Relapse Scenario-Jake

Jake is a 30 year old biracial male who has entered intensive outpatient treatment (IOP) after receiving a DUI. Jake has been in IOP for two months and his group counselor suspects continued use as he has not made much progress on his treatment goals while in group. He misses group at least once every two weeks but somehow comes often enough to not completely blow out of group. His group counselor has done ETG -urinalysis on him but they always come up clean. He continues to make excuses for not getting a job or meeting any other goals. His counselor asked that he come for an individual appointment and intentionally scheduled it for a day that he wasn’t coming to IOP. He showed up and his counselor thought he smelled faintly of alcohol. He did a random urinalysis and he could see that Jake was nervous. When they went back to the office Jake confessed that he had been drinking all along. He was timing it so he wouldn’t have alcohol in his system when he showed up for group. He admitted that it might be harder than he thought to not drink but all his friends drank and he didn’t really have a problem so why not!?

The counselor let Jake know that he would have to call his probation officer and tell him right away. He suggested an inpatient treatment stay as he did not feel Jake had the supports or ability at this time to stay away from alcohol. Jake was upset and refusing but in the end he realized that he would have to go or go to jail. He left for Inpatient treatment a week later.

Jake returned from Inpatient two months later a changed man. He went back to IOP and was the poster child for recovery. He went to meetings every day. He moved back in with his mother and started to look for work. He was walking the walk and talking the talk. In group he was confronted with the cloud he seemed to be on and watching for when “real life” showed up. He said he was sorry they all weren’t as good at this recovery thing as him and he thought they were jealous.

Jake stated he got a lot of support at his home group and you all are harshing my vibe. Jake did finally get a job but needed a car. He started to experience a lot of anxiety about how to get a car, worried his family wouldn’t be supportive and nagging thoughts that he would fail. These were familiar feelings. He use to drink when he felt this kind of anxiety. This thought created even more anxiety.

He decided to ask his mom to sign for him to buy a car but his other siblings found out and convinced her to not do it. “It’s too soon, they said, let him take the bus for a while; it’ll be good for him.” Jake was furious and came to group angry at everyone. The group tried to give him feedback but he was closed down and unable to receive it. He left angry and anxious. Then he thought about his friend Johnny. He is a motor head and usually always has some beater in his yard. He thought maybe he won’t be as unsupportive as all these creeps.

He went to see Johnny. As expected Johnny was happy to see him and said he would look around for a cheap ride for him. Johnny offered Jake a beer. He said, “Man, you know I’m not drinking, you know I had that DUI, and well, probably not a good idea.” Johnny said, “How long have we known each other, brother, and you can’t have a beer with me?” He told Jake he didn’t think he was an alcoholic and he had been fooled by the man. “The man, never, ever, wants you to have any fun?” He asked him, “What the hell kinda brainwashing place did you go?” Jake said, “You know what; you’re right, give me that beer man.” “Cheers.”

As soon as he had it he knew he had screwed up but he felt relaxed too. This scared him and he left before having another and went to a meeting and confessed. He knew he had to tell his treatment group and he knew he had some amends to make. He was scared that he came so close to completely losing it again. He didn’t think he would make it back if he started drinking again. He would feel too much like a loser and it wouldn’t matter anymore. He had to do what his sponsor was telling him. He knew that much. He was aware too that he had been ignoring the familiar gnawing feelings he felt when he got stressed and it scared him how much the alcohol helped. After today he had the realization that the beer had really helped him relax. He didn’t know what to do about this. He thought he should talk with his counselor about it.