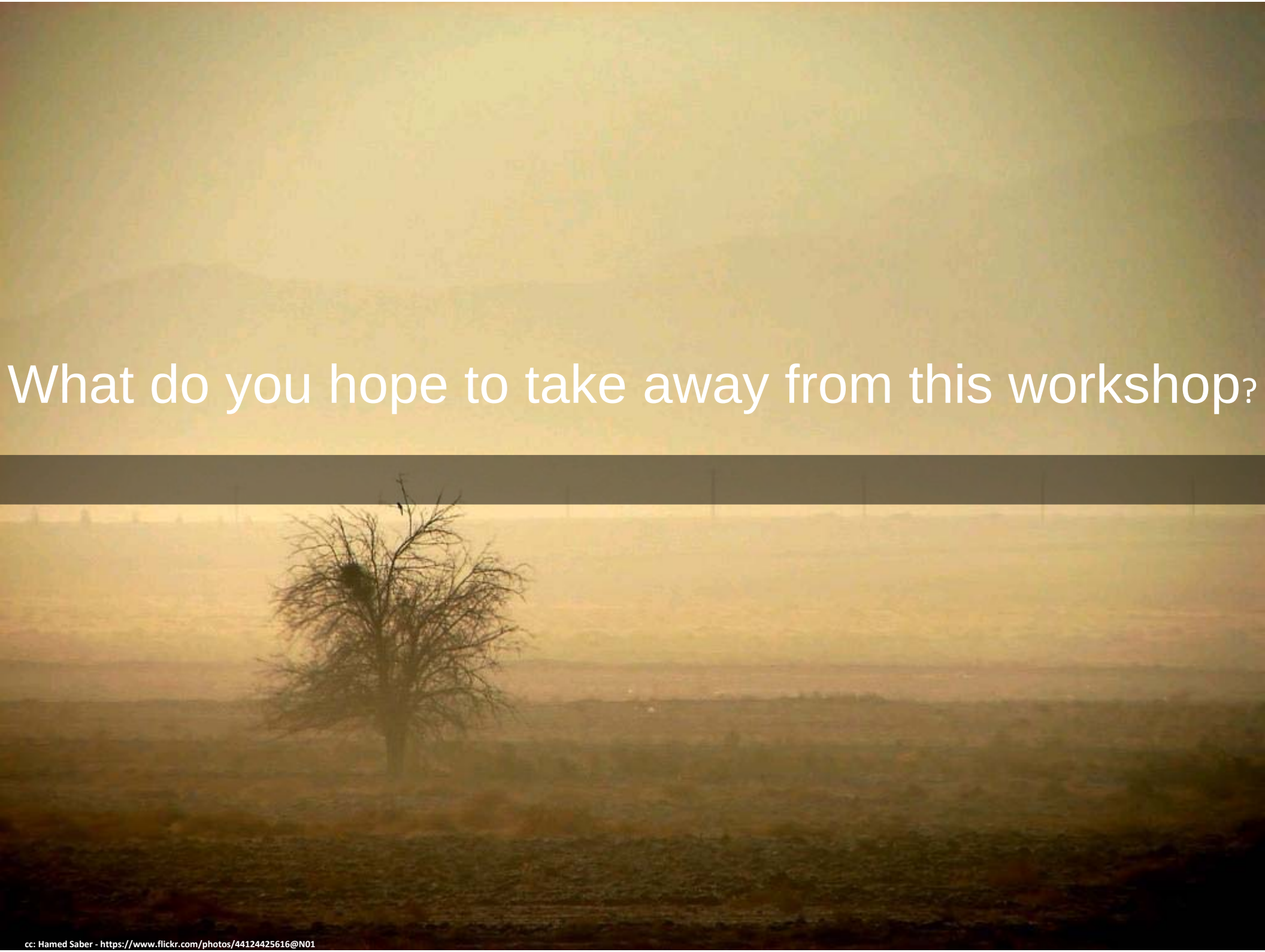

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Common Stages of Recovery

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Why does this matter?

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Emotional and Behavioral Stages of Recovery

- Learning
- Deepening
- Connectedness
- Integration

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Learning Stage-Year One

- Learning about SUD
- Physical detox and stabilization
- Learning to socialize in group settings
- Learning to break the pattern of isolation
- Anxiety management
- Learning to ask for help

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Deepening Stage-Years 2-3

- Identifying old behaviors
- Emotional detox
- Increase in health
- Increased ability to tolerate feelings
- Increased commitment to personal recovery

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Connectedness-Years 3-5

- Depth of joy and misery can be profound
- Avoidance of creating drama
- Increase in honesty
- Connections to a wider circle of people

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Integration-Years 5 +

- Relationships based on love rather than need
- Automatic use of tools learned in recovery
- Ability to act on knowledge and follow through
- Self-forgiveness
- Having fun and joy in life

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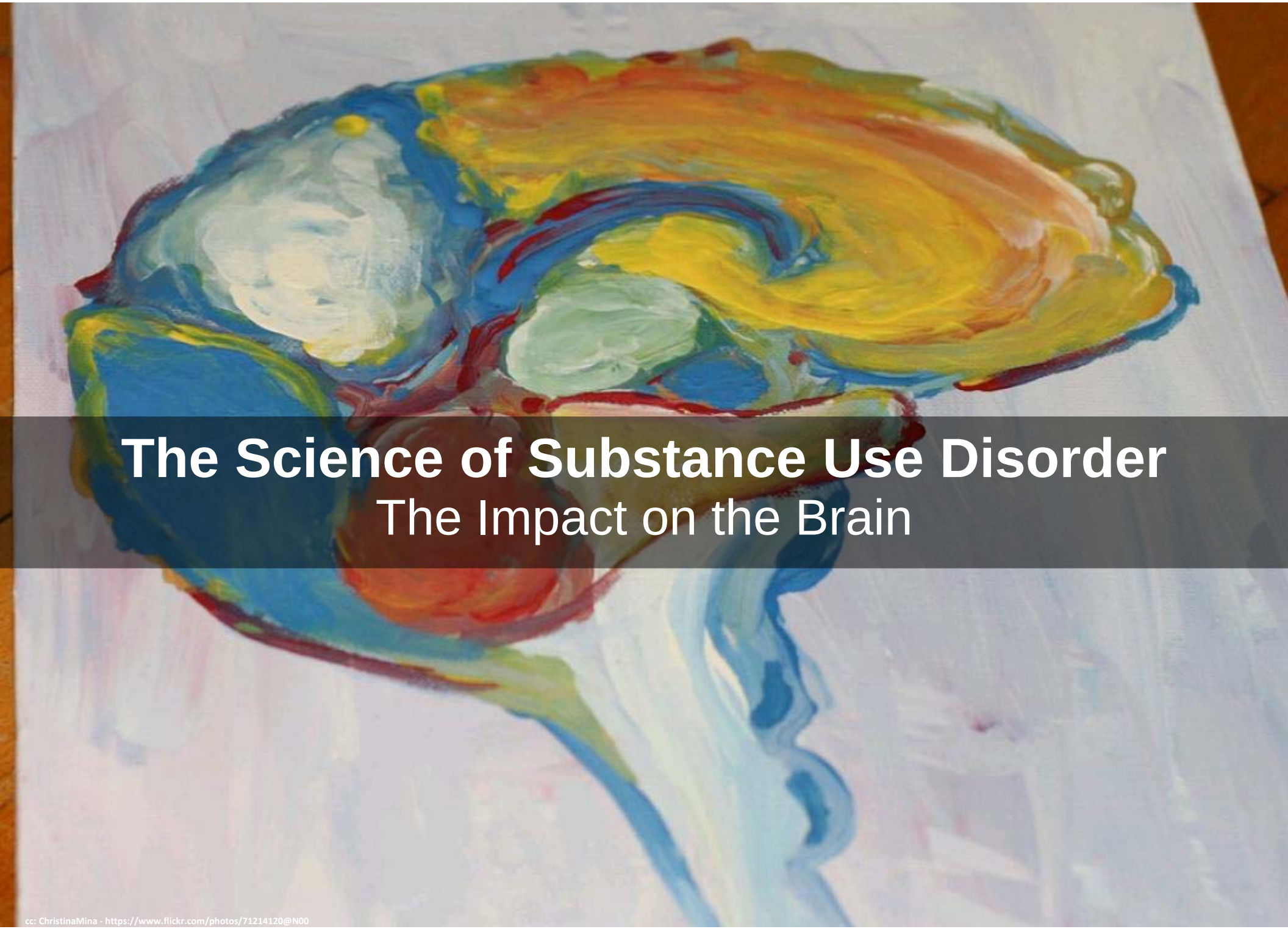

The Science of Substance Use Disorder

The Impact on the Brain

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Why is this information important?

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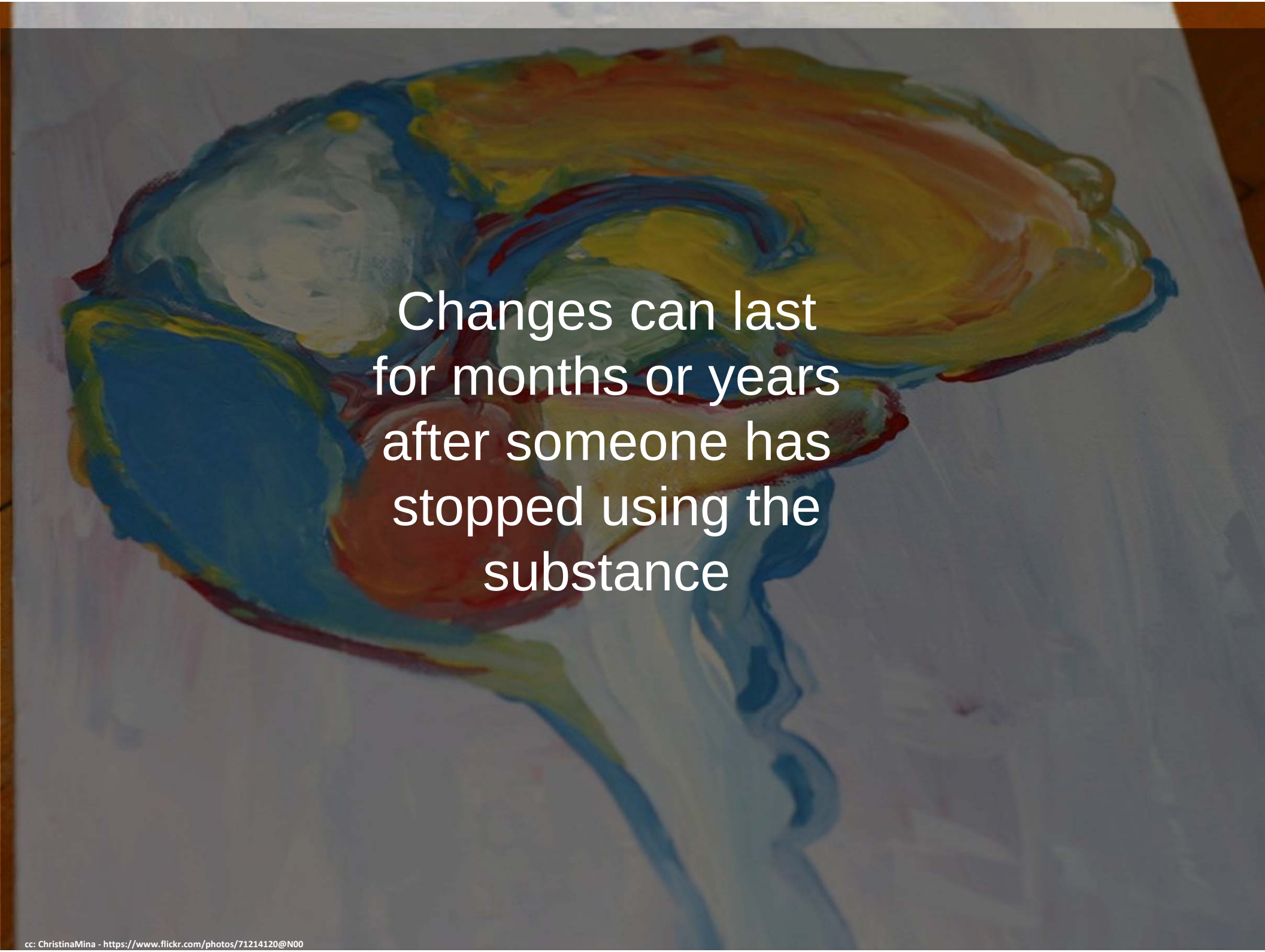

Changes can last for months or years after someone has stopped using the substance

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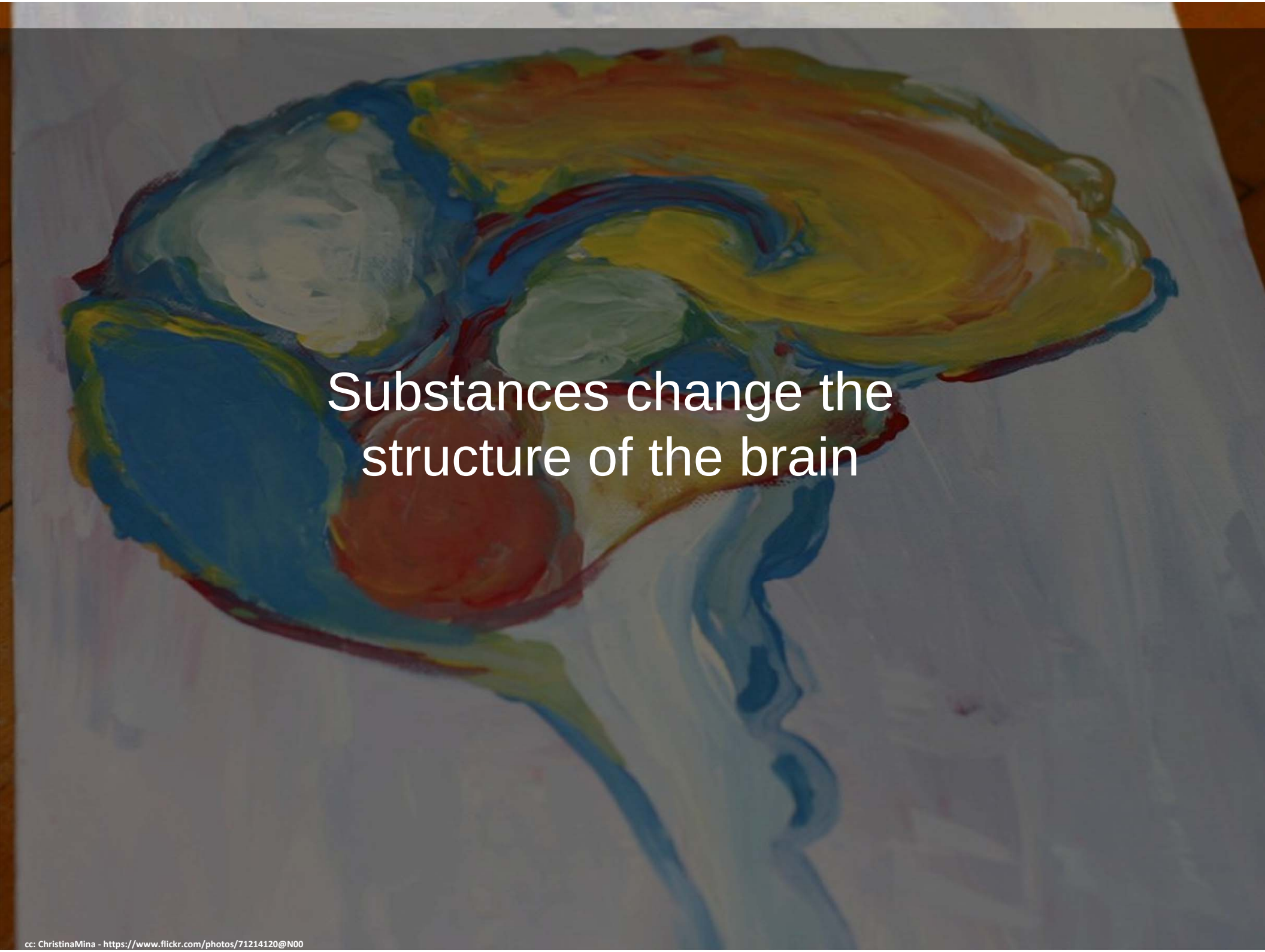

Substances change the structure of the brain

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Long-Term Effects

- Intense impulses to take substances
- Cognitive impairment
- Memory
- Erodes self-control
- Ability to make sound decisions

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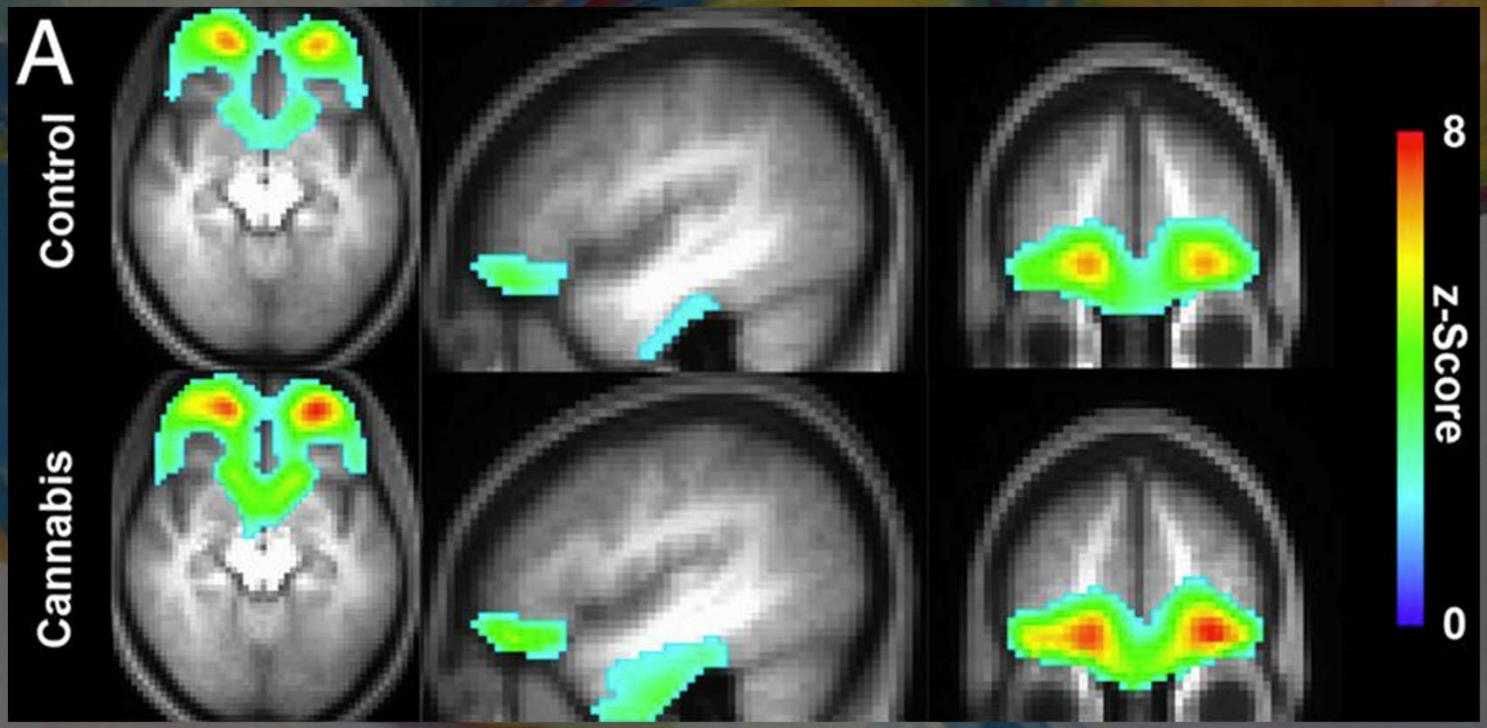

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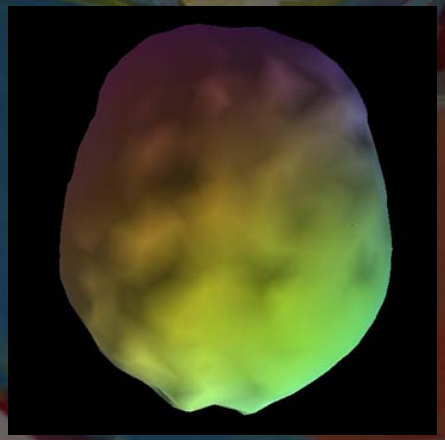
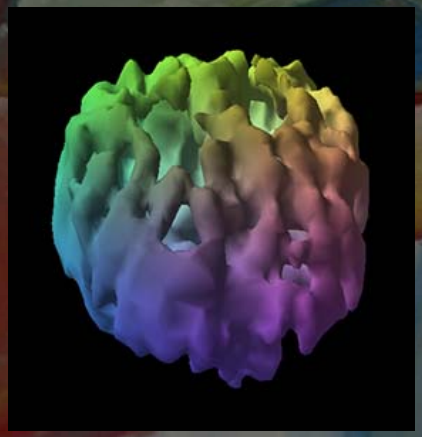
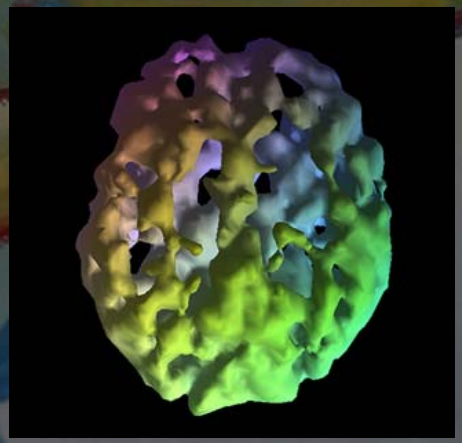
SPECT Imaging







