

Journey

making recovery from addiction visible

Oct/Nov 2023 • Issue 29



Wes Salvucci *Paying It Forward*

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Cover

Wes Salvucci

Photo by Brian Delaney



Forever Thanked

People recover in communities, and while recovery is an individual's responsibility, entire communities benefit when recovery from addiction is visible.

Thanks to advertisers, subscribers, sponsors and private gifts—many help us keep the magazine free, and everyone plays a part in amplifying hope!

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From the Publisher



This issue is about employment, employers, and workplaces, and after reading all the articles, I'm feeling an overwhelming amount of gratitude for an employer who took a chance on someone like me when I was newly sober.

Back in 1993, I saw an ad in the newspaper and mailed my resume, with a stamp, to apply for the job (no internet, no email, no cell phone).

At the time, I was living in a half-way house called Evodia with 12 other women—all newly sober like me, so when Gary Lambert, owner of “American Speedy,” a print company, called me twice to set up an interview, he was actually calling the pay phone in the hall. I wasn't home either time and the different women who answered the calls told him I was at a “12-step” meeting and to call back later.

Back then, there wasn't the science that there is now to prove that substance use disorder is a chronic brain disorder that affects behavior. People like me were (and still are today) judged harshly, and the consequences of my behavior were seen as moral failure.

But, regardless, he asked me to come in and interviewed me eye-ball to eye-ball.

I cried when he asked where I was living and told him everything—probably way more than he needed to hear—and at the end I said that although I hadn't worked in quite a while, I really believed I could do the job.

He decided to give me a chance, and hired me as a desktop publisher.

I started one day a week for four hours, then two days a week, and over time I worked myself into a part-time job and then a full-time job. Because of that opportunity, I was able to learn a new technology (Ventura Publishing) and because I knew that technology, it led to my next job with Healthsource Maine, and so on, and so on.

Gary took a chance on me, he watched me quite intensely those first few weeks but I could tell that he genuinely wanted to know how I was doing when he asked.

Thank you Gary Lambert and all the other Gary Lamberts out there who give people like me a second chance, and don't let our history define our potential.

Are you looking for a job?

Check out the article, *Considering an Employer?* (page 12) by the team supporting the workforce development arm of the Manufacturers Association of Maine, to help you assess whether the role and company you might be considering is IDEAL for you.

Grateful.

Carolyn

Since our very first team meeting on November 8, 2018, we've held true to our core values as a team of people fiercely devoted to making recovery visible and celebrating freedom from addiction.

Thankfully we lean on these values when making decisions about what and who to include our magazine and reserve the right to refuse advertisers and editorial content that doesn't align with these values.

CORE VALUES



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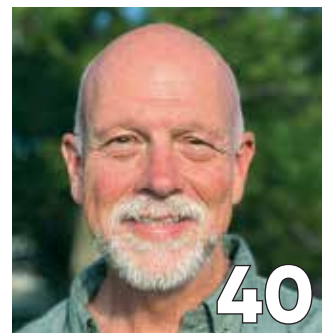
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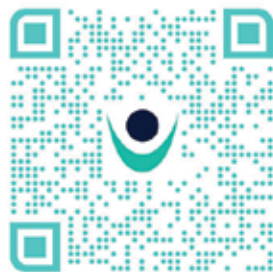
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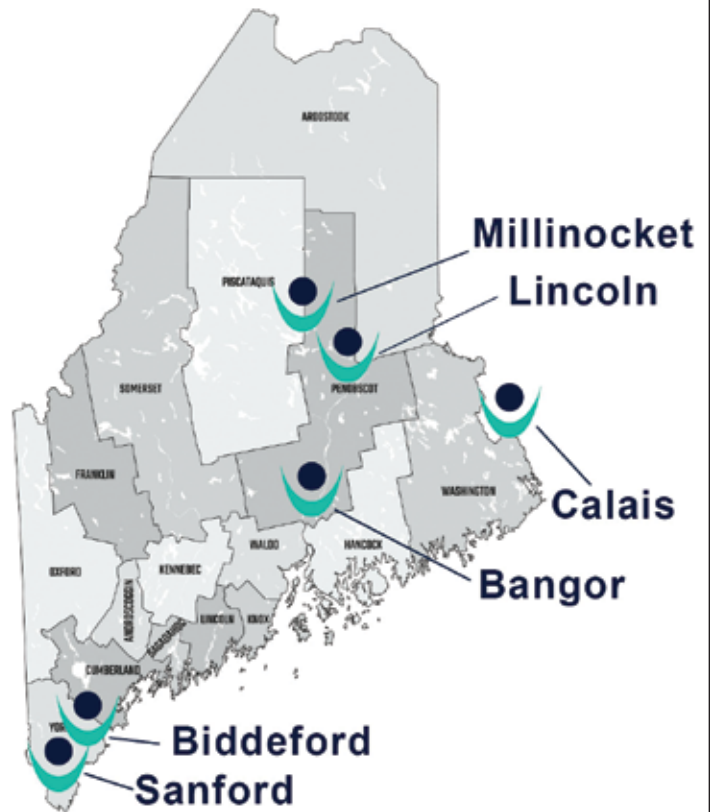


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Personal Recovery *story*

Paying it Forward

Wes Salvucci finds meaning in matching people in early recovery with dignified work

by Amy Paradysz

MaineWorks has been a big part of 23-year-old Wes Salvucci's recovery story. And now, as Director of Operations, he's in a position to help others in recovery find solid careers in Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

"I'm in the construction field but also get to help people find a life like I did, with two career job offers at 10 months sober," Wes says.

It's an incredible turnaround for a young man who was discharged from the Army three years ago after failing several drug tests. And Wes doesn't shy away from telling that story.

"When I was about 12 or 13, I started experimenting with things, mostly alcohol and marijuana," he says. "I was keeping up appearances, still passing enough classes, still playing sports. But I was getting into pills and things were going downhill pretty quick."

He was kicked off the basketball team first, then football and lacrosse. Without sports, he was failing to even show up to school. Then, at the beginning of his senior year, his parents sent him for 40 days of treatment at a mental health facility in Massachusetts.

"It was more focused on feelings than substance use," Wes says. "I did it for my family, but I personally



Photo by Brian Delaney.

had no plans to stay sober. I got out of there and pretty much started drinking immediately but stayed away from drugs."

He finished high school online—missing prom and graduation—then joined the Army. He got through Basic Training and to his first duty station in Fort Carson, Colorado, where he served as an infantry mortarman. He was part of a squad of four, each member carrying a piece of a small hand cannon that could be assembled to shoot small rockets.

"I was really good at my job," Wes says. "But I was drinking a lot..."

Then, slowly, I started doing drugs again. And then I started doing cocaine. I failed a lot of drug tests, did some stupid things and was chaptered out."

His family hadn't heard from him in so long that they called his unit and found out he was no longer in the military.

"My Dad set me up in a treatment center," Wes says. "He flew me back from Colorado to Massachusetts, picked me up at Logan and told me right then and there, 'You're going to treatment or you're not getting in my car.' That's when I decided, enough was enough."

When Wes started his 45-day stay at a New Hampshire treatment center his recovery began in earnest.

“I knew I needed to do something,” he says. “The path I was on was death or jail, and it was coming quickly.”

Having been through treatment before, he knew he could make friends with people who didn’t really want to be there or he could make friends with people motivated by hope for a better life.

“Thankfully, I chose the right people,” he says.

There, 12-step recovery became part of his daily life for the long term. He wanted to take that back to his hometown in Massachusetts, but the treatment facility arranged for him to stay at a sober house in Portland, Maine. A luckily timed pandemic stimulus check paid for his first 30 days.

“I didn’t want to have to go make another new life for myself,” he says. “So I didn’t plan on staying more than a month.”

He arrived with just \$12, a few cans of soup, a bag of clothes and a job interview set up at a Shaw’s grocery store. When he got to the sober house, though, someone told him about MaineWorks.

“And they started me the next day, working with general contractor Allied Cook,” he says. “We were building apartment units with a six-story 80-unit building. I worked on everything from laying the concrete pad to doing the framing.”

When Wes sprained an ankle badly enough that he needed to take 10 weeks off from construction, MaineWorks kept him employed—including driving workers to job sites in Brunswick and Waterville. He shadowed the operations manager in hiring and dispatch. Once his ankle healed, Allied Cook wanted Wes back to work with

them. In fact, the company was considering offering him a full-time carpentry job once he had his own car.

Wes was 10 months sober when he bought a 2005 Honda Accord and in a matter of two days had two career job offers.

“I had a super-hard choice,” he says. “I could go with Allied Cook and have a career in construction. I was good at it, and I liked the company and the people. Or I could come to MaineWorks and have a construction-related job but with the recovery piece.”

He chose MaineWorks.

“I believe everything happens for a reason,” says Wes, who has been promoted a couple times now. “Everything I’ve done has put me here today with this opportunity to give others the options I was given.”

That’s his “day job,” but he also manages the men’s sober home that he initially thought would be a one-month detour in his life. He stayed 18 months, and though he no longer lives there, he manages group meetings and weekly goal check-ins at the house.

In both positions, he works with people in early recovery and connects them with resources—whether that’s basic essentials like food, finding a meeting or a sponsor, or finding immediate or long-term work.

“What better opportunity than to have a job that is about helping people?” he says.



Amy Paradysz is a recovery ally and freelance writer and editor from Scarborough with more than 20 years of experience. She can be reached at amyparadysz@gmail.com

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Workplaces at the Forefront

Championing Recovery and Hope

by Carolyn Delaney

I believe that businesses have the influence to reduce addiction stigma and save lives.

According to the National Safety Council, 75 percent of people who struggle with substance use disorder are employed. Workplaces have an opportunity to play a major role in reducing stigma by fostering understanding, offering support, and creating environments where hope can grow and recovery can thrive.

Several initiatives around the country are supporting employers in their desire to change workplace culture, although similar they're not interchangeable — referred to as “recovery-friendly,” “recovery-ready,” “recovery supportive” or “recovery-informed.”

These initiatives are taking root by creating a cultural framework for education, training, support, and visibility that benefits not only employees and family members but the broader community and society as a whole.

The core of my business as the founder of Journey Enterprises is about elevating and amplifying these types of initiatives. I think about this all the time. A recent Health Links webinar gave me an added boost of inspiration regarding recovery and the workplace—so much so that I requested permission to share some key insights from the three panelists



who spoke. Health Links is a program from the Center for Health, Work & Environment at the Colorado School of Public Health that is part of Colorado’s Recovery Friendly Workplace Initiative. The group hosts an annual webinar on recovery-friendly practices for employers and workplace champions.

Links Between Work and Substance Use

There are many links between work and substance use, as pointed out by Jamie C. Osborne, a public health analyst for CDC – National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). Consider the connections between hazardous work and increased risk of work-related injury. Or how limited available sick leave might affect someone considering taking time for recovery. Or the impact of the anxiety accompanying unemployment or unstable work.

“Workplaces are looking to support workers who are struggling with substance use to receive treatment, achieve their recovery goals and of course to keep them working,” said Osborne. “Keeping all of that rooted in a focus on prevention and stigma reduction.”

“For the employee, employment provides economic stability, a meaningful social role, and direct access to treatment and recovery services, making it an important

factor in supporting the initiation and maintenance of recovery.”

A report from the University of Chicago and the National Safety Council found that one in every 12 workers has an untreated substance use disorder. And yet, only a fraction, about one in 6 people facing substance issues, reach out for help.

It’s important to remember that among us, even those we work with, someone might be silently suffering and seeking support. When I think about that, it’s a reminder about the importance of the language we use when talking about substance use disorder. We never know if the person we’re talking to may be struggling or may love someone who’s struggling.

Creating a workplace that encourages their employees to get the help they need is a multifaceted challenge but one that promises rewards.

By understanding the unique needs of their workforce, offering resources and support, and promoting a culture of what the NIOSH calls Total Worker Health®, employers can pave the way for a healthier, happier and more productive workplace.

If you want to create a supportive workplace program but don’t know where to begin, the NIOSH has best practice resources online: <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/twh/>.

Creating a Supportive Work Environment

The workplace can have both **recovery hazards**, such as negative working conditions and exposure to stigma, and **recovery supports**, such as fair treatment and social support, which can both impact the well-being and recovery process of employees. Visit <https://bit.ly/cdc-workplace-recovery> for more information.

“Substance misuse and substance use disorder have become significant workplace stressors,” said Cal Beyer, a human capital risk management consultant and a long-term advocate for workplace mental health. Beyer resides in Washington state and works nationally.

Employers who actively acknowledge this challenge and work towards creating an environment that supports the recovery journey of every affected individual can have a great impact on the health of their workplace. Beyer recommended that employers begin by learning about the impact of substance misuse on their industry from both a human and financial perspective. Then work to remove barriers, reduce stigma, promote active care and put the cultural framework in place to make this happen.

