

# Journey

making recovery from addiction visible

Dec 2023 / Jan 2024 • Issue 30



**Ryan  
Paige**

**From Adversity  
to Advocacy**

**Supporting  
Employee  
Mental Well-being**

**SMART Recovery:  
Life Beyond Addiction**



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Dec 2023 / Jan 2024 • Issue 30

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**Cover**  
*Ryan Paige*  
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.

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## From the Publisher



An important part of recovery is recognizing that there are things beyond our control.

But there are things we can control. The practice of recognizing small, controllable elements of my life has not only brought me happiness but has also been

a small, but vital step in understanding and nurturing my mental health.

From the serenity prayer, by embracing the power “to change what I can,” I have a path to serenity that includes things like curry leaves, yellow flowers, and benches by the water.

These are three things that bring me instant happiness.

I call them my “Five Seconds to Happy” things.

A long time ago a sponsor “suggested” I spend some time exploring things that bring me joy. Although I was adamant that life was really hard, unfair, and that there wasn’t any happiness to be found, she reminded me of a conversation just a few days earlier when I commented about enjoying the warm feeling of the sun on my face in early spring.

She gave me a simple exercise to identify, based on my five senses, things that uplifted me. They had to be

things that were 100 percent in my control, and I had to write them down on an index card to keep them close.

What that list would look like today:

- **SIGHT:** yellow flowers
- **SOUND:** ocean waves
- **SMELL:** curry leaves
- **TASTE:** turmeric ginger tea
- **TOUCH:** my purple blanket that my daughter made me

All of these are so simple, and so accessible.

Finding my “Five Seconds to Happy” is like uncovering hidden treasures for myself. They’re simple things that instantly change my mood, and by paying attention to them, I can greatly improve my mental health.

I invite you to find your own “Five Seconds to Happy.”

Articles in this issue can help start your exploration. Mental Health Literacy is an organization dedicated to enhancing understanding and awareness; it offers tips, tools, and resources (page 8). Carole Fontaine’s *Surfing My Feelings* provides insights and tools for navigating big emotions (page 12). Also, thanks to Peter Wohl, we introduce “eco-spirituality,” a concept that combines environmental awareness with spiritual practices to emphasize a deep, sacred connection between humans and the Earth (page 37).

I continue to add to my list of simple, accessible paths to happiness ... and serenity.

Take good care,

*Carolynn*

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



# visible recove

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# ry saves lives

# Personal Recovery *story*

## From Shadow to Light

### *How Ryan Paige Turned Adversity into Advocacy*

by **Gabrielle Gilbert**

**R**yan Paige's childhood was marked by the unsettling normalcy of substance abuse. His family moved often, and the constant relocation only intensified his feeling of displacement. Regardless of where he was, the shadow of drugs and crime loomed. By age 13, Ryan had already witnessed friends proudly flaunting their brushes with death and the law.

For many years, Ryan believed he was in control of his addiction. But as he dove into harder drugs, that illusion quickly shattered. "I tried to escape and fit in," he reflects, "but it became my prison, isolating me from everything meaningful." This realization marked a turning point.

Despite understanding the gravity of his situation, breaking free from the chains of addiction proved impossible. Multiple attempts at moderation and treatment didn't work and the birth of his three children magnified the gravity of his situation.

After two overdoses in one week, a significant wake-up call came on September 7, 2019, when Ryan found himself in the recovery wing of a hospital. This unexpected turn of events, coupled with a heartfelt plea for help, steered him in a new direction.

Ten days later, he accepted a bed in a sober house. "I knew I needed help. The opportunity was there, and I seized it," he says.

His recovery journey wasn't straightforward, but through internal battles and external pressures, Ryan's transformation became evident. He recognized that recovery wasn't about reaching a destination but embracing a continuous journey of self-improvement. "The freedom of choice became my anchor," Ryan shares. "I realized I didn't have to stay sober, but I chose to."

With newfound purpose, Ryan and wife Cynthia, founded AccessDirect Recovery Network. This nonprofit bridges the gap between those seeking help and available resources, such as detox facilities and recovery programs. Within a year, AccessDirect expanded its reach, touching lives beyond Maine.

For Ryan, the reward lies in witnessing transformation in others. "Seeing someone else's growth, that's where the magic is," he shares passionately. With his children and a supportive community by his side, Ryan continues to champion the cause of recovery. He believes in the right to access timely treatment and advocates for its recognition as a basic human right.

Gratitude fills his heart as he acknowledges the invaluable support



from Cynthia, friends, mentors, and organizations that have been pillars of strength in his journey.

