

When you're ready,  
we're ready to help.

WALK-INS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME AT THE MORTON CENTER. NO APPOINTMENT IS NECESSARY FOR YOU, OR A LOVED ONE, TO IMMEDIATELY BEGIN TREATMENT FOR SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER.

**WALK-IN HOURS**

Monday - Thursday: 8am - 3pm

Friday: 8am - 12pm

1028 Barret Ave., Louisville, KY 40204



Celebrating 35 Years

## Morton Center Updates

### Connection

Hello,

"Alone we can do so little .. together we can do so much" Helen Keller

Valentine's Day is not only about the perfect dinner, flowers or candy to surprise your loved one with but it's also a way to express thanks to all those that help support you every day in life. Today I would like to say thank you to all of our donors, board members, Alumni, staff and volunteers that help provide support to The Morton Center.

We simply can't do it without you.

Thank you for your continued support and friendship.

Priscilla McIntosh  
Chief Executive Officer  
The Morton Center, Inc.



### "The Doctor's Opinion"

Dr. Ashley Peak, MD, ABPN, ABAM  
Medical Director



## Love, Connection, and Vitamin O

Valentine's Day is mostly a commercial holiday these days, yet it offers the perfect opportunity to focus on the importance of relationships and connection. Building social support, repairing relationships, and learning healthy ways to communicate are part of any solid recovery treatment plan. A specific neurohormone is released when we give and receive physical affection, share in vulnerable communication, and socialize with those we trust. This hormone is called oxytocin. I ask patients to think of it as "Vitamin O" and to seek it out on a daily basis. When we

connect with our social groups, hug a loved one, or cooperate with others, the hypothalamus releases oxytocin which is meant to solidify social bonding. Interestingly, new mothers lactate in response to increased release of oxytocin when they cuddle with their newborns or in response to cries of hunger. Vitamin O causes a complex cascade of neurotransmitter release in the brain, including increased dopamine release. Higher levels of dopamine lead to overall improvements in mood, pleasure, and sense of well-being. Although many will be celebrating their romantic interests this Valentine's Day, love and connection are available to us in many forms through relationships with family, friends, and pets.

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### **The Clinician's Point of View**

Amy Travis, Marriage and Family Therapy Associate, LCADC  
Counselor at The Morton Center

#### **Whole-being Connection**

Connection is an important element of recovery. Being connected to other humans in meaningful ways is a hallmark of a healthy, balanced, life. While our society is currently geared towards connecting through technology, whole-being connection occurs in a variety of ways across multiple life dimensions. Some of these dimensions include emotional, psychological, physical, spiritual, and social connection in relationships. Whole-being connection is also not limited to one type of communication, like social media. Rather it is formed in person, over the phone, through letters or text, through common shared experience, in small and large groups. It helps increase the ability to trust and be vulnerable which are two important elements of healthy relationships. Healthy connection helps us move out of our selves and into relationship with the wider world. This might include connecting with people, pets, nature, or your Higher Power.



While it is critical to learn how to form and maintain healthy connections with others it is equally important to develop a deep connection with self. So often we travel through our days cut off from ourselves not really paying attention to the inner messages that guide us towards the life we want to live. There are many mindfulness-based practices that can help enhance your ability to hear these messages. These practices can help re-connect you with your values and goals. For ideas on how to nurture this connection to self and others please reach out to your recovery support team for more information. You deserve the deeper connection to yourself and others that this work will bring to your recovery journey.



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### **The Research**

#### **Drug Addiction, Social Connection, and the Brain**

by Jill Suttie

First published in *Greater Good Magazine*, August 11, 2017.

***A new study of opioids reveals a tie between drug addiction and social connection.***

Science has long known that having positive social connection is important to a happy and healthy life.

But less is understood about how our brains support and encourage connecting with others. While prior research has suggested oxytocin plays a role in nurturing and trusting others, thereby strengthening social bonds, many researchers also suspect that brain opioids are important to social connection. Opioids are naturally occurring brain chemicals—perhaps the most well-known being endorphins—that cause pleasurable sensations in the body and encourage us to enjoy whatever we are

experiencing. It's possible that opioids also cause the warm feelings we get in social encounters, thereby encouraging us to be more engaged with others. But, according to a recent study, the role of opioids may be a little more complicated than that—and there are practical implications for how we treat drug addiction.