“The hallmarks of a recovery-friendly workplace,” Beyer said, “include stigma reduction, flexible policies, peer-to-peer mentoring and support as well as ongoing training and resources to promote active recovery.”

Andersen Construction: A Recovery-Friendly Workplace

Andersen Construction is one of the largest commercial construction firms in the Pacific Northwest. Kristina Ewing, who led the holistic design of a robust Health and Well-being Department, shared how the company has implemented a recovery-friendly workplace in practice.

She suggested understanding the unique challenges of the industry, ensuring leadership buy-in, and knowing available resources—state, federal and local, **many of them free**. She also suggested having resources readily available, because the more employers start talking about these offerings, the more employees will join in the conversation and be interested in what’s available.

Andersen Construction started by laying the foundation with “mental health lite” topics, introducing techniques like tapping and mindfulness training that can provide workers with practical tools to manage stress and pain. They built up to heavier topics such as suicide and addiction, breaking down stigma through repetition and self-disclosure, and educating and discussing through “toolbox talks,” while also ensuring the availability of Narcan on every job site and office.

Ewing encouraged employers to educate, discuss, and share frequently.

Creating a safe and stigma-free workplace environment where conversations about mental health and substance use disorders are normalized can help employees feel more comfortable seeking help and support.

Final Thoughts

I hope you’re as encouraged as I am by the substantial work being done around the country with employers wanting to be part of the solution. Check out page 16 to find out what’s going on here in Maine!

If you have found these highlights as intriguing as I did, check out the 1-hour webinar here: <https://bit.ly/totalworkerapproach>

Or use this QR code to go right to the YouTube video.



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Considering an Employer?

Is an Ideal Workplace Even on Your Radar?



by Dick Dyer, APR, Rachel Knight from Destination Occupation, and John Lewis from Synergy Workforce Solutions – all volunteering as the workforce development arm of the Manufacturers Association of Maine

No one's journey in life is exactly the same. We all have individual experiences and desires that impact us in different ways. These factors influence our perceptions and our decision-making. For many, the journey to a desired destination, like employment, is very personal.

A career in the trades can offer a world of possibilities for those considering a new path.

These careers provide stable income, a physically active, hands-on environment, and opportunities to work with tools/machines, solve problems, and see a final product or project come to completion. In addition, you don't have to take work home, and you have a chance to master valuable skills.

By choosing a trade, you open doors to a fulfilling and rewarding career path. From electricians to carpenters, plumbers to welders, the options are diverse, and the demand is high.

Once you identify a company you'd like to work with, it's up to you to

check it out and remember that the interview process is a two-way street. This is your chance to ask all the questions about what's important to you and make sure this potential company is a fit for you.

Your exploration of potential employers should serve as a roadmap for your career journey. The best "guides" in this journey are your individual needs and you get to define your "IDEAL."

The first step is awareness.

If you know nothing about a company, your journey might take you in a different direction, perhaps towards one of their competitors. Once you're aware, think about what makes that company or role so appealing that you'd want to be a part of it.

Assessing an employer through their recruitment efforts is a crucial step for potential employees to determine if the company aligns with their values, career goals, and work preferences.

Here are some key ways to evaluate an employer through their recruitment efforts:

Job Postings and Descriptions

Pay attention to the job postings and descriptions. A well-crafted job posting helps you envision the type

of role you're applying for. Can you see yourself doing this job at this company?

Company Website

Visit the company's official website. Look for an "About Us" or "Company Culture" section. This can provide information about the company's history, mission, values, and culture. A company that shares this information is often proud of its identity and is more likely to be transparent. Videos provide a great way to see the culture of the company and answer: What is it like to work there?

Online Presence

Check the company's presence on professional networking sites like LinkedIn. Review employee profiles, especially those in similar roles. This can give you insights into the backgrounds and career progression of current employees.

Employee Reviews

Research employee reviews on websites like Glassdoor or Indeed. Pay attention to both positive and negative feedback. While individual experiences can vary, common themes in reviews can provide valuable insights into the company's strengths and weaknesses.

Recruitment Process

Assess the recruitment process itself: Is it organized, respectful of your

time, and transparent? How are you treated during interviews and communications with the company's representatives? A positive recruitment experience often reflects a company's commitment to its employees.

Communication

Analyze how the company communicates with you throughout the recruitment process. Prompt and respectful responses to your queries and concerns indicate good communication practices within the organization.

Benefits and Perks

Review the benefits and perks offered by the company. Competitive compensation, healthcare, retirement plans, and additional perks like flexible work arrangements or professional development opportunities can be indicators of a company's commitment to employee well-being.

Interview Questions

Pay attention to the questions asked during interviews. Do they focus solely on your qualifications, or do they also inquire about your values and goals? Thoughtful interview questions can reveal the company's priorities.

Reference Checks

If possible, reach out to current or former employees for informal discussions about their experiences. They may provide candid insights into the company's culture and work environment.

By defining your ideal role AND workplace, and by using these strategies, you'll be able to figure out if a particular company is the right destination on your career journey.

If you're an employer and would like to find out more on how Destination Occupation and Synergy Workforce Solutions can help you attract the right candidates, please email dick@destinationoccupation.com or john@synworkforce.com.



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Employment

The Vital Cornerstone for Recovery

by the Journey Editorial Team

For many, navigating the path of recovery, employment offers more than just financial stability. It provides a renewed sense of identity, purpose, and belonging. The act of working, collaborating with peers, and contributing to society enriches recovery capital, strengthening the foundation on which people can rebuild their lives.

According to Alison Webb in her book, *Recovery Allies, How to Support Addiction Recovery and Build Recovery-Friendly Communities* (North Atlantic Books, 2022), employment transcends just being a route to income.

It stands as a cornerstone in the path to recovery by:

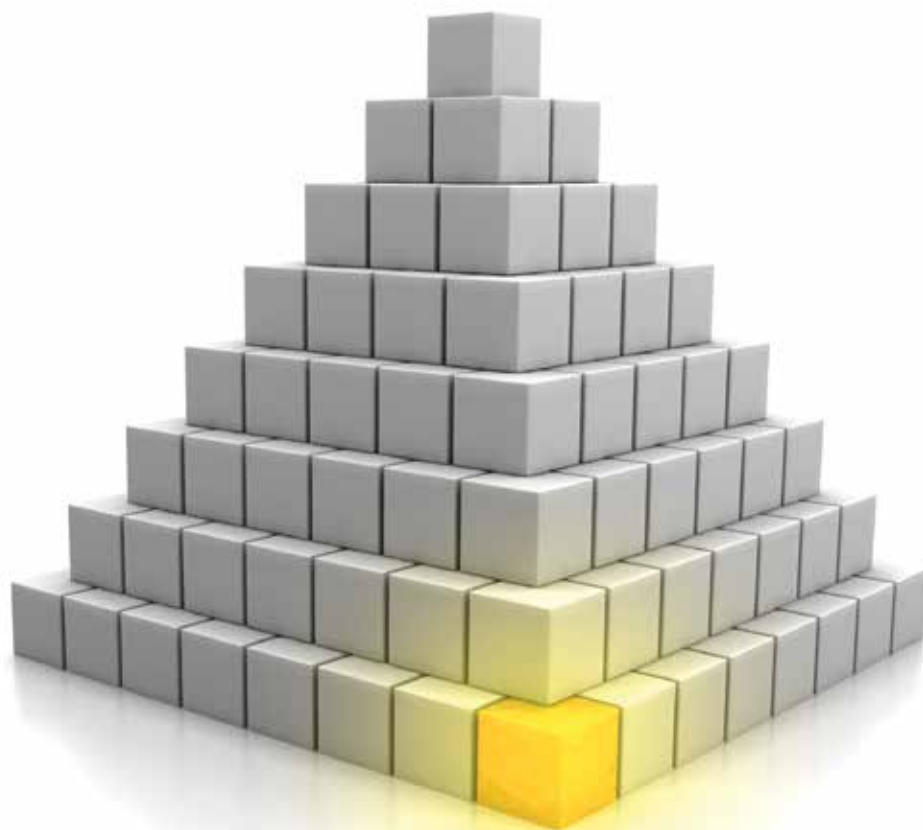
- **Fostering Self-Worth and**

Purpose: Engaging in work not only gives individuals a sense of identity and purpose but also provides them avenues for personal growth, a feeling of belonging to a team, and opportunities to meaningfully contribute to society.

- **Bridging the Gap – From Takers to Givers:** Many in recovery perceive their past of active addiction as a period where they were merely “taking” from society. Employment paves a way for them to evolve from “takers” to “givers” enabling them to contribute to their communities and the broader society.

- **Employers Being Champions:**

The recovery journey is immensely aided by employers who recognize



and establish supportive environments for those in recovery. Alison emphasizes that the repercussions of substance use in professional settings, such as escalated healthcare expenses and absenteeism, make it important for employers to be supportive to recovery efforts.

- **Enhancing Recovery:** Data suggests that employment dramatically enhances recovery capital by presenting avenues for independent living, access to health insurance, reduced financial stress, and an improved social stature.

Also, a job can structure one’s day, elevate self-respect, uplift spirits, and amplify overall life quality.

- **Guarding Against Returning**

to Use: Being employed can be a significant guard against returning to use. As Alison writes, “*The likelihood of sustained recovery is as deeply influenced by employment as it is by the duration of treatment.*”

In a nutshell, employment isn’t just a ladder to economic well-being. It’s vital to amplifying recovery capital, nurturing self-worth, bestowing purpose, and endorsing long-term recovery.

Revolutionizing Recruitment

The Power of a Stigma-Free Job Board

Imagine a world where everyone gets a fair chance to shine, even after facing life's toughest challenges. That's the vision behind our stigma-free job board. It's more than just a list of jobs; it's a beacon of hope.

We launched our job board on May 16, 2022 in an effort to help employers who wanted to be seen by the recovery community raise their hands. Over the past year and a half, we've had over 70 employers posting their jobs with more than 175 jobs.

Our community thrives when everyone feels valued and accepted. By embracing our stigma-free job board, employers are not just opening doors; they are saying, "We see you, and your past does not define your future."

We're grateful for these employers who actively support this initiative. Their actions shout loud and clear: "Together, we can make a difference." When employers and communities join hands to support those in recovery, they're creating a culture of acceptance and encouragement.

CAP QUALITY CARE's mission has been to provide the highest quality, most effective care for dependence or addiction related to heroin and/or pharmaceutical opioid medication, based upon medical research. Our treatment philosophy includes seeing patients as individuals with a medical problem and not judging them morally for the symptoms of their affliction. www.capqualitycare.com



BRIGHTER HEIGHTS MAINE offers a variety of services including Medication Assisted Treatment, Medication Management, Case Management and Substance Use Counseling. We take MaineCare and offer self-pay rates. Our clinicians provide trauma informed care and we embrace a harm reduction philosophy. Our referral form is online: <https://www.bh-maine.com/referrals/> or call (207) 338-8960 ext. 205.



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MARTIN'S POINT HEALTH CARE is a not-for-profit organization providing primary care and health insurance plans to the people of Maine and beyond. We have a variety of openings in our administrative and clinical settings. Join our team in creating a workplace that encourages trust, care, collaboration, and growth. Apply online today!



ABC Service Center
ACE Corporation
Aroostook Mental Health Services, Inc.
Bankers Life
Better Life Partners
Black Point Inn
Bread and Roses Bakery
Brighter Heights Maine
Cafua Management Co. LLC
(Dunkin Donuts)
CAP Quality Care, Inc.
Casco Bay Community Support Services
Catholic Charities Maine
CML Services Inc d/b/a Servpro of Portland commonspace
Crossroads
Davinci's Eatery
DiMillo's on the Water
Ferry Beach Retreat and Conference Center
Greater Portland Health Groups Recover Together
Health Affiliates Maine
Healthy Acadia
Hilton Garden Inn Auburn Riverwatch
Jones Landing Bar and Restaurant
Journey Magazine
Kennebec Behavioral Health
Leavitt and Parris & Fortune Companies
Lewis Brothers Landscaping
Lifeline for ME
Lowe's
LST Landscaping Inc
Magic Carpet Cleaning & Restoration
Maine Behavioral Healthcare
Maine Oxy Acetylene Supply Co
MaineHealth
Martin's Point Health Care
Masis Staffing Solutions
Mid-Coast Recovery Coalition
Milestone Recovery
Molnyck
My Place Teen Center
NAMI
Northern Light Health
Norway Savings Bank
Paradigm Windows LLC
Penquis
Pinetree Institute
Pleasant Point Health Center
Portland Recovery Community Center
Primerica
Reed & Reed
Roma Pizza KPT
Saco Valley Health Center
Safe Voices
Sanford Recovery Community Center
SaVida Health
Second Street Associates
Spurwink
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TEMPO Employment Services
The Ecology School
The Holy Donut
The Park Danforth
The Portland Press Herald
Top of the Hill Counseling
Tyson Foods
Wayfair LLC
Wayfinder Schools
Western Maine Addiction Recovery Initiative
Youturn Health

Maine's Newly Launched RFW Certification by Pinetree Institute & PRCC

by Ali Bland

In a society that is increasingly recognizing the importance of self-care and wellness, a new trend is gaining momentum—the Recovery-Friendly Workplace. (RFW). Originally launched in 2018 by New Hampshire Gov. Chris Sununu, the program is now in place in more than 25 states. In Maine, companies like Kennebunk Savings Bank are redefining workplace cultures by prioritizing employee well-being and offering support for those facing and recovering from addiction.

