



## **Bio for Tommy Cook**

### **Tommy's recovery story:**

I utilized substances at a young age in order to cope with feelings of anxiety, low self worth, and shame. My substance use rapidly got to a point where it was harming my connection with family, friends, and self. I entered my first substance treatment at 17 years old. Through his recovery journey, I have gained experiential wisdom surrounding self love, presence, the value of vulnerability, and how to best remain honest in all areas of my life.

Over the years I have built a vast community of individuals also on a path of healing and transformation. My drive towards self discovery and truth led me into the counseling field, where I continue to learn about myself through holding space for others.

### **How Tommy came to Next Step:**

I moved to Asheville 8 years ago in order to work as a wilderness therapy guide. After several years as a guide, I knew that counseling was the profession I wanted to pursue and got my masters degree in clinical mental health counseling. Several years ago I led hikes with the men at Next Step Recovery and felt a draw to potentially join the Next Step Team.

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Several years later I joined the team to run weekly groups surrounding nervous system regulation, mindfulness, and attachment theory.

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

Self forgiveness and self love are the most powerful antidotes to an addictive lifestyle.

Shame and self judgement are the precursors to addictive patterns. Open and honest connection with other humans is a necessity to remain on the path of recovery.

**A little known fact about Tommy:**

I enjoy ecstatic dance, drumming, and singing to express my true self and drop away from obsessive thought patterns. I am passionate about building my connection with God while exploring a wide range of spiritual paths to discover what best fits my worldview.

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