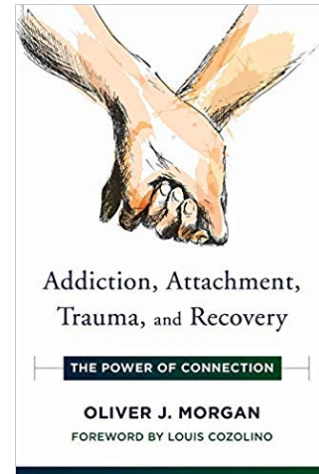
[Click to read the complete article from Greater Good Magazine.](#)

## Reading List

### Addiction, Attachment, Trauma, and Recovery

by Oliver J. Morgan

"Understanding addiction is no longer just about understanding neurons or genes, broken brain functioning, learning, or faulty choices. Oliver J. Morgan provides a fresh take on addiction and recovery by presenting a more inclusive framework than traditional understanding. Cutting-edge work in attachment, interpersonal neurobiology, and trauma is integrated with ecological- systems thinking to provide a consilient and comprehensive picture of addiction. Humans are born into connection and require nourishing relationships for healthy living. Adversities, however, bring fragmentation and create the conditions for ill health. They create vulnerabilities. In order to cope, individuals can turn to alternatives, "substitute relationships" that ease the pain of disconnection. These can become addictions. *Addiction, Attachment, Trauma, and Recovery* presents a model, a method, and a mandate. This new focus calls for change in the established ways we think and behave about addiction and recovery. It reorients understanding and clinical practice for mental health and addiction counselors, psychologists, and social workers, as well as for addicts and those who love them."



[Click here to purchase on Amazon.](#)



### Staff Spotlight

Myra L. Woodard, MSSW, LCADC  
Counselor at The Morton Center

Myra received her Bachelor of Science in Social work (BSSW) from Spalding University and her CADC (Certified Alcohol Drug Counselor) in 2009. She was awarded a Master of Science in Social Work from the University of Louisville Kent School and her LCADC (License Clinical Alcohol and Drug Counselor) in 2015.

Myra has worked in the field of addiction for over 17 years, with experience in: residential treatment, case management, and individual, group, and family counseling. She has gained supervisory experience in residential settings working with women experiencing homelessness, substance use disorders, HIV, pregnancy, young mothers, and and co-occurring disorders sometimes requiring the utilization of MAT (medication assisted treatment).

As a therapist, Myra not only address's the individual's addiction, but works to find "what's under the iceberg"; the barriers that prevent a person from maintaining sobriety. These may include: trauma, abuse, mental health issues, or other co-occurring disorders. Myra believes that "If we can change one individual, we can change families, if we change families we can change community, if we change community, we can change the world".

### Everything you think you know about addiction is wrong.

Johann Hari is a journalist and author of two best selling books: *Lost Connections* (2018) and *Chasing the Scream* (2015)

"What really causes addiction, to everything from cocaine to smart-phones? And how can we overcome it? Johann Hari has seen our current methods fail firsthand, as he has watched loved ones struggle to manage their addictions. He started to wonder why we treat addicts the way we do, and if



Johann Hari spoke at TED Global London in June

there might be a better way. As he shares in this deeply personal talk, his questions took him around the world, and unearthed some surprising and hopeful ways of thinking about an age-old problem."

2015. His talk has since become the topic of much debate concerning the common underlying causes, and treatment options, of addiction. The above video has been viewed over 7 million times on YouTube.com.



## Winter Programming News: Spotlight on Family Services

Research shows that treating the whole family enhances success rates for both the individual and their loved ones. The Concerned Persons Program, presented Tuesday evenings at 5:30 pm at The Morton Center, focuses on topics such as: healthy communication, recovery, healthy boundaries, defenses, family roles, connection, self-awareness, coping

skills, self-care, and more. Email Amy Travis [atravis@themortoncenter.org](mailto:atravis@themortoncenter.org) for more information, or [click here to learn more.](#)

## Support The Morton Center

More than 23 million Americans have a drug or alcohol abuse problem, but only 10 percent will get the treatment they need. Your tax-deductible donation will help us provide services to individuals that otherwise could not afford treatment, and provide support to their loved ones.

[Read Elaine's Story](#)



## About The Morton Center

The Morton Center is a full-service addiction recovery facility offering professional counseling and therapy, as well as prevention and educational services, for individuals and families struggling with substance abuse issues. Since 1984, our customized, holistic approach has helped to reengage individuals and their families with lives of meaning and purpose often lost in addiction.



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