Recently the State of Maine funded a two-year statewide pilot for the Portland Recovery Community Center (PRCC) and Pinetree Institute to support businesses in becoming recognized as RFWs. The vision is that Maine's businesses will lead the way to champion recovery from substance use disorder as a strength and work intentionally with people in recovery and their families. RFWs encourage a healthy and safe environment where employers, employees, and communities can collaborate to create positive change and eliminate barriers for those impacted by addiction.

The shift toward inclusion

For PRCC and Pinetree Institute, success has never been solely measured in numbers. We understand that the heart of any organization lies within its people and that means acknowledging life's challenges and building human capital. We recognize that addiction can affect anyone, any family, any community. Recovery is possible and our goal is to build workplace health, safety, and wellness as the cornerstone of workplace culture.

Breaking stigma, fostering authenticity

One of the key objectives of Maine's RFW initiative is to break down the stigma surrounding addiction. We help employers build environments where

both employers and their employees have the tools to create a culture of inclusion for people in recovery, so that they can attract new workers and retain a productive workforce. The initiative will help employers discover that hiring workers in recovery is a great investment. Sometimes, people just need a second chance.

The Core Pillars of RFWs

- **Stigma Reduction:** Employers are assisted with participating in public awareness and educational events to decrease stigma attached to substance use disorder. Employers have access to a diversity of training modules.
- **Cultural Shifts:** Reviewing policies to reduce barriers to those impacted by addiction and to help achieve a high level of employee health, safety, and productivity.
- **Support Services:** Employers are connected to many community, prevention, treatment, and recovery support services including working with Recovery Community Centers.
- **Training and Support:** Employers receive recovery support resources and training that promote health, well-being and recovery for all employees and their families. Training includes the intersection of substance use disorder and traditionally marginalized populations as well as Overdose Recognition and Reversal Protocols.
- **Feedback:** All companies are given the opportunity to participate in improving and further developing standards for making an impact statewide for people in recovery.

Join us on this path

Businesses that have adopted a RFW model see many benefits:

1. Access to highly skilled talent
2. Increased retention
3. Lower absenteeism
4. Increased brand equity
5. Healthier workforce

To kick off this exciting initiative, we invite all businesses interested in early



adoption of the RFW to reach out for training and support. This will be an excellent opportunity to learn more about the program, meet our team of experts, and share your valuable feedback and ideas. All RFW sites are provided with a RFW Toolkit that includes best practices and evidence-based resources to reduce barriers for those impacted by addiction and to help achieve a high level of employee health, safety, and productivity.

PRCC and Pinetree Institute firmly believe that a supportive and inclusive workplace culture is not just a trend, but a fundamental aspect of our identity as a state. RFW initiatives empower workplaces to support employees who are impacted by substance use disorder, helping them create a stronger, healthier, and more productive workforce in the process. Together, we can make a difference and create a workplace where everyone can thrive.

For more information, please contact Mark@Pinetreeinstitute.org



Ali Bland, Administrative Coordinator at Portland Recovery Community Center. Ali is a person in long-term recovery.

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52% of Employers Experience Workplace Issues Due to Employee Substance Use and Behavioral Health Struggles

Youturn Health can help.

Youturn Health is a virtual program that bridges the gap between inaction and seeking treatment by making support accessible.

We provide support for:

- Anxiety, stress, depression
- Substance use
- Suicidal ideation
- Grief

Youturn Health can help engage your struggling employees to support them before they reach a crisis point.

Contact us today
to find out how we can help.

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Fuel Your Passion

Prepared for your first, next, and best career moves

by Heather Douglass

Free for Many. Affordable for All.

Maine's community colleges offer over 300 degree and one-year certification options and offer the lowest tuition in New England. For half of our students, Pell Grants and Maine State Grants cover the total cost of tuition and fees. For many, it covers significantly more. In all, 74 percent of full-time students receive grant aid to help cover the cost of their education. And you don't have to be a full-time student to qualify for financial assistance.

Get to Work Fast

Did you know that in addition to degree and certificate programs, Maine's community colleges offer you over 200 short-term workforce programs at no cost? The Harold Alfond Center for the Advancement of Maine's Workforce was created to bolster programs that help you learn quickly and get the skills you need to go right to work. Most programs range from three weeks to several months. Whether it's your first career or you are interested in switching professions, we can help you get started.

No Cost to You

These workforce programs are free to Maine residents 18 or older with a high-school diploma or equivalent, like a GED or HiSET.

For Everyone and Every Age

We have programs for everyone! If you just finished school and need to go into the workforce, we can help. If you already have a career but are

considering trying something new, now's the time. And, if you want to get better at your current job, workforce training can help with that, too.

Life Changing Opportunity

Whether you want a better paycheck or work/life balance, our team is here to help you reach your goals. Additionally, most workforce training

programs offer credit for those who want to continue in a degree program; scholarships are available to make that option even more attainable.



Heather Douglass is the Director of Workforce Communications for the Maine Community College System (MCCS).

What Type of Training?

Short-term workforce programs train you for a high-demand, good-paying job. Maine's community colleges offer training in:

- AEMT
- Aquaculture
- Arboriculture
- Amazon Web Services (AWS)
- Commercial driver's license (CDL)
- Certified Clinical Medical Assistant (CCMA)
- Certified nursing assistant (CNA)
- Computer Numerical Control (CNC) machining
- Construction
- Cybersecurity
- Dental assisting
- Education technician
- Electric vehicle repair
- Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
- Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)
- Fiber optic technician
- Heat pump installer

- High-pressure boiler
- Journeyman electrician
- Land surveying
- Learning facilitator
- Licensed practical nurse (LPN)
- Manufacturing
- Marine design
- Mechanized logging
- Medical assisting
- Medical coding
- Mental Health Rehabilitation Technician-Community (MHRT-C)
- Natural gas and propane
- New cook training
- Oil burner technician
- Patient service representative
- Pharmacy technician
- Phlebotomy
- Production technology
- Refrigeration
- Respiratory therapy
- Surgical technology
- Welding
- and more!

Start your new beginning with us. Go to MCCSworks.com or visit our colleges:

- Central Maine Community College | Auburn | bit.ly/workforce-cmcc
- Eastern Maine Community College | Bangor | bit.ly/workforce-emcc
- Kennebec Valley Community College | Fairfield | bit.ly/workforce-kvcc
- Northern Maine Community College | Presque Isle | bit.ly/workforce-nmcc
- Southern Maine Community College | So. Portland | bit.ly/workforce-smcc
- Washington County Community College | Calais | bit.ly/workforce-wccc
- York County Community College | Wells | bit.ly/workforce-yccc

Are You Willing to Go to Any Lengths?

by Joanna Free

A question that's been posed to people in recovery for many decades now is this daring call to action, "Are you willing to go to any lengths?"

Any lengths?

Some of us come into recovery pretty ambivalent, some come rushing or tumbling in, ready to do whatever is required to transform our lives. Tell us to stand on our heads and sing Happy Birthday and we'd do it.

We remember the lengths we went to before we came to recovery: begging, borrowing and stealing from others and from ourselves, from our own lives, for years.

Were we — are we — willing to bring the same level of determination to this new path?

The new path, the path of recovery, looks different for each of us. And the way we begin it does, too.

In 2013, a woman by the name of Etta Mae Lopez slapped a police officer ...

to ensure she'd go to jail. She wanted to stop smoking, and she knew that if she struck a law enforcement officer, she was guaranteed jail time. She waited for hours outside the Sacramento Jail for an officer to exit in uniform. When Deputy Matt Campoy came out the door, she stepped directly into his path and slapped him in the face. When he brought her inside the facility, she slapped him again on his arm, for good measure.

Just 5'1" tall, 31 year old Etta Mae Lopez was a small but determined bundle of energy. Her strategy was pretty wacky — we wouldn't endorse it! — though it got her a sentence of 63 days and, in that time, she got free.

Many people who are incarcerated for reasons other than Etta Mae's await the day they're released and can smoke again. Instead, she treated jail as her own recovery center for sobriety, and she found her own unique way in.

What creative, wacky, willing-to-go-to-any-lengths things have you done to get and stay on your own unique and

individual path of recovery? And who have you invited or recruited to support you in your transformation? And how can you thank them for the unique way they've showed up?

Matt Campoy joked with friends and the media that he had a new name after that event: Nick O'Derm. He didn't know he was going to become a catalyst in Etta Mae's unique path to freedom.

I want to say *Thank You* to both Etta Mae Lopez and to Matt Campoy, aka Nick O'Derm. I've shared your story with friends and fellow buttkickers, in and out of recovery, for a decade now. It's a delight to share it here, too, in the spirit of inviting each of us to stay creative, to stay connected, to hang on to our sense of humor, and to keep asking ourselves and each other the vital question — are you willing to go to any lengths?



Joanna Free is the (grateful) author of *BUTTKICKERS: Twenty Ways to Leave Tobacco* and a (proud) writer for *Journey Magazine*.

Compassionate Conversations

How to Support Employees Facing Substance Use Challenges

by **Bridget Kelly**

Three out of four people with substance use disorder (SUD) are in the workforce, which means employers need to know how to talk to people with SUD. It's not always easy, so here are some tips to get started.

How to Identify Someone in Need

Substance use affects the person who is struggling and their family members. Both types of people could be your employees, so it's important to know how to recognize that someone may need support. There aren't always signs, but if someone is struggling with substance use or has a loved one who is struggling, you may notice:

- A rapid change in appearance
- Inappropriate verbal or emotional responses
- Calling out sick or unexplained absences
- Irritability
- Leaving early or arriving late

Talking to Someone in Need

Your goal as an employer is to steer your employee to support and resources. First and foremost, know that in any conversation, no matter what the message is, it's the way you say it that matters.

Below are some helpful tips for a productive conversation:

Don't lecture:

- Focus on having an authentic conversation and making them feel comfortable.
- Make it clear that you are coming to them because you care about their well-being.



Pick your moment:

- Separate the discussion from disciplinary action.
- Demonstrate that you are interested in talking to them as a caring human being.

Stick to the facts:

- Avoid using phrases such as: "You need to go to rehab," or "You've been drinking a lot."
- Try to incorporate phrases like: "The company is trying to change the way it handles employee substance use, and we have these resources..."

Keep it brief: You don't have to offer a solution, but point them to available resources.

Plan to follow up: Tell them you're worried about them, and ask if you can follow up. Be specific about when and how you will reconnect. Then, be sure to follow through and reach out when you told them you would.

Have a clear understanding of what is available for them: Know the resources your organization offers so that you can help guide them most effectively.

Employers have undeniable power in helping employees get help for their or a family member's substance use.

A thoughtful conversation from a place of caring can help provide the support needed to make a positive change.



Bridget Kelly is Vice President of Growth and Strategic Partnerships at Youturn Health where she expands and manages Youturn Health's strategic relationships to help change the face of behavioral healthcare.

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Youturn
HEALTH

Recovery's True Persona

by Karen St. Clair

What does recovery mean to you...from the inside?

From the outside, recovery often gets portrayed as a solo trek, a battle we must wage in isolation, but in truth, recovery is a collective experience, as we discover our shared humanity. It's a journey we don't have to walk alone.

In recovery, we learn we are not defined by our worst moments.

Recovery gives us permission to be imperfect. We don't have to punish ourselves when we stumble on the path; after all, relapse is part of the process and with self-compassion, we can get back up again and again until we find our way. We deserve support, not judgment.

In recovery, the masks we hide behind fall away as we learn that it's ok to meet the world with radical authenticity allowing the relationships we choose to be defined by trust, not fear.

With time, we make peace with our past as the pain that once haunted us transforms into wisdom and we gain the clarity to break certain cycles that may have been holding us back.

Recovery can instill great strength within us to endure things we once thought were impossible: overcoming cravings, facing fears, breaking free of the familiar; but above all, recovery teaches us that we are enough. Simply showing up each day with the courage to keep going makes us Heroes and Sheroes because we don't need to be perfect to live boldly.

Recovery is a choice to reclaim our lives. It's the realization that we've



always possessed the capacity for joy, connection, and meaning and simply need to look within to find the key. Recovery gives us permission to unleash our full selves upon the world albeit flawed, fierce, and free.

“You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step.”
— Martin Luther King

When I ask myself, “What does recovery mean to you?” I pause and think of all the ways that my Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT), or tapping practice has evolved my answer to be: “Hope, Strength, Community, Purpose, Compassion and Acceptance.”

Research shows that EFT improves multiple physiological markers of health as it lessens addictive cravings, traumatic symptoms, and depression by releasing emotions and energy blockages. The practice restores inner balance and empowers people in recovery to self-soothe, face triggers, and regain control of their lives.

Best of all, EFT provides a self-help tool to overcome challenges and build the future we deserve.



If you're ready like I was to take that first step of releasing stressful patterns from the past and start experiencing emotional freedom in the present, let's connect about how EFT can start helping you today.

Contact Karen St. Clair to learn EFT in private sessions, in workshop settings, or as a presenter at your next corporate function at karenstclairEFT.com.



Karen St. Clair is an accredited certified EFT International Trainer NQT, Reiki Master of Masters, best-selling author, speaker, and founder of Reiki Tap RenewalSM and has a gift for facilitating her clients' life-changing outcomes.

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“Do you really think there’s any hope for me?”



Overcoming the Invisible Addiction of Problem Gambling

by Lori Manson

By the time I talk to Mainers who are experiencing gambling problems, they are usually desperate. They have lost money, relationships, and sometimes their home, job, or business. They are feeling hopeless. They want to stop gambling, and they’ve tried many times. They think they are weak and have no self-control. They don’t think anyone will understand. Problem gambling is called the “invisible addiction” for a good reason. You can’t see the signs until a lot of harm has been done.

Many people are unaware that gambling can become an addiction just like substances can, much less that there are services in Maine to help those impacted by gambling problems. Sadly, only a small percentage of people who experience gambling problems will seek help. They will continue to struggle, and their loved ones will also pay the price.

Data from the 2021 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey indicates that 1.14 percent of Maine adults report that the money or time spent gambling has caused problems in their lives. This translates to thousands of Mainers experiencing gambling problems, which means their gambling is negatively impacting work, school or other activities, mental or physical

health, finances, reputation, or relationships with family or friends. For each person with a gambling problem, many other individuals in their lives are also impacted.

It’s important to know that Maine has services and resources for problem gambling, and how to find them. The key point, which is easy to remember, is that 211 Maine serves as Maine’s Problem Gambling Helpline. If you are concerned about your gambling or the gambling of a loved one, 211 Maine employs live specialists who are available 24/7 with information about resources and services. Dial 211, text your zip code to 898-211, or visit 211Maine.org.

Maine has counselors and social workers who can provide counseling for individuals who have gambling problems and their family members, and counseling can be provided at no cost if the person cannot afford to pay. Most of the counselors can provide their services statewide via telehealth. The list of providers can also be accessed via 211 Maine.

OTHER RESOURCES

Self-Exclusion is a tool many people use to help them avoid gambling. It involves filling out a form to prevent yourself from gambling. Right now, the Maine statewide self-exclusion list covers all casinos in Maine. A person can self-exclude for one, three, or five years, or for a lifetime. You can complete the form with

trained staff at multiple community sites in Maine. You can also self-exclude with an online meeting in the comfort of your home. For more information, visit adcareme.org/problem-gambling/ (Note: When sports wagering becomes operational in Maine, there will be the opportunity for individuals to request to be excluded from those operators.

The AdCare website will have further details as they become available.

Meetings are one of the most recognized ways to help people seeking recovery from gambling problems. You can call the New England Intergroup of Gamblers Anonymous Hotline at (888) 830-2271. The hotline is manned 24 hours a day by New England GA members in recovery. It is helpful to call the hotline even if there isn’t a live meeting in your area because the person in recovery can talk to you about other options. Though there aren’t many in-person GA meetings in Maine, you can participate in any virtual (Zoom or phone) meeting offered in any state.

Gamblers, Family and Friends in Recovery is a website to find virtual meetings and support 24/7/365. The list of meetings can be overwhelming, but I’ve been told that the Florida Daily is a good one that takes place every day. Learn more at gamblersinrecovery.com

Gam-Anon is a resource for loved ones who are impacted by problem gambling. Learn more at gam-anon.org.

As part of my job, I keep an up-to-date list of resources that can be helpful to people in Maine, and most can be accessed at no cost. For example, podcasts are a popular way to get information and inspiration any time by listening to people in recovery talk about problem gambling stories and topics anytime on your device. Here's a partial list:

- All In: The Addicted Gambler's Podcast
- The Broke Girl Society
- After Gambling Podcast
- All Bets Are Off Podcast
- Fall In: the Problem Gambling
- Podcast for Military Service Members and Veterans

The full list of resources also includes free, downloadable booklets, private social media groups, screening tools, and additional options for meetings. It can be accessed at [/adcareme.org/problem-gambling/](http://adcareme.org/problem-gambling/)

As a final thought, AdCare can provide a personalized **Problem Gambling 101** training for any group in Maine at no cost. Parent groups, employers, colleges, medical practices, etc. are encouraged to host a session to help increase awareness about key issues related to problem gambling.

We can all play a role in reducing the harm of the "invisible addiction" for Maine people, families, and communities.



Lori Manson is the Problem Gambling Services Coordinator at AdCare Problem Gambling Services in Augusta, and is an active member of the Maine Council on Problem

Gambling, the Northeast Consortium on Problem Gambling, and the National Council on Problem Gambling.

Did You Know?

Gambling triggers the body's reward system in a manner similar to substances

Gambling disorder is unique among addictive behaviors as it's the sole non-substance addiction recognized in the Substance-Related and Addictive Disorders section of the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, otherwise known as the DSM-5.

Gambling disorder can bring about significant harm; it can affect your finances, emotions, social life, occupation, and even your physical well-being.

People dealing with substance use and mental health issues are at an elevated risk of developing a gambling problem, and screening and early intervention can effectively reduce the harm. Neglecting screening, however, can lead to higher treatment costs in the long term.

Even moderate gambling can have a negative impact on treatment outcomes and may evolve into a secondary addiction for those recovering from substance use disorders, potentially increasing the risk of relapse.

Many cases of Gambling Disorder go unnoticed due to limited assessments for this issue.

DSM-5 CRITERIA

Persistent and recurring problematic gambling behavior that causes significant impairment or distress is indicated by an individual experiencing four (or more) of the following criteria within a 12-month period:

- Requires increasing amounts of money to experience the desired excitement from gambling.
- Feels restless or irritable when trying to cut down or quit gambling, with repeated unsuccessful attempts to do so.
- Frequently preoccupied with gambling, such as persistent thoughts about past gambling experiences, handicapping, or planning the next gambling session.
- Often resorts to gambling when feeling distressed, such as when feeling helpless, guilty, anxious, or depressed.
- After losing money gambling, frequently returns another day to try to recoup the losses (referred to as "chasing" one's losses).
- Lies to conceal the extent of involvement in gambling.
- Has jeopardized or lost significant relationships, jobs, educational opportunities, or career prospects because of gambling.
- Relies on others to provide money to alleviate desperate financial situations caused by gambling.



**PROBLEM
GAMBLING
SERVICES**

Gambling Problem?

Now you can access self-exclusion services online!

Is the money or time you're spending at the casino causing problems in your life? **Give yourself a break.** One tool that many people find useful is **self-exclusion**. That is when you voluntarily complete a form that prevents you from entering all casinos in Maine for a chosen length of time.

The **self-exclusion** process can now be completed **online** with the assistance of trained staff. The process is fast, easy, and you don't need to leave your home or office to do it.

How does it work? First, you contact **AdCare Problem Gambling Services**. Often, the service can be done right away if you contact us during the business day or an appointment may be scheduled for another convenient time. We will email you a form that is fast and easy to fill out online. Then you will meet with us via Zoom to complete the process.

What if you don't want to self-exclude online? There are locations with trained staff available to process the self-exclusion form with you in-person.

Find locations in Augusta, Bangor, Belfast, Portland, Rockland, Skowhegan, and Waterville.

If you'd like, we can also talk about **additional problem gambling resources & services** such as support groups, podcasts, and **in-person or telehealth counseling services which may be provided at no cost if you can't afford to pay.**

**For more information
scan the QR code
call (207) 626-3615 ext.20
or email problemgambling@adcareme.org**



Maine CDC Office of Population Health Equity

Community Care Referral System

Who is the Community Care Referral System for?

Anyone can submit a referral to the Community Care Referral System for themselves or someone they know who needs help getting connected to social service supports.

How can the Community Care Referral System help?

The Community Care Referral System helps connect Maine people with community organizations who can meet their social service needs, including but not limited to:

- Culturally and linguistically appropriate services
- Resources for mothers, babies, and children
- Assistance navigating the healthcare system
- Health and wellness education
- Support applying for MaineCare, TANF, or CoverME
- Options for food, heat, and transportation assistance
- Support for stress and anxiety
- Legal support for immigration
- Support accessing non-emergency, one-time household items

What can I expect?

1-3 business days after you submit the online referral form, you can expect to hear from one or more community organizations that can help meet your needs. Please keep in mind that once organizations make contact with you, it may take longer to get all the help you need since organizations may have waitlists for service.

How do I apply?

Submit a referral by accessing the online form at www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/equity/community-care.shtml or by scanning the QR code below!



Have questions? Need help?

email CDC-CommunityReferrals@maine.gov



RECOVERY SUPPORT SERVICES & INFORMATION

Recovery support services are intended to provide access to social support, employment, housing, and a variety of other services for people in recovery from substance use disorder.

Recovery Community Centers	Recovery Residences	Recovery Coaching
<p>What are they? Recovery community centers are also known as recovery support centers or recovery cafés. They're non-residential community-based hubs that offer a broad range of recovery-oriented, peer-delivered services that support addiction recovery within a rich social context.</p> <p>They provide a variety of specific services to help people achieve and maintain recovery.</p> <p>What do they provide?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recovery coaching• Technology and internet• Peer-facilitated support groups• Employment assistance• Recreational activities <p>Is there a cost to participate? No, these services are free for participants.</p> <p>What do we know about the benefits? Preliminary evidence suggests benefits include improvements in living conditions, happiness, remission, and quality of life.</p> <p>What is the best way to learn more? You can locate your local recovery community center by searching on the web with search terms such as "recovery community center," "recovery support center," and "recovery café," alongside the name of your town or city, or by looking at your local or state public health department website.</p>	<p>What are they? Recovery residences are supportive living environments that are free of alcohol and other substances. People may reside there for months, or even years, with others who are also on a journey of recovery.</p> <p>What do they provide? Recovery residences offer a safe, sober living environment with room and board and mutual support from other residents in recovery. Employment and self-care are encouraged and may be facilitated.</p> <p>What do we know about the benefits? Studies examining them have shown significant improvements in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employment• Criminal justice involvement• Remission• Treatment engagement <p>Who runs them? Residents themselves are often responsible for decision-making and financial self-sufficiency. Residents also provide informal case management for each other, offering advice on health care access, employment, managing legal problems, and engaging with social services. In other instances, recovery residences are professionally managed or monitored.</p> <p>Is there a cost to participate? There is usually a charge. Fees range from extremely low-cost (e.g., a small proportion of an individual's total income) to higher-cost, depending on location and facilities.</p> <p>How do I learn more? Information can be obtained via internet searches for "recovery residences," "Oxford House," "sober homes," and "halfway house." More general information can be found on the Maine Association of Recovery Residences website (MaineRecoveryResidences.com/).</p>	<p>What is it? Recovery coaches, sometimes known as "peer recovery support specialists," are trained to provide accessible and flexible mentorship and information, and connection to services for people in or seeking recovery.</p> <p>What does it provide? Recovery coaching offers diverse assistance in navigating complicated systems of healthcare and provides linkages to community-based recovery support services. It supports the transition between levels of care, connects patients with helpful services, and facilitates engagement with mutual aid organizations. It operates within the broader recovery ecosystem, extending the bounds of conventional treatment.</p> <p>What do we know about the benefits? Early studies have shown positive improvements in substance use outcomes and engagement with treatment services. Participants report finding recovery coaching very helpful.</p> <p>Recovery coaching serves people with substance use disorders who need more flexible, accessible support and linkages to helpful services. Recovery coaching typically is provided by people with lived experience of substance use disorder, who are trained in recovery coaching models, and typically have at least 2 years of recovery.</p> <p>Is there a cost to participate? If you access these services through a recovery community center, recovery coaching may be free. If you access these services through a hospital system, recovery coaching may be covered by your insurance plan. Recovery coaching may also be available through out-of-pocket payment.</p> <p>What is the best way to learn more? Recovery coaching is typically available through recovery community centers, addiction treatment, or hospital systems. You can find these services in your local area by searching online for "recovery coaching," or through other community-based entities and clinics that serve people with substance use disorders.</p>



Mutual Help Organizations

Addictionary

Recovery Bulletin

What are they?

Mutual-help organizations, also referred to as “self-help groups” or “mutual aid,” consist of groups of individuals with a common problem that come together to share their experiences, while providing help and support to each other.

What do they provide?

- Identification with a community of people with similar experiences
- Strategies, techniques, or philosophies that guide recovery
- Flexible support during and between formal mutual-help meetings

Mutual-help organizations typically serve people interested in recovery, as well as family members seeking to help a loved one.

What do we know about the benefits?

Dozens of clinical trials and cost-effectiveness studies have demonstrated that Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and clinical treatments that link patients to AA are effective and cost-effective for addressing alcohol use disorder. AA participation is associated with

- improved motivation and spirituality
- positive changes in social networks
- reductions in impulsivity and craving

Other research is beginning to show potentially similar support for other mutual-help organizations.

Most mutual-help organizations are fully run by participants, though some organizations can have trained, non-peer facilitators.

Is there a cost to participate?

Mutual-help organizations are typically free to participants. Donations are voluntary, and activities are often funded by donations at the group level or through the parent organization.

What is the best way to learn more?

Meeting information can be found online by searching the organization’s name. Below are some popular mutual-help organizations:

- Alcoholics Anonymous
- SMART Recovery
- Celebrate Recovery
- Women for Sobriety
- LifeRing Secular Recovery

What is it?

The Addictionary is a glossary of addiction-related terms that describes the many facets of substance use disorder, its treatment, and recovery support services. It includes **Stigma Alerts** for language or terminology that has been found to increase stigma and discrimination.

What is the purpose of it?

If we want addiction destigmatized, we need a language that’s unified, and that accurately reflects the true nature of substance use disorder.

Research shows the language we use to describe substance use disorders impacts people and services, and how the disorders are understood. Studies demonstrate that exposure to stigmatizing terms can induce cognitive biases that affect clinical judgements and quality of care.

Research also indicates stigma reducing increases the likelihood of individuals seeking help, staying in treatment, and achieving long-term remission. The aims of the Addictionary are:

- to improve the accuracy and precision of terminology surrounding addiction and combat discrimination
- to destigmatize and advocate for consensus in the field of addiction.

Who is it for?

The primary audience are people with lived experience and their families, clinicians, researchers, policymakers, and members of the media.

Where can I find it?

Check out the Addictionary on the RRI website (recoveryanswers.org/addiction-ary/). It is also a featured resource on Google’s Recover Together website (recoverttogether.withgoogle.com).

What is it?

A monthly publication summarizing and translating the latest research findings on addiction treatment and recovery. Summaries are contextualized to provide maximum helpfulness for clinicians, administrators, policy makers, and the general public.

What’s it for?

To enhance the value and utility of addiction science for practitioners, researchers, policymakers, and the public good. The goal is to summarize the latest discoveries and make research findings accessible for everyone.

Who is it meant for?

- Individuals and families
- Clinicians and providers
- Researchers
- Policymakers

How can I read it?

The Recovery Bulletin is available to everyone for free. You can subscribe on the Recovery Research Institute website (recoveryanswers.org), where you can also check out hundreds of past articles in the online archive (recoveryanswers.org/addiction-research-summaries/).

Each article answers these questions...

- What problem does this study address?
- How was this study conducted?
- What did this study find?
- What are the implications of the study findings for various stakeholders?

Recovery Research Institute at Massachusetts General Hospital

Visit RecoveryAnswers.org for more information

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Finding Your Third Space at Botanically Curious

by Paula Kersch

My plant-medicine business, Botanically Curious, is striving to create third space opportunities for people through wellness workshops and private gatherings. What are third spaces? Well, you have work, you have home and then there is the third space. This space is an anchor of community life that helps foster more creative interaction. Botanically Curious focuses on making experiences educational, fun, and healthy.

As you start or continue on your health journey, finding a third space that fits your lifestyle and helps support your goals is important. Whether you are looking to take a quick break at lunch to grab a special formulated herbal tea blend, or wanting to unwind with friends on a weekend with zero-proof botanical beverages, Botanically Curious has something for everyone. Bring co-workers in and learn more about managing stress holistically through our monthly workshops, which change with the seasons.

Top 3 Herbs to have on hand for immune health

As the temperature is dropping our bodies are adjusting. What better way to help support our bodies than by giving them some help to fight off unwanted pathogens, the natural way.

Rosemary

The winter blues are a real thing. Did you know that just the smell of rosemary can help lift those spirits? Plus, Rosemary has many healing properties as it's an excellent source of antioxidants and anti-inflammatory compounds to help boost the immune system and improve blood circulation. Use it

in tea daily after lunch for a quick focus boost to get you through the rest of the day!

Elderberries

It's no secret that Elderberries are known for their ability to support your immune system. They are rich in Vitamin C, fiber, and antioxidants. But did you know that this immune modulating herb is actually best taken in the middle of an actual cold? When it comes to immunity, there are stages and immune modulating herbs like elderberry work best when they already have a pathogen to fight. Making Elderberry syrup when you feel a cold coming on is a great use of this plant. 1 tablespoon of elderberry syrup extract four times a day while sick.

Marshmallow Root

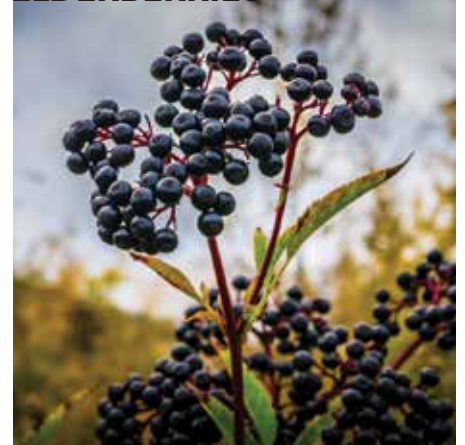
This underrated beauty hydrates the mucosal membranes of the body, allowing the barriers of entry like the nose and the throat to keep fighting with stronger defense against pathogens in your environment. I recommend a cold infusion in the morning before you drink or eat anything else. Prepare the night before then enjoy! Bonus, this herb can also help with heartburn relief during those holiday meals!

To learn more about plant medicine, connect with an herbalist in our blending lab for a custom product formulated for your body type, or book a workshop with friends, visit botanicallycurious.com. If you're a person who is curious about learning herbalism for your own health or wanting a space where you can enjoy a zero proof beverage, check out Botanically Curious on Congress Street in Portland this Fall!

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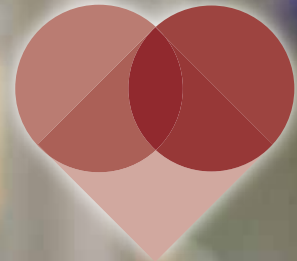


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Couples In Recovery



The Sobriety Shift *From Pink Cloud to Lasting Change*

by Elaine Shamos
and Glen Simpson

We often hear this same story from couples in recovery: “I was so happy when my partner got sober. It was like being in a pink cloud for both of us. But now it seems like our same patterns of arguing with each other have popped up and I feel like nothing has changed except the drinking.”

It’s a great accomplishment to stop engaging in one’s substance use disorder as it is also a big stride for one’s partner to acknowledge their part in enabling. Once life moves past this sobriety transition, work can begin to create lasting changes in ourselves and our partnership. Taking a deep look into unresolved beliefs and behaviors that have followed us through a lifetime is the work of reprogramming.

The patterns of behavior we learned from our family of origin or other early life experiences are so firmly ingrained because they allowed us to survive and sometimes prosper. However, when our relationships are repeatedly impacted by wounds from the past, we come to see our old behaviors no longer serve us. This can become painfully clear once the substance is behind us and the conflict continues. In fact, these patterns will continue to occur in our lives until we are willing to do “the work.” Whether

it is through the 12-steps, other modalities, and/or therapy, we all have an opportunity to acknowledge and reprogram our wounds.

The process to uncover, honor, grieve, and give voice to the patterns we learned to survive can be both painful and enlightening, and doesn’t happen all at once. However, under the care of a trusted therapist, sponsor, or guide we can begin to be aware of when these behaviors show up. Perhaps we learned to not trust others and tracked situations that felt dangerous to us as a child. In our adult relationship, believing we are always right and not listening to our partner doesn’t serve anyone. For many there was no room for us as a child and we learned to pretend we were okay, without needs, and had no voice. Not expressing ourselves and taking care of our partner while ignoring our own needs is a recipe for resentment. These unwanted behavior patterns are all tied to unresolved pain.

Starting to become aware of how these patterns show up in all our relationships is the first step to reframing our experiences. We don’t have to carry these feelings like a heavy burden or as an excuse for “bad behavior.” We can go from feeling shame to becoming curious and compassionate with ourselves. From there, by lengthening “the pause” in a conflict, we can choose to

communicate differently, connect, and repair.

It is often said that it only takes one person to change the relationship. This is true but ideally, both partners would be interested in doing their work and sharing their stories. It requires us to learn how to listen, ask open-ended questions, and acknowledge our partner’s story and pain. Witnessing and validation is often all we need to engage on our journey of discovery. Couples therapy can be very useful especially when both partners’ pain stories are clashing with each other. In this safe setting, skills can be learned to pause, listen, repeat back, and ask for help.

In the end, embracing the journey of self-discovery and mutual understanding paves the way for a profound, lasting connection—a testament to the power of humility, curiosity, and the willingness to put in the work. Beyond the pink cloud lies a fulfilling life of genuine interdependence and unwavering love!



.....
Elaine Shamos, MPH, has 30 years experience as a public health professional and is the former director of Dartmouth’s Women’s Health Resource Center. Glen Simpson, LCSW, CADAC, has a private practice specializing in substance use disorder, and couples therapy. They are working together on a book for couples in recovery.
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Compassionate AA Sponsor

From personal struggles to guiding others

by Michael Eon

As a recovering alcoholic and an active member of Alcoholics Anonymous, I willingly offer my services as a sponsor to take other men through the 12-Step process as I was led through it years ago. A key principle of my recovery is the notion that to keep it, I must freely give it away.

The 12-Step process is an evolution that moves the recovering addict out of his or herself, and into fellowship with all people, whether they are in the program or not. Service is a process of humility and one of my key responsibilities.

As stated in Step 12: “Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.”

As an alcoholic and drug addict who has struggled with addiction throughout my life, I am in a unique position to help other addicts, through my experiences both in active addiction and in recovery.

Leadership is about providing guidance, direction, and solutions.

As a member of Alcoholics Anonymous who has had a spiritual experience—a personality change—as a result of the 12 Steps, I put those principles into action to the best of my willingness on any given day.

I am accountable for my actions. I learn from my defects of character. I strive for tolerance, humility, and service. I surrender my personal will and ambitions to those of the group so that I may be of greater service to those around me, both inside and outside of AA.

Helping others through the 12-Step process can be a very rewarding experience, although not always with the results sought. Not all of those I sponsor will make it through the process. I’ve found that a person needs to achieve a certain level of despair in sobriety, perhaps even an emotional rock bottom, before they become willing enough to throw out all of their old ideas and preconceived notions in order to become teachable

and willing to do what the 12-Step process requires of them.

I have seen people drag themselves into AA for the first time, having just hit rock bottom in active addiction, in a state of hopelessness and helplessness that is almost inconceivable.

I have witnessed them become entirely different people once I’ve taken them through the process, both internally and externally, and they have moved from self-centeredness to more altruistic behavior, and regained the family and employment they had lost. It’s truly remarkable to witness, and very gratifying to know that I was able to play a part in their recovery and spiritual growth.

.....
Please note that this article is being attributed to my pen name, Michael Eon. As the author of a soon-to-be-released novel titled THESE THINGS HAPPEN (Girl Friday Books, Sept. 19, 2023), I made the decision early on in the writing process to use a pen name. Because the novel includes a great deal of fictionalized description of AA meetings and the process of the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, based on my own real-life experiences as an AA member, I thought it best to use a pen name to respect the traditions and preserve my personal anonymity.

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The Overdose Prevention Through Intensive Outreach, Naloxone and Safety (OPTIONS) state agency is a coordinated effort of the Maine Office of Behavioral Health (OBH) and other partners to improve the lives of Mainers with substance use disorder. OPTIONS supports treatment, wellness, recovery and recovery, and aims to reduce the number of fatal and non-fatal opioid-related overdoses.

Know your OPTIONS to stay safe, get well and stay well.

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Download and share free materials to reduce stigma, raise awareness and educate your community.

The Growing Power of Connection for Maine's OPTIONS Liaisons

by Beth D'Ovidio

On a rainy morning in Bangor, Ashley Roberts, OPTIONS Liaison for Penobscot County, is meeting up with a public health nurse and other members of the behavioral health team at Community Health and Counseling Services. They head out together weekly to provide mobile healthcare to people who are currently unhoused. These trips allow the nurse to provide care and Ashley, a licensed alcohol and drug counselor, to build relationships and learn what people may need to stay safe and healthy.

Every day across the state, OPTIONS Liaisons in every county connect with people in need of support related to substance use. Though no two days look the same, this always starts with care and concern for a person's overall well-being, and not just their substance use.

For Liaisons, this may mean assisting someone to find an available treatment provider for themselves or a loved one. In other cases, support is helping someone access transportation or food assistance. It could also mean accompanying law enforcement officers to visit a person who has experienced an overdose, to begin building a relationship. For other Liaisons like Nick Loscocco in Lincoln County, support takes the form of regular meetings at a local jail, to connect people to resources upon their release. As any Liaison will tell you, they want to support each individual in whatever way is best for them to stay safe and get healthy.

"The great thing about OPTIONS is that we really have a lot of freedom to work in a variety of arenas. And we want to simplify

substance use—but substance use is really complex. There's no cookie-cutter solution. Everybody has individual needs," says Glenn Gordon, Oxford County Liaison.

OPTIONS (which stands for Overdose Prevention Through Intensive Outreach Naloxone and Safety) is one strategy supported by Governor Janet Mills' administration to reduce fatal and non-fatal drug-related overdoses in Maine. Liaisons are licensed behavioral health clinicians working through four agencies contracted through the Maine Office of Behavioral Health: Aroostook Mental Health Services (AMHC), Community Health and Counseling Services, Sweetser and Tri County Mental Health Services.

According to Gordon Smith, Maine's Director of Opioid Response, "We are building a system of support that is human-centered. Care, concern and connection are the building blocks of this system. It all starts with these fundamental steps - relationships and trust are essential."

Liaisons' work is also proactive, so communities are aware of what's available and can understand the importance of a compassionate response. Liaisons engage with the public to reduce stigma, distribute naloxone and create visibility for the support that is available.

Program Success and Growth

While the OPTIONS initiative is still new, data collected by the The Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center at the University of Maine are showing encouraging results. Eric Haram of Haram Consulting, LLC, along with the Maine Medical Association's Center for Quality Improvement (CQI) provide



Glenn Gordon, BA, CADAC, OPTIONS Liaison, Oxford County.

technical assistance. According to Haram, "Liaisons have referred over 5,100 people to community-based treatment or recovery support programs, with about 80% of clients confirmed to have attended their first appointment." He adds, "Over 850 individuals have been referred to syringe services between October 2022 and July 2023." Liaisons have also given out about 14,000 doses of naloxone and have trained over 6,300 Mainers on overdose response and antistigma education.

The technical assistance team works directly with Liaisons to strategically improve services, reduce barriers and increase the number of people served. Program data, and input from stakeholders, have resulted in quality improvements. This year, Governor Mills announced an expansion, adding 16 Liaisons to serve in counties with a high need.

Liaisons & First Responders

Liaisons work alongside first responders who provide aid to people in medical emergencies, including EMS (emergency medical services) and law enforcement. Having a history of an opioid overdose places a person at greater risk of an overdose in the future, so this collaboration with first responders is critical. Law enforcement referrals are the most frequent way people get connected with OPTIONS Liaisons, having resulted in thousands of Mainers reached since the initiative began.

Because Liaisons cannot be on site for every accidental overdose that occurs, OPTIONS is now partnering with Maine EMS for a pilot project to increase collaboration and follow-up. Through the project, EMS responders can make direct referrals to their local OPTIONS Liaison using their medical record system in the field. This allows EMS to respond to the medical emergency while also supporting the person's behavioral health needs. According to Megan Salois, Maine EMS Substance Use Disorder Response Program Manager, "The referral program is still in its early pilot stages but with close work alongside with the Office of Behavioral Health we envision great potential to offer a new pathway for our EMS clinicians to connect people experiencing substance use to treatment and harm reduction access options."

Sharing Liaison Stories

To raise awareness about OPTIONS Liaisons and what they can offer, the OPTIONS media campaign produced a set of videos featuring five local Liaisons sharing their stories and their work in Androscoggin, Franklin, Lincoln, Oxford and Penobscot counties. View and share them at KnowYourOptions.ME.

As Dave Bilodeau, OPTIONS Liaison for Androscoggin County, says in his video interview, "No matter how low you are, no matter how bad you are right now, things can get better and you can live a good life. So never give up on anybody."

To find and connect with your local OPTIONS Liaison, visit KnowYourOptions.ME.

Article made possible with the support of the OPTIONS program and the Maine Office of Behavioral Health. KnowYourOptions.ME



Beth D'Ovidio is a public relations/communications professional with extensive experience writing compelling content for PR, marketing, and social media. She has 20 years of experience in developing and implementing successful media strategies, plans and campaigns.



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Personal Recovery *story*

On Fire for Recovery *Josh Colwell's Story*

by **Gabrielle Gilbert**

Josh Colwell's favorite thing to talk about is recovery. He is a husband, a father, a harm reductionist, and an active recovery worker and advocate. Josh is currently employed by a treatment center in New Hampshire, and his experience includes volunteering, working with five different drug courts including the Federal Drug Court, and a recovery community center. He is also a Certified Recovery Support Worker working to make recovery as accessible as possible.

Before Josh lit up for recovery, he was drowning in his addiction.

He grew up in Rochester, New Hampshire and wished he was anyone else. Josh lived with his single mother, her new husband and siblings. Josh was bullied as a child and describes himself as "fear-driven." His escape was gangster movies. He admired the bosses with all the power, money, and women they could ask for.

These men were strong and in charge, respected and validated and feared. Josh had his first drink at 15 and quickly discovered he would never be a casual drinker. When he was drunk, Josh felt he was finally equal to those around him. He no longer felt afraid, or insecure, or unworthy, until he was hungover and alone again.

He married at 20, was a father at 21 and celebrated by exercising his "God given American right" to get wasted. Soon, Josh learned he could bribe the bartender to stay open later with drugs, which became a routine. Instead of joining the mafia, Josh found the rock 'n' roll lifestyle he was looking for in a biker gang when he was 27. It wasn't long before he was introduced to his "drug of no choice." Josh's ego outgrew him. He

became hyper-focused on getting high however he could and his life was crumbling. In 2018, five federal agents knocked on his door and arrested him. He was released on probation while waiting for his court date and couldn't imagine what his life would look like sober; he wasn't even sure it was possible. Before his release, he called everyone he could think of, no one answered except his mother - "I was horrible to her when I was in active addiction, so I was stunned when she took my call."

After his arrest, Josh isolated himself. He was miserable and hopeless, he says. He heard from a friend who had recently been released from jail and started going



to 12-Step meetings. The friend suggested Josh give it a try. As much as Josh didn't want to go, he knew he had to do something.

"I just went, not because I was looking for a solution, I went because I needed to get out of my house," he says. It was a crowded meeting, and Josh had a front row seat. "I go and I sit and the guy that was speaking spoke my story...like, [he] was telling my feelings, even talking about the same substances that I had used. And he is sitting there, looking like he got his together," Josh says, "At this point, I just don't want to be miserable anymore."

With the possibility of 20 years in prison hanging over his head, Josh looked toward opportunity, hoping recovery would change his life. His marriage had fallen apart, most of his friends and family didn't want anything to do with him, and his father was dying of cancer.

"My life was a house of cards at that point," he says. But he knew someone who was working at a local recovery community center and, through his fear and some tears, Josh checked it out for himself. It was here that a match was lit for him. "I used to say all the time, 'They helped save my life. The executive director, [would say], 'you saved your own life, bro.'" There, Josh maintained his sobriety and collected proof that life beyond addiction and fear was possible for him. He was set up with a recovery coach, who asked him what he wanted to accomplish and helped him set attainable goals. Eventually, Josh moved into a sober house in Dover NH, became a house manager there, and started volunteering.

"I got to see recovery firsthand," he says, "I got to see all different angles and I got to learn all these different resources. It was amazing. I fell in love with recovery, I got fired up about recovery. Living at that sober house was also huge because I worked and lived with other men that were serious about recovery. And not only serious about recovery, but were on fire for recovery. When you're around people that are on fire for recovery, you become on fire for recovery! These are the first people that wanted nothing out of me. They didn't want anything that was in my pocket. They didn't want any money from me. What they wanted was to see me get better. The only catch was once I got better, they wanted me to help the next person."

Josh was learning selflessness over selfishness, honesty over lies, forgiveness over resentment, companionship over competition, confidence over fear. He was learning to live in a brand new way in

recovery—no longer in survival mode, no longer desperate for validation.

There was a visible, honest change in Josh. After just eight months, his probation officer didn't even recognize him.. Josh became the supervisor of a criminal justice program while he was still on pretrial, sharing his story and advocating for recovery support on a federal level. "Recovery is something like a positive forward shift." Josh explains.

Following his own advice, Josh looked for more and more possible positive shifts in his life. Through the dating website Bumble, Josh was even able to fall in love again. He was honest and upfront about his recovery on date number one and he and his partner went to 12-Step meetings together for dates two, three, and four.

When Josh's day in court came, all his work in recovery spoke for itself. He received a time served sentence which equated to 12 hours in jail instead of 20 years, one year supervision, and actually began working for the criminal justice system doing peer support for drug court.

Josh still clearly remembers the judge's words on the day of his sentencing: "He says, 'I've dealt with hundreds, if not thousands of people, and they come into my courtroom and they tell me the same thing: 'You're never gonna see me again. I'm not gonna do this anymore.' It's got me jaded. but your actions in the last two-and-a-half years have spoken louder than any words I've ever heard in this courtroom. And because of that, I'm ready to impose a time-served sentence.' I was like, what?! Just tears instantly...I remember going to a meeting the day before I went to court, and I was saying bye to all the people at the meeting. And I walked into the meeting like the following week, and everybody was like, 'what are you doing here?'"

Since October 2018, Josh has maintained his sobriety and rooted himself deeper in his recovery community, doing his best to leave a "positive footprint" and passing along resources and knowledge.

One of the most important aspects of his work is sharing resources about recovery for anyone who asks. He remembers having zero resources himself and understands the empowerment of knowing where to turn.

In part, he is also diligently working to obliterate stigma around addiction and advocates for judgment-free, open conversations so that people looking for help aren't frozen with fear or shame to go asking for it.

"Recovery is not only possible, but it's attainable." Josh says, "With the right resources anybody can do it. I think we have a lot of work to do as a recovery community to break down more walls, tear down more barriers. I think that we just need to have the ability to, when somebody's like, 'Hey, can you help me?' to be like, 'Yes! We can!'"



Gabrielle Gilbert is an endlessly curious freelance writer, poet, and visual artist waking up in Southern Maine.

Journey

OUR READERS

- people **seeking recovery** from an addiction
- people **in recovery** looking to improve their health and well-being through education, careers, etc.
- **family members** of people in recovery
- **concerned citizens** looking for solutions to a public health crisis
- **recovery champions** eager to amplify voices to eliminate addiction stigma

Fibers in the Threads of Community



by Christine Morris

Like so many Mainers, I live in a small rural community. For some this community is a source of strength, an anchor in life's storms. For others it can seem at times that the long memory of community can make it hard to make the metamorphosis from caterpillar to butterfly. I know that for some a community can go from feeling like a grounding anchor in a storm to an anchor that weighs them down and keeps them stuck in the mud of their mistakes.

Sometimes we are members of a community by forces not of our own choosing—a survivor community, or a member of a community of loss or grief. For many of us our knowledge of community has provided us with all of these experiences. Ultimately for each of us the truth of community lies in the words of Herman Melville “We cannot live only for ourselves. A thousand fibers connect us with our fellow men.”

The last three years have certainly demonstrated our human need for community. One doesn't have to scan the headlines for long to see the

toll that isolation has taken on our mental and emotional health.

Not surprisingly the effects of the isolation have resulted in an increase in reports of feelings of loneliness and depression. However, the pandemic also demonstrated that we could redefine community and it provided many of us with an opportunity to create new communities. Rather than the traditional definitions of community that we were used to, the pandemic highlighted the benefits of our chosen communities and offered us an opportunity to redefine and recreate these groups. When we create communities that are based on our individual values, friendships, beliefs, and interests, the mental, emotional, and physical benefits we receive are abundant.

Communities provide us with so many essential benefits. We are social creatures, even the most introverted among us still possess a need for emotional connections. Belonging to a community offers us a sense of belonging, a place we can find support and acceptance. Community assures and reassures us that we are not walking alone. These

connections can provide us with a purpose beyond ourselves. For many of us this sense of connection and responsibility to another can be the key to moving past our own pain, our own struggles, to urge us to keep moving forward. According to a number of researchers, including recent research from Ohio State University, people suffering from feelings of depression or anxiety have experienced significant symptom relief by doing good deeds for others. It is widely believed by psychologists that social connections are one of the most critical factors to thriving in life.

While the benefits we obtain from these connections are numerous, connecting to our communities requires us to equally give of ourselves. The community relationship is a relationship built on our knowing that we have something to offer as well as to receive.

We all have something to offer others—whether it is our time, our talents, or even an encouraging word or smile. Creating community begins by showing up, by being present for another. Look for opportunities that pique your interests, speak to your

values and passions, and resonate with you.

Building your community can take time and a single community you are connected to may not fulfill all your needs. We are complex and dynamic and therefore our community connections will be diverse. This diversity provides us with the rich soil we need to grow into our most full selves.

In the words of one of my heroes, Dorothy Day — an American journalist, social activist and anarchist who, after a bohemian youth, became a Catholic without abandoning her social and anarchist — who knew that community is essential to our survival, “We have all known the long loneliness, and we have found that the answer is community.”

Christine Morris, LCSW, a Clinical Supervisor at NAMI Maine, is a respected Licensed Clinical Social Worker from Charlotte, Maine, whose extensive career spanning 15 years has been dedicated to enhancing the lives of children and families across Washington County.



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Stories Restoring Hope

Geoff Smith *Transforming Struggles into Service for Sobriety*

by Jamie Lovley

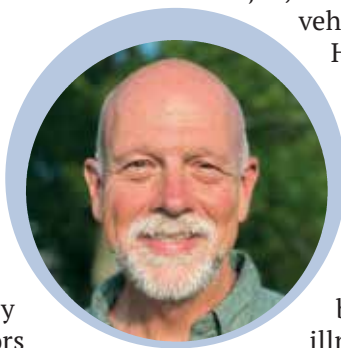
Geoff Smith is a man driven by a desire to serve others. In addition to running his machine shop, he works for Volunteers of America, driving incarcerated men from the Maine Coastal Regional Reentry Center to recovery meetings, and also mentors individuals as a recovery coach. His gentleness, tempered through experience and humility, allows him to use his redemptive story as a tool to help save other people's lives, just as sobriety saved his.

Geoff was raised in Dorchester, Massachusetts. During his youth, he quickly learned to build defenses to cope with the chaotic world around him. By 11 he had his first beer and immediately began planning how to get his next. "It did something for me that nothing else had in my life. It was the cure," he says.

In young adulthood, drinking cost him his first job. Even when his use of alcohol escalated to get him into trouble with the law, he still found himself drinking before court appearances to muster the courage to show up.

Around 30, Geoff met and married his late wife, beginning a journey that brought him away from the urban environment of Boston to a fresh start in Clinton, Maine. This

geographic change led to a good job, a new house, and a new vehicle in the driveway. However, it didn't take long for his binge drinking to cause his new life to unravel. "I'd miss a Monday, miss a Tuesday, and end up taking a week off because of a mystery illness," Geoff says.



Geoff eventually ended up in the psychiatric unit at a Waterville hospital, and was driven to his first recovery meeting by a volunteer, like he drives others now. Once released from the hospital Geoff began a 17-year period of sobriety. He attended recovery meetings for six months before turning his focus to working overtime. Staying busy seemed to be the cure. For those years, Geoff enjoyed success and a life with his wife and daughter, who had never known her father when he was still drinking.

However, after his daughter went away to college and a rocky separation from his wife, Geoff began to feel the foundation of his sobriety fall away. "It was like my alcoholism crept behind me and was waiting that entire time," he says. When he picked up a drink again, it only took two weeks to get back where he started.

This time, Geoff says he felt like he was on the last downslope of a

Maine Voices of Recovery series is supported by Knox County Community Health Coalition in partnership with the community to teach about recovery, dispel misunderstanding about substance use disorder in Maine, and record stories of how long-term recovery does work. All names are used with permission.

No two recovery stories look the same. If you believe you have a problem with substance use, reach out for help. Call 211 for resources in Maine.

roller coaster with no brakes. "When I went to buy booze, I had to write the check out at home," he says. "I was shaking so bad I couldn't write it out in front of the clerk, I couldn't even meet her eyes." Alcohol mixed with other drugs, amphetamines and opioids, kept Geoff up for days on end.

In these dark hours, Geoff felt as though he had lost all hope. It seemed to him that there was only one decision left to make, how to end the pain for good. Looking back, Geoff credits the grace of God for another option coming to mind—to ask for help.

After a call to his then-ex-wife, Geoff was taken to the same psychiatric unit and once again found himself sober and sitting in recovery meetings. This time he heard the same words differently, and he wholeheartedly committed himself to sobriety.

"Everyone has a different message but with that raw honesty that I heard; everyone was telling part of my story. Enough of myself was out of the way."

The almost nine years of sobriety he now has feel different than the 17 years he had previously. His physical sobriety is accompanied by emotional sobriety, and he is grounded by gratitude and service to others. "I'm always orienting back to trying to help someone."

After being introduced to meditation in therapy, Geoff began to incorporate meditative practices into his daily life. The meditation, along with the support of the recovery community, helped him calm the anxiety that alcohol had failed to cure.

Today Geoff gets to enjoy the gifts of his recovery. He is able to spend quality time with his daughter, who he says has been a constant support and inspiration, and his volunteer work allows him to build relationships with men who need the example of a man at peace with himself and the world.

It is Geoff's hope that the community would see people in jail for drugs as more than their crime, or their disease. "If there is judgment there, these individuals feel it three times more than intended."

For Geoff, expressing gratitude is the gauge he uses to measure his self-awareness and attitude every morning. He shares this gift of a new outlook on life by helping others recognize their own gratitude and spiritual depth.

His words, simple yet profound, remind us all to see each day as a gift. "If I help one person, then it's worth it. Thank you, God, for another day."



Jamie Lovley is a Certified Prevention Specialist and LMSW at Penobscot Bay Community Health Partners. She is passionate about using her experience in journalism and social work to write recovery stories that fight stigma and inspire hope.

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The Role of a Peer Recovery Coach

by Audra Stewart

“I just don’t know how to stay sober,” is something that I’ve heard a lot during my time as a peer recovery coach. My response always is, “with the right support around you, anything is possible. Just please be patient with yourself.”

From there we hit the ground running.

When someone has decided that they want to explore a life of recovery, I want to be the one there to go through the journey with them. Many times, our first meeting will be an opportunity for casual conversation, the “getting to know one another” phase. Building a sense of comfort and trust right from day one will create a strong foundation for this vital relationship.

Over time, our meetings will progressively deepen, and when a person knows that they are in the company of someone that has shared life experiences, it is much easier for them to open up and share more about themselves and how they would like to explore their recovery.

Some conversations may be challenging, but as a coach that has been through it, I know how important and helpful it is to have someone there to listen. I might find

myself crying alongside them, but through the tears we shed, I remind them that I am here for them no matter what has happened or what the future holds. “Addiction is letting go of everything for one thing, and recovery is letting go of one thing for everything.”

When someone is in early recovery it is important that they know that some days may be difficult, however with support, recovery is possible! Through the coaching relationship, they will gain skills and tools that may make their lives easier, and lessen their desire to use substances each and every day.

On days that folks may be struggling, I am there to remind them of the skills they have learned, and how to use them. I will encourage and continue to support them, provide linkage to resources, and to encourage them to seek out meetings if that is the path of recovery they have chosen. I am there to listen to the challenges and to celebrate the successes, all while walking alongside them on their recovery journey.

The consequences of relapse can be devastating. The support of a peer recovery coach, and connection to a recovery community and resources can offer change and encouragement in powerful ways. Staying connected to people who are supportive of their

decision to stay away from self-destructive/compulsive behaviors is important.

Peer recovery coaches understand the nature of substance use, and can help someone make positive connections to many resources that may result in change. I have been humbled by my relationships with the individuals that I have served over the years.

I have been with several people when they have gotten a job, found a place to live, had children, graduated from drug treatment court, and many more life wins. But I have also been on the receiving end of a phone call telling me that someone I coach has either overdosed or died by suicide. A little piece of me is lost when that happens.

I love being the solid and balancing force in someone’s life. I love watching the glow in their eyes when they achieve a goal they set for themselves. And most of all, I love seeing them discover their own self-worth. It is at that moment that I realized that I’ve made an impact. My role as a recovery coach is both challenging and fulfilling, while living my life without the need for substances.

.....
As a Community Health and Communications Coordinator, Audra serves her community by spreading the word about health and wellness programs and initiatives that Healthy Acadia provides.
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Peer Recovery Coaching Making a Difference

by **Nicole Proctor**

Imagine, a fresh opportunity for a whole new workforce in Maine. One that has the ability to save lives and turn personal struggles into strength.

Amid the increase in overdoses and prevalent substance use disorder in Maine's communities, a new workforce of people in recovery trained to combat this public health crisis is helping to make a difference.

Portland Recovery Community Center (PRCC) has provided leadership to a growing network of recovery community centers with a goal to make recovery coaching available in every community.

Peer Recovery Coaches meet people where they are, support them in their personal journey and help provide the resources needed to make recovery possible.

Members of this new workforce serve as motivators, cheerleaders, and confidants to those seeking a personal path of recovery.

Since 2018, nearly 1,500 coaches have been trained statewide, a joint effort by two organizations, Portland Recovery Community Center (PRCC) and Maine Alliance

for Recovery Coaching (ARC) through Healthy Acadia.

PRCC established the Maine Recovery Coach Certification Board (MRCCB) which began credentialing recovery coaches in 2021.

Two levels of credentialing are available: Registered and Certified.

MRCCB provides oversight and a Code of Ethics assuring that Peer Recovery Coaches practice with integrity and fidelity to the model. Recovery Coaches are required to have regular supervision in a specific model called Coachervision. Any trained recovery coach who has also completed the required training may apply to become registered in Maine. By agreeing to adhere to the Code of Ethics and receive Coachervision, a recovery coach can apply for state certification after providing 500 hours of coaching and receiving 25 hours of Coachervision.

In addition to serving at Recovery Community Centers, Peer Recovery Coaches can be found in hospitals, jails, treatment centers and other settings. Employers seeking to hire peer recovery coaches should consider two important factors. First, make sure that the candidate is a registered or certified coach in Maine. Employers

can verify if an applicant they are considering is credentialed at peerrecoverycoachme.org/resources/

The second thing employers should consider is whether their organization is equipped to provide the required Coachervision. Coachervision is a requirement for recovery coaches to gain and keep their credentials, while providing support for the role they fill in the organization. Supervision of peer recovery coaches is different from clinical or other kinds of supervision. Coachervision classes are offered several times a year.

If you are seeking a peer recovery coach for your personal recovery journey, or wish to become one, contact Statewide Recovery Coach Coordinator Justin Reid, justin@portlandrecovery.org.

If you are seeking Coachervision for yourself or an employee, PRCC provides virtual group Coachervision statewide. Contact Kim Capone-Sprague kim@portlandrecovery.org.

For more information: peerrecoverycoachme.org.

.....
Nicole Proctor is Program Director at PRCC for the Recovery Hub.
.....

Transformation: A Recovery Journey

12-Month Wall Calendar making recovery visible in Maine



ARTIST: Eric Sorensen

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Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.

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Meeting Guide syncs with area, district, intergroup/central offices and international General Service Office websites (some of which are listed on A.A. Near You), relaying meeting information from more than 300 A.A. service entities directly to you. Over 100,000 weekly meetings are currently listed, and the information is refreshed twice daily.



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412 Waldo St, Rumford, Maine

Open: Monday - Friday 10 am - 4 pm
info@llrecoverycenter.com

<https://www.llrecoverycenter.com/>

Bangor Area Recovery Network

Supporting life beyond addiction

(207) 561-9444
www.bangorrecovery.org

**Recovery is a process.
 There are many pathways to recovery.
 Recovery overcomes shame and stigma.
 Supporting recovery is a community responsibility.**

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Our mission:
 To support people seeking recovery by establishing a personalized path to recovery through coordinating services, resources, and referrals.

We offer:

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- Recovery Coaching & Recovery Coach Training
- Job skills preparation
- GED Readiness
- Resource Coordination
- Prison Re-integration

447-9500
 2323 Medway Road
 Medway, Maine

Spreading Recovery Throughout Maine

Portland Recovery Community Center (PRCC) is Maine's Recovery Hub. We build recovery community throughout the state of Maine. **We are your people.** We are people in recovery who know what it's like and are on the journey with you. Whether you're new or you've been on this path for a while, **recovery community centers offer the home base you need in your recovery journey.** Membership is free and multiple pathways are honored. Find a recovery community center near you by visiting portlandrecovery.org — **and find your people.**

102 Bishop Street Portland, ME 04103
 207-553-2575 • portlandrecovery.org

INSPIRE RECOVERY CENTER
In Support Of People In Recovery
 A Project of Healthy Acadia

24 Church Street, Ellsworth
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INSPIRE honors all pathways to recovery. We offer a safe, fun, and welcoming space to connect with members of the community.

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All of our programs and events are free and confidential. email inspire@healthyacadia.org for more info!

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FREE RECOVERY PROGRAMS

We are fortunate to live during a time when there are many options for finding and sustaining lasting recovery from addiction. We are all individuals and while there are many aspects of our personal journeys that may be similar to those of others, we are each called to discover for ourselves what works and what doesn't work for us. Our goal is to provide options and shine a light on different approaches that people use to maintain lasting recovery without endorsing specific approaches or recovery programs.

MUTUAL AID PROGRAMS

Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACA) is a 12-step program of men and women who grew up in alcoholic or otherwise dysfunctional homes. The ACA program was founded on the belief that family dysfunction is a disease that affected us as children and affects us as adults. adultchildren.org

Al-Anon is a 12-step program for people whose lives have been affected by someone else's drinking. By sharing common experiences and applying the Al-Anon principles, families and friends of alcoholics can bring positive changes to their individual situations, whether or not the alcoholic admits the existence of a drinking problem or seeks help. al-anon.org

Alcoholics Anonymous is an international 12-step program of men and women who have had a drinking problem. It is nonprofessional, self-supporting, multiracial, apolitical, and available almost everywhere. Membership is open to anyone who wants to do something about their drinking problem. aa.org

Cocaine Anonymous is a 12-step program of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others recover from their addiction. ca.org

Codependents Anonymous (CoDA) is a 12-step program of people whose common purpose is to develop healthy and loving relationships. CoDA.org

Crystal Meth Anonymous is a 12-step program whose primary purpose is to lead a sober life and to carry the message of recovery to the crystal meth addict who still suffers. Membership is open to anyone with a desire to stop using drugs. crystalmeth.org

Debtors Anonymous is a 12-step program that offers hope for people whose use of unsecured debt causes problems and suffering in their lives and the lives of others. debtorsanonymous.org

Drug Addicts Anonymous is a 12-step program of men and women who have recovered from addiction and are committed to helping those who still suffer. We have recovered by using the twelve steps as outlined in the book of Alcoholics Anonymous. daausa.org

Food Addicts Anonymous is a 12-step program that believes that food addiction is a biochemical disorder that occurs at a cellular level and therefore cannot be cured by willpower or by therapy alone. faacanhhelp.org

Gam-Anon is a 12-step program of men and women who have been affected by the gambling problem of another. gam-anon.org

Gamblers Anonymous is a 12-step program of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from a gambling problem. gamblersanonymous.org

Millati Islami is a fellowship of men and women, joined together on the Path of Peace. We share our experiences, strengths, and hope while recovering from our active addiction to mind- and mood-altering substances. Following Millati Islami's 12 Steps to Recovery, members look to Allah (G-D) to guide us on Millati Islami (the Path of Peace). While recovering, we strive to become rightly guided Muslims, submitting our will and services to Allah. millatiislami.org

Nar-Anon Family Groups is primarily for those who know or have known a feeling of desperation concerning someone's addiction problem. nar-anon.org

Narcotics Anonymous (NA) is a 12-step program of people for whom drugs had become a major problem. We are recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean. This is a program of complete abstinence from all drugs. We suggest that you keep an open mind and give yourself a break. na.org

Nicotine Anonymous® ("NicA") is a 12-step program of men and women helping each other to live lives free of nicotine. nicotine-anonymous.uk

Overeaters Anonymous is a community of people who through shared experience, strength and hope are recovering from unhealthy relationships with food and body image. oa.org

Recovery Dharma uses Buddhist principles and practices to recover from addiction. RecoveryDharma.org

Sex Addicts Anonymous is a 12-step program offering a message of hope to anyone who suffers from sex addiction. saa-recovery.org

SMART Recovery is an abstinence-oriented, not-for-profit organization for individuals with addictive problems. Our self-empowering, free mutual support meetings focus on ideas and techniques to help you change your life from one that is self-destructive and unhappy to one that is constructive and satisfying. smartrecovery.org

Underearners Anonymous (UA) is a 12-step program for individuals recovering from a distorted sense of self and time, an inability to provide for one's needs or to fully express one's competencies. WeAreAllUA.org

Wellbriety — White Bison offers sobriety, recovery, addictions prevention, and wellness/Wellbriety learning resources to the Native American/Alaska Native community nationwide. wellbriety.com

Women for Sobriety is based on a new life program of positivity that encourages emotional and spiritual growth. It is run by women in small mutual aid groups held in hospitals, clinics, treatment facilities, women centers, and wherever women with alcoholism are being treated. womenforsobriety.org

Workaholics Anonymous is a 12-step program for individuals to share their experience, strength, and hope with each other that they may solve their common problems and help others to recover from workaholism. workaholics-anonymous.org

FIND RECOVERY ONLINE

319 AA Group — We are a group of alcoholics working together to get and stay sober. We are doctors, custodians, mothers, fathers, children, and everyone in between living our lives one day at a time. Everyone who has a desire to stop drinking is welcome to become a member of our family as we trudge the road of happy destiny. 319aagroup.org

IN THE ROOMS — Through live meetings, discussion groups, and all the other tools In the Rooms has to offer, people from around the world connect with one another and help each other along their recovery journeys. intherooms.com/home

LifeRing Secular Recovery is a secular, non-profit organization providing peer-run addiction recovery groups. The organization provides support and assistance to people seeking to recover from alcohol and drug addiction, and also assists partners, family members and friends of addicts or alcoholics. lifering.org

Reddit Recovery — A place for Redditors in recovery to hang out, share experiences, and support each other. They discuss the various ways to achieve and maintain a life free from active addiction. Everyone is welcome. reddit.com/r/REDDITORSINRECOVERY

SHE RECOVERS Foundation is a global grassroots movement currently consisting of more than 325,000 women in or seeking recovery from substance use disorders, other behavioral health issues and/or life challenges. All efforts are designed to end the stigma and shame of "being in recovery" so that more women can heal and grow. sherecovers.org

Statewide Resources

CRISIS HOTLINES

Maine Crisis Hotline

Maine Behavioral Health
888-568-1112
24 hour hotline, mobile assessment & crisis intervention

National Human Trafficking Resource Center/Polaris Project

888-373-7888
National, toll-free hotline, available to answer calls and texts from anywhere in the country, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year.

Safe Voices (domestic violence)

800-559-2927

Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault

800-871-7741
Confidential services, free of charge. Provides information, crisis counseling, and emotional support and advocacy.

Maine Access Points

207-319-8823 (call or text)
info@maineaccesspoints.org
We provide state-wide naloxone distribution, overdose prevention education, support and aftercare.
www.maineaccesspoints.org

POISON CENTER

Maine Medical Center

800-222-1222
The NNEPC poison help line is available 24/7 by phone, chat and text to provide treatment advice for poisonings or to answer poison-related questions.

HOTLINES

Intentional Warm Line

50 Moody St Saco
866-771-9276
Confidential telephone support services for non-crisis situations, including, but not limited to: Peer-to-peer support, social connection, sharing personal victories, overcoming fear, grief or sadness, developing effective strategies for the future, assistance with referrals to community resources, talking to someone when feeling sad, lonely, or discouraged.

Maine Tobacco Helpline

800-207-1230
M-Th 10a-8p, F 10a-5p, S 10a-2p
If you call after hours please leave a message. Staff will call you back.

Domestic Violence Support

866-834-4357
Information, crisis counseling, emotional support and advocacy.

MISCELLANEOUS

211 Maine

Directory connecting people to variety of health and human services in Maine that can be accessed online or on the phone.

Medical Professional's Health Program

20 Pelton Hill Rd Manchester 8a-4p
207-623-9266 x5
Assessment/screenings for medical professionals who might have substance use disorders/mental health disorders. Referrals. Monitoring.



Recovery Centers

Recovery centers are located all over the nation in the communities they serve. ALL the services are FREE and everyone is welcome. They provide non-clinical support services depending on the center – for example, peer recovery coaching, telephone recovery support, skill building, and other wellness and social activities. Stop in to your local center to find out more about the support offered.

Aroostook Recovery Center of Hope

106 Main Street, Houlton
207-254-2213

ARRC Augusta Recovery Reentry Center

2 Bangor Street, Suite 2, Augusta
207-226-3438

Bangor Area Recovery Center

142 Center Street, Brewer
207-561-9444

Bath Recovery Community Center

15 Vine Street, Bath
207-389-4236

Beacon House Peer and Recovery Center

3 Canal Street, Rumford
207-418-0079 / 207-369-0868

Beacon of Hope Recovery Center

19 VFW Street, Lincoln
207-403-9100

Biddeford Peer Support Center

15 York Street, Biddeford
207-358-4414

Coastal Recovery Community Center

11 White Street, Rockland
207-691-3697

Commonspace

103 India Street, Portland
207-773-1956

DownEast Recovery Support Center

311 Main Street, Calais
207-952-9279

Down East Recovery Support Center

11 Free Street, Machias
207-259-6238

Franklin County Recovery Center/Farmington

130 Quebec Street, Farmington
franklincountyrecoverycenter@gmail.com

Franklin County Recovery Center/Jay

2 Church Street, Jay
franklincountyrecoverycenter@gmail.com

Harvest Inn Peer Center

43 Hatch Drive, Caribou
207-492-1386 / 207-498-0247

The Hills Recovery Center

15 Tannery Street, Norway
207-744-2424

INSPIRE Recovery Center

24 Church Street, Ellsworth
207-412-2288

Lakes Region Recovery Center

2 Elm St, Bridgton, ME 04009
207-803-8707

Larry Labonte Recovery Center

412 Waldo Street, Rumford
207-418-4983

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Pir2Peer Recovery Center

2323 Medway Road, Millinocket
207-723-1327

Portland Recovery Community Center

102 Bishop Street, Portland
207-553-2575

REST Center

205 Main Street, Lewiston
207-783-7378

Roads to Recovery Community Center

1 Water Street, Caribou
207-493-1278

Rockland Peer Support Center

12 Union Street, Rockland
207-317-3012

Together Place Peer Run Recovery Center

2 Second Street, Bangor
207-941-2897

Valley Peer Run Recovery Center

272 Main Street, Suite 101, Madawaska
207-728-4806 / 207-316-7375

Wabanaki Health & Wellness Center

157 Park Street, Suite 5, Bangor
207-951-7526



GET FLEXIBLE ADDICTION TREATMENT

Take your life back
without giving it up.

- ✓ Rapid access to virtual or in-person treatment
- ✓ Insurance and MainCare accepted, and coverage if you're uninsured
- ✓ Access to medication, counseling, and other support services
- ✓ A caring, judgement-free community
- ✓ Just one hour per week



Appointments are always available.
Call us today!

(888) 391-5978

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Fighting Stigma to Save Lives

WHAT IS STIGMA?

Stigma causes negative attitudes, stereotypes, shame, and fear toward people who use substances. People who use substances often internalize these feelings. Stigma is expressed in big and small ways through words and behavior. It can create an environment where people feel devalued, dehumanized and isolated because they struggle with substance use.

STIGMA

HOW IS **STIGMA** HURTING PEOPLE IN MAINE?

- makes it hard to ask for help
- prevents people from offering support
- stops people from getting medication for treatment
- reinforces strong negative feelings of worthlessness and shame
- leads to isolation
- blocks people from recognizing there is a problem
- blames people for their substance use disorder
- keeps people from carrying naloxone
- causes discrimination
- robs people of empathy and compassion

STIGMA



Substance use disorder is a chronic condition that changes the way a person's brain works, making it difficult to stop. It can happen to anyone, and it often starts with a prescription.

Help to fight stigma in Maine by following the OPTIONS campaign on social media and sharing stories of support and resilience (@knowyouoptionsme on Facebook and Instagram).

Visit [KnowYourOptions.ME](https://www.knowyouoptions.me) to find your county's OPTIONS program Liaison and learn more.

We can all be a part of the solution.

OPTIONS
SAVE LIVES