Ryan's story is one of resilience, transformation, and an unwavering belief in second chances. With a chuckle, he refers to his life experiences as a "Degree of Hard Knocks." He believes in harnessing one's past to create a brighter future. "When we redirect our passion and determination towards positive change," Ryan remarks, "nothing can stand in our way."

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

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

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# MentalHealthLiteracy.org

## *A Beacon of Knowledge and Support for Mental Health*

In an era where mental health is increasingly recognized as a critical component of overall well-being, MentalHealthLiteracy.org emerges as a vital resource. The organization and the website are dedicated to enhancing understanding and awareness of mental health issues, providing valuable information and tools to a wide audience.

Here's what you can find on MentalHealthLiteracy.org:

- **Educational Resources:** The site offers comprehensive articles and research findings, making complex mental health topics accessible to everyone.
- **Guidance for Various Audiences:** Whether you're a teacher, parent, healthcare provider, or someone seeking personal knowledge, there's something for you.
- **Symptom Recognition and Support Strategies:** Learn to identify signs of mental health issues and find effective ways to offer support.
- **Advocacy and Awareness:** The platform actively promotes mental health awareness, aiming to reduce

stigma and influence positive policy changes.

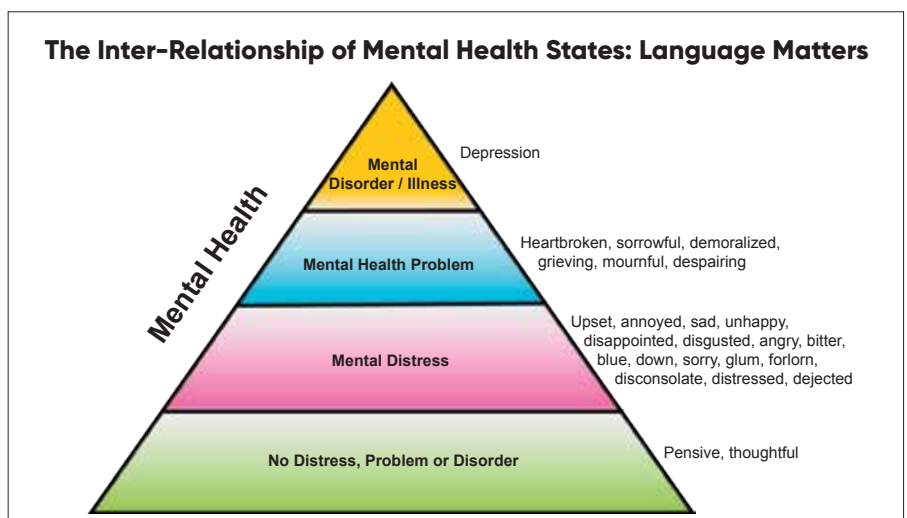
- **Credible and impactful resources:** Built by partnering with professionals and organizations.
- **Interactive Tools:** Engage with quizzes and self-assessment tools to deepen your understanding of mental health.

MentalHealthLiteracy.org breaks down barriers enabling a more informed and empathetic approach to mental health. Part of improving mental health literacy is making sure we are using the right words

to describe the various components of mental health and mental illness.

Understanding these differences is crucial for obtaining the right kind of help when needed, avoiding unnecessary treatment, and expressing our feelings clearly through the language we use with others.

It's important to note that while the website is a fantastic educational resource, it does not replace professional medical advice or treatment. Always consult healthcare professionals for personal medical concerns.



# The Big 5 (+1) for Mental Health

Research continues to support a handful of basic lifestyle factors that help keep us mentally healthy.



The Big 5 (+1) are interconnected. Making improvements in one area often helps with the others too!



# Employee Mental Well-being

## How and Why to Create a Culture of Support



by **Bridget Kelly**

**E**mployee mental well-being is as important as physical health. Mentally and physically sound employees are more resilient and are prepared for the daily stresses of work. Employees who struggle with their mental health are more likely to develop chronic conditions like heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and substance use disorder.

On the other hand, an employee with strong mental health translates to positivity in the office and confidence in their abilities. Confident employees engage with coworkers and workplace activities and have an interest in building their skills and adding to office morale.

According to the National Safety Council (NSC), employers spend about \$15,000 more per year on employees who experience mental distress. Employers are in a powerful position to influence workplace culture and destigmatize issues around mental health. Caring about your employees is simply the right thing to do, and additional benefits of improving employee mental well-being include:

- Reduced absenteeism, presenteeism, burnout, turnover, and healthcare costs
- Increased engagement, better decision making, and increased retention

### How to Create a Culture of Support

• **Lead by Example:** Leadership has to believe in the program, agree to behaviors that promote organizational wellness, and practice what they preach. Additionally, organizations should train leaders to recognize, approach, and offer help to people who may be struggling.