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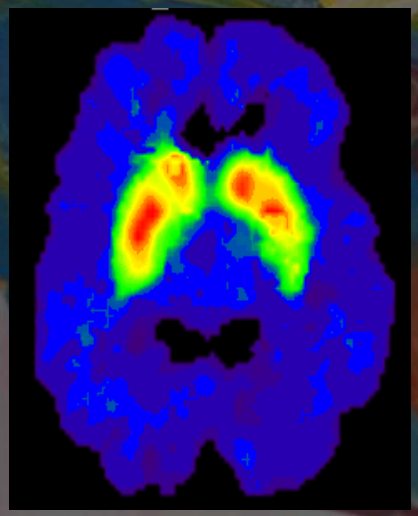
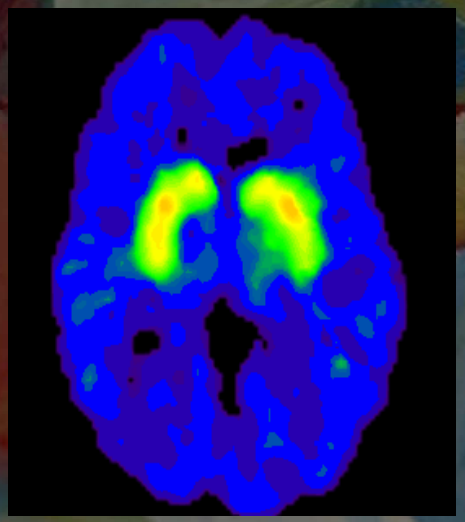
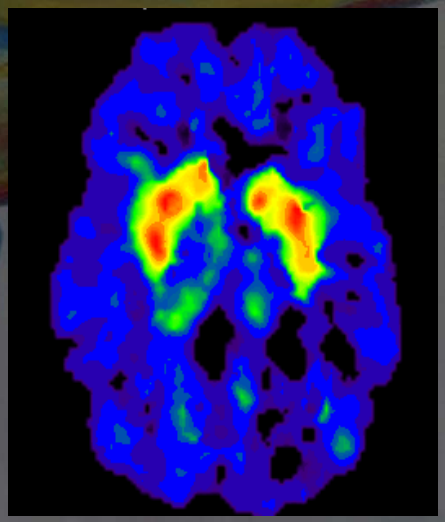
The Good News-The Brain Can Heal







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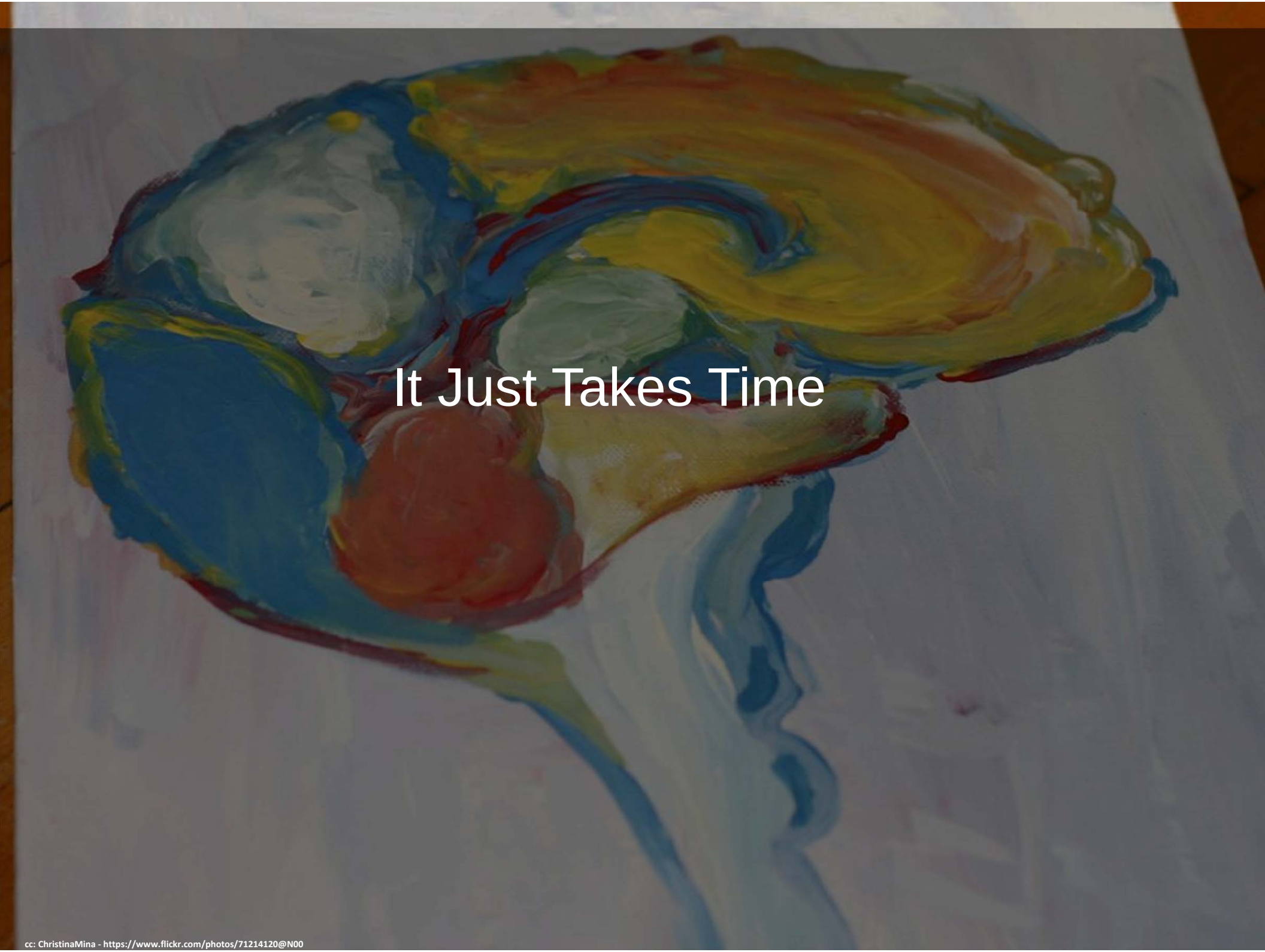

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Post Acute Withdrawal Syndrome

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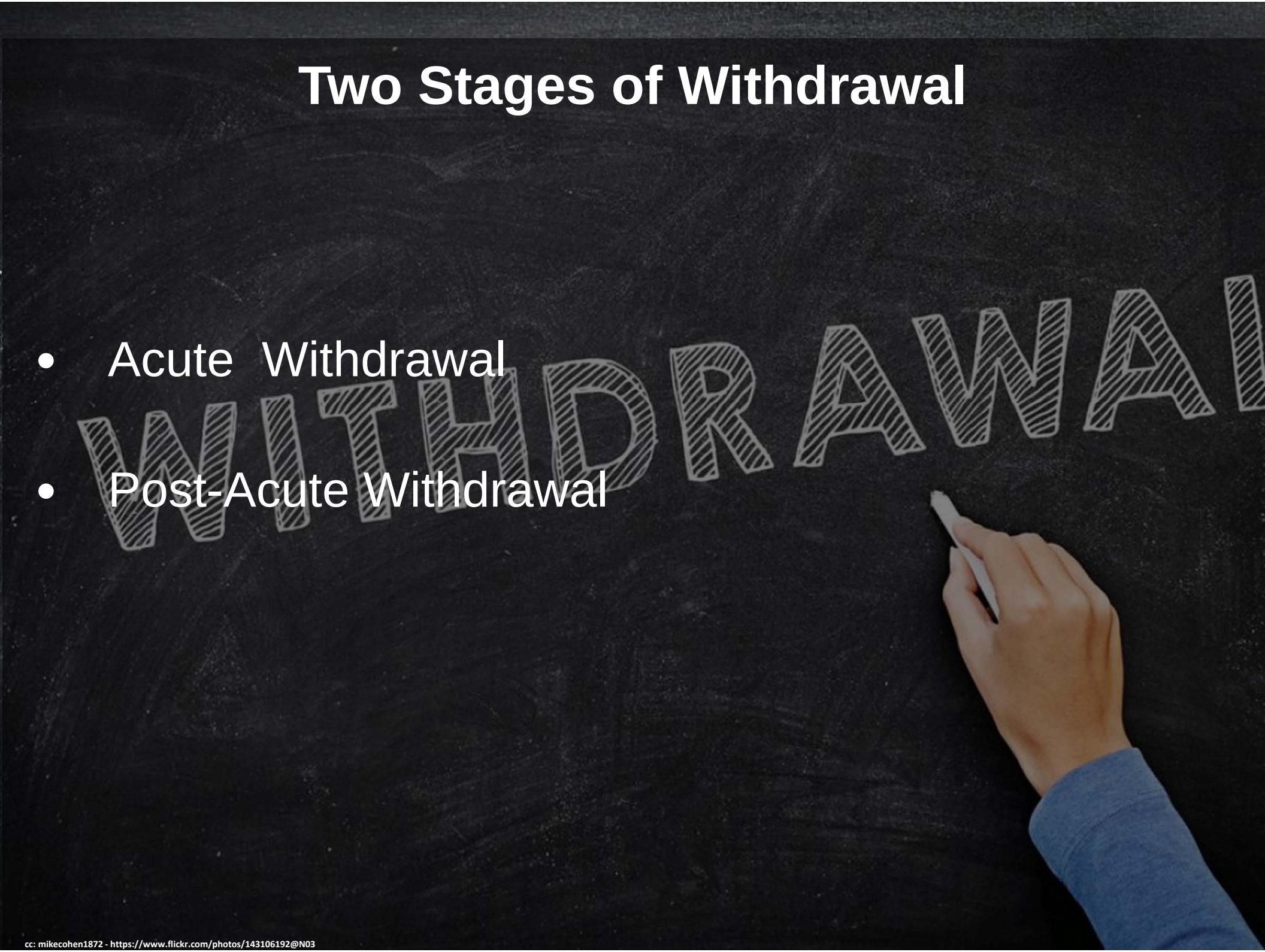
Two Stages of Withdrawal

- Acute Withdrawal
- Post-Acute Withdrawal



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- Second stage of withdrawal
- Fewer physical symptoms
- More emotional and psychological withdrawal symptoms
- Occurs because your brain chemistry is gradually returning to normal
- Most people experience some post-acute withdrawal symptoms.

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Symptoms appear seven to fourteen days into abstinence, after stabilization from the acute withdrawal.

It results from the combination of damage to the nervous system and the psychosocial stress of coping with life without substances

Recovery causes a great deal of stress. The stress aggravates the brain dysfunction and makes the symptoms worse.

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1. Inability to think clearly
2. Memory problems
3. Emotional overreactions
4. Sleep disturbances
5. Physical coordination problems
6. Stress sensitivity

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Inability to concentrate for more than a few minutes

Impairment of abstract reasoning

Concentration is more of an issue when abstract concepts are involved

Rigid and repetitive thinking

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Short-term memory problems are very common

During stressful periods it may also be difficult for an individual in early recovery to remember significant events from the past

Due to memory problems, it may be difficult to teach the individual new skills and information

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Individuals in early recovery tend to overreact.

Individuals may become angry over what may later seem a trivial matter.

Individuals may feel more anxious or excited than they have reason to be.

When an overreaction puts more stress on the nervous systems than it can handle, there is an emotional shutdown.

Individuals may swing from one mood to another without knowing why

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Most recovering people experience sleep problems

Some of them are temporary; some are lifelong

Unusual or disturbing dreams

Difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep

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Serious PAW symptom
Not as common as the others

Symptoms include:

- Dizziness
- Trouble with balance
- Problems with coordination between hand and eye
- Slow reflexes

*This is where the term “dry drunk” originated from

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Difficulty in managing stress is the most confusing and aggravating part of post acute withdrawal

Recovering individuals are often unable to distinguish between low-stress situations and high-stress situations

They may not recognize low levels of stress, and then overreact when they become aware of the stress they are experiencing

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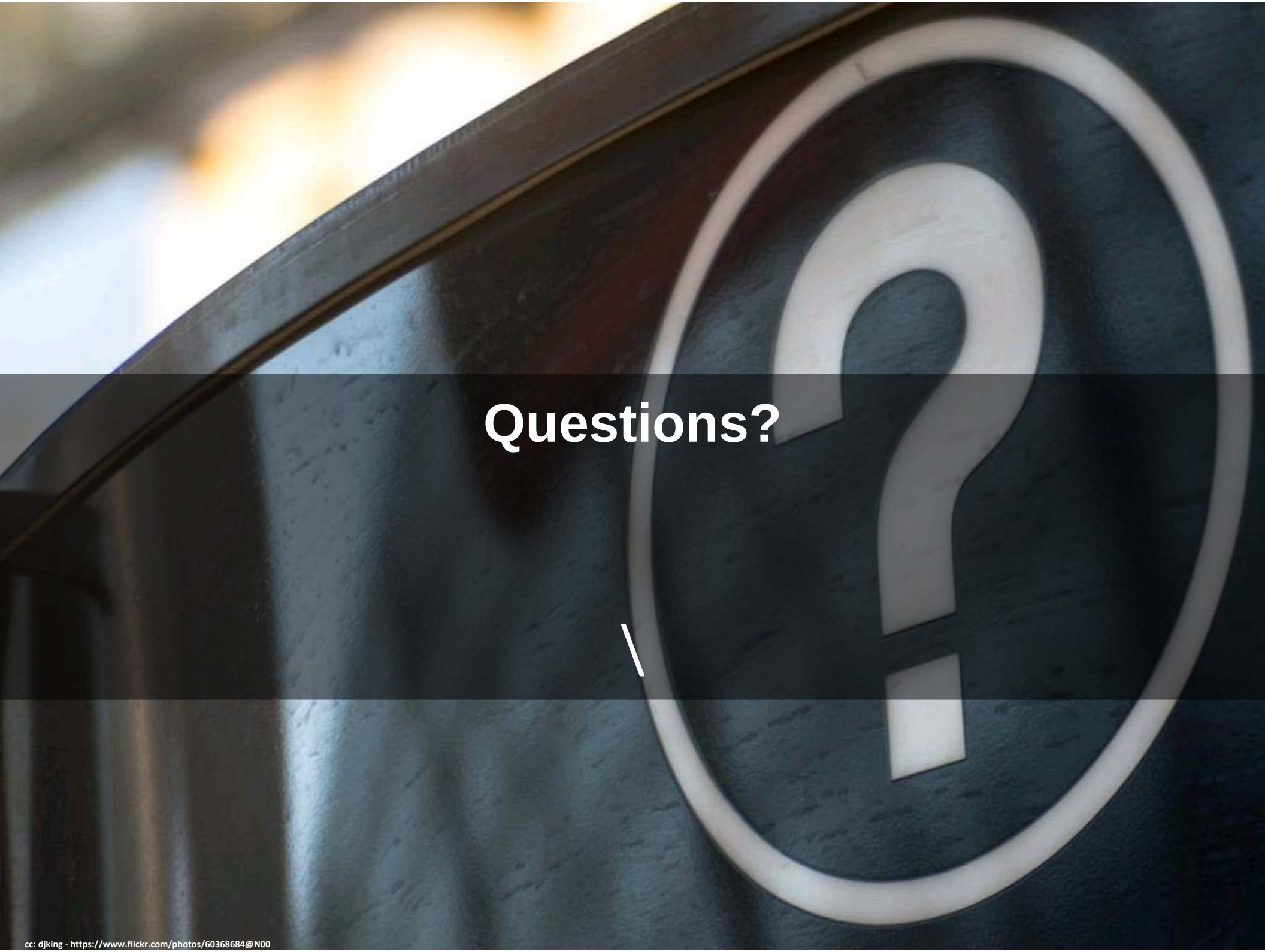

Questions?

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Recovery Friendly Workplaces

How we can help!

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Recovery Friendly Workplaces

Educate Employees on Substance Use Disorder and the Damage of Stigma

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Recovery Friendly Workplaces

Make Self-Care a Workplace Priority

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Recovery Friendly Workspaces
View Behavior through the PAWS Lens

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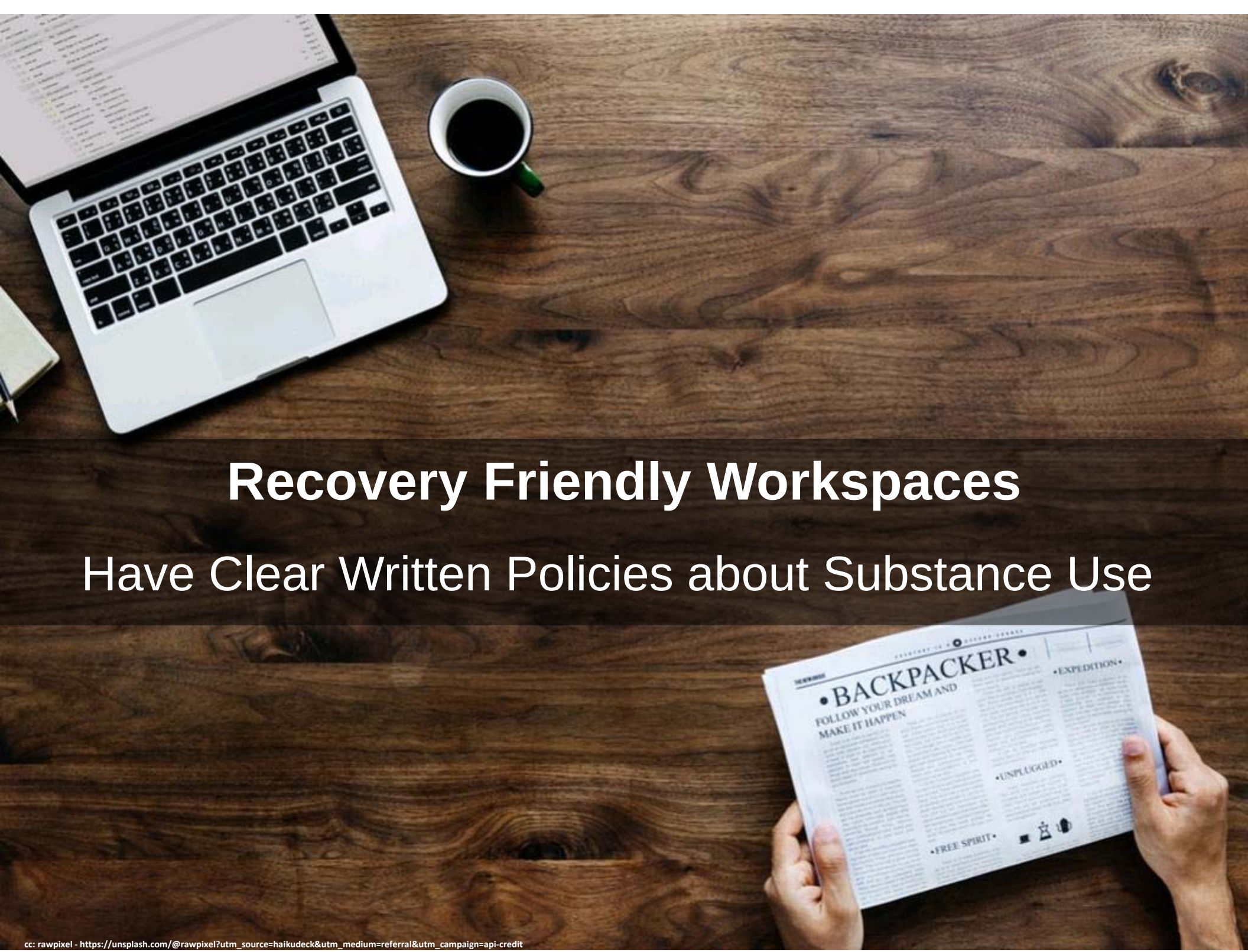
Recovery Friendly Workspaces

Have Clear Written Policies about Substance Use



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Recovery Friendly Workspaces

Provide Supervisors with SUD Training

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Recovery Friendly Workplaces

Provide Resources & Access to EAP or Other Support Programs

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Recovery Friendly Workplaces

What are Your Ideas?

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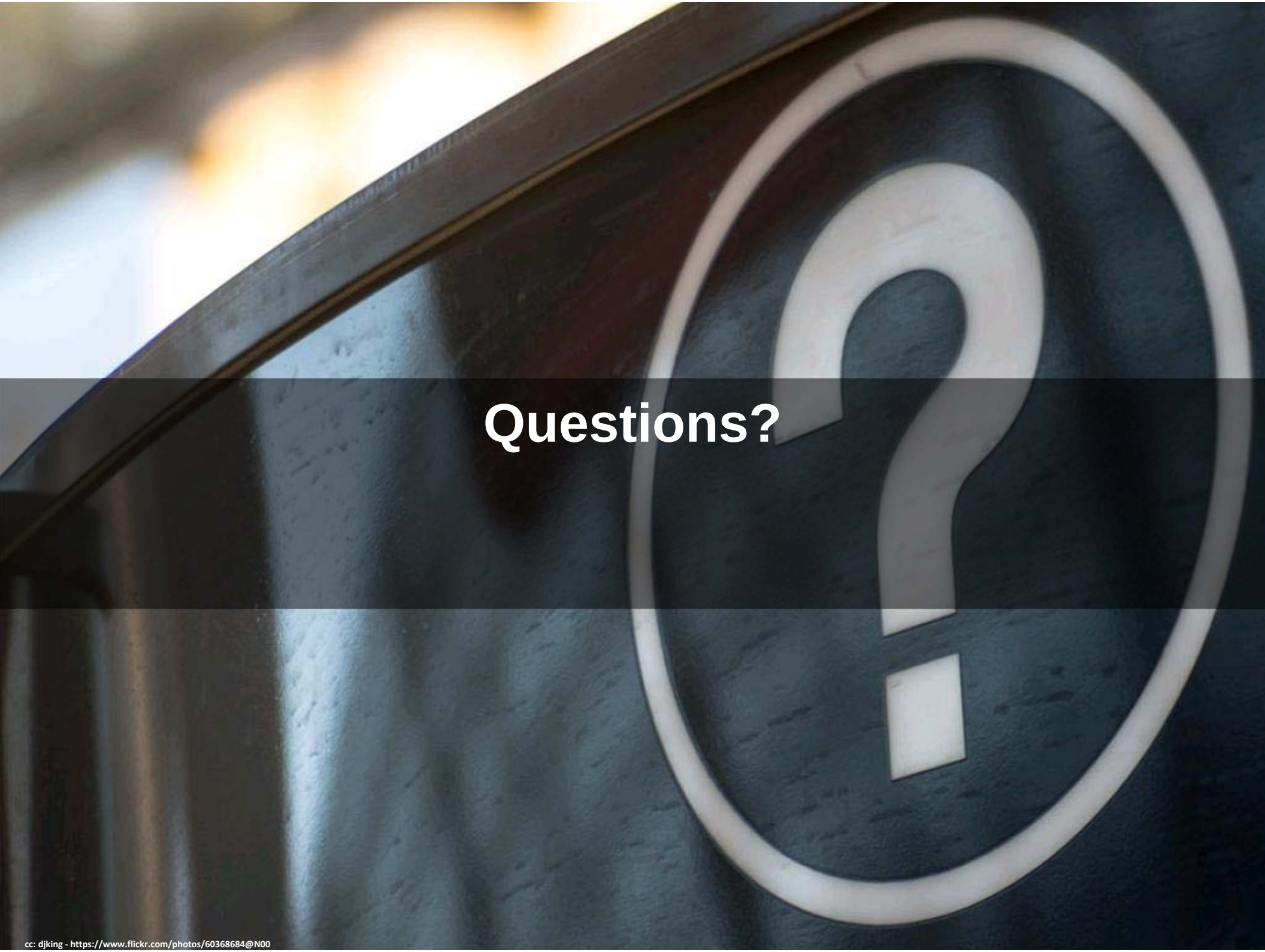

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Resources

- hrose@facesandvoicesofrecovery.org
- Recovery Research Institute
- National Institute on Drug Abuse
- Vermont Recovery Network
- www.facesandvoices.org