• **Encourage Breaks:** This will help employees manage stress and refocus on the rest of the day. Everyone recharges differently. Here are some ideas: Take a walk outside for 15 minutes. Get up from your desk and drink water. Listen to a song that takes your mind off work. Watch a YouTube video that makes you laugh. If you absolutely can't get away from your desk, spend 90 seconds taking 10 deep breaths.

### • Promote Mental Health

**Resources:** This can be an informal group where people meet to discuss mental well-being, or you may offer peer coaching or therapy support through Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) and health benefits for people who need one-on-one support. Communicate regularly about these resources so people know how to access them – and let them know which ones are confidential. Employees may be more likely to get help for their mental well-being if they know their employer won't find out about it.

• **Educate Employees:** Communicate through lunch and learns, e-newsletters (Mental Health Mondays), virtual tools like a video library, a health and wellness program, or anything that provides the information they need to understand how to manage mental well-being. Tip: Share your own story or start with a topic like stress management. People may be hesitant to admit they struggle with mental well-being, yet many experience stress or are willing to share after someone else.

Mental well-being is critical to organizational wellness. While it does require a commitment from leadership, it's well worth the investment. In fact, the NSC reports a \$4:1 return on investment in workplace mental health.

With those results, employers can't afford to ignore employee mental well-being.



*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

# Herbal Support for Emotional Well-being with Botanically Curious

by Paula Kersch

**E**motional resilience is just as important as the foods you are eating, or the exercise you are committing to. “Keeping it together” emotionally day by day is a strenuous process when we have things happening in our lives that may feel out of our control.

Days turn into weeks, turn into months, turn into years as your body continues to hold this stress. Our emotional energy, if left unsupported becomes routine, leaving us feeling less productive, drained of energy and feeling hopeless.

Botanically Curious knows that a holistic approach to emotional well-being is key for long term success.

Focusing on the four pillars of health, i.e. movement, sleep, nutrition and stress management allow our bodies to not just survive but thrive!

Focus on incorporating herbs with a Nervine quality. This herbal action works by therapeutically supporting nerves, which nourishes and sustains the functions of the central nervous system, which reinstates the balance and tranquility in the body.

## Some helpful hints to support your emotional health with herbs

**Lemon Balm** (*Melissa officinalis*) tea daily! This plant can be underrated when it comes to its nervous system support. Its appealing taste makes it a favorite with children and those with sensitive palates, so if you

don't like green tea, try lemon balm as an alternative!

As a trophorestorative herb in the body, lemon balm nourishes and brings balance to the major organ systems of the body. Scatter the leaves over a fruit salad for added zesty flavor safe for the whole family to enjoy.

**Wood Betony** (*Betonica officinalis*) glycerite based tincture when intrusive or racing thoughts won't subside—it might do the trick!

Wood Betony is great to incorporate when a person's stress is stuck in their head; they can't stop thinking and relax, they over-analyze, they aren't grounded and are generally suffering from mental overexertion and subsequent anxieties.

Wood Betony is generally considered safe to use. It can stimulate uterine contractions, so some herbalists advise against its use during pregnancy. (However, it is considered mild, and there is debate amongst the herbalism community about its use during pregnancy.)

Also, high doses of some preparations can cause stomach irritation or mild nausea in some individuals so always do your own research before incorporating any herbal protocols or work with a trained herbalist.

Remember! Botanically Curious educates the public on herbalism to spark a curiosity to learn more, before incorporating any herbal protocol, consult health and wellness professionals to ensure you select the right herb and dosage for your

## LEMON BALM



## WOOD BETONY



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# Surfing My Feelings

by Carole Fontaine

I survived hurricanes aboard my sailboat, yet somehow it was inner turmoil that threatened to sink me.

Overwhelmed by BIG emotions, I was adrift—I don't know for how many days, months—in a sea of darkness. It was either let myself sink or swim in intense pain. I knew I had to find my way back if I was to reclaim my life but floating in numbness was almost pleasant after the suffering. I wanted to heal, even thrive, but how could I get from how I was feeling to where I wanted to be? I had to find a way to navigate my emotions and sail the currents of my heart.

## Is it an emotion or a feeling?

Understanding the difference between my feelings and my emotions gave me a new perspective on challenges, which helped me put emotional distance between myself and the perceived “obstacle.”

We say the word “feel” for both feelings and emotions, but they are two separate things.

**EMOTIONS** are sensory-based and start with physical sensations, like butterflies in your stomach, expansion or tightness in the chest, the welling of tears in the eyes, or the raising of hair on the arms. The body's senses trigger chemical reactions, sending signals to the brain.

**FEELINGS** are the narratives crafted by the mind when interpreting those emotions, such as ‘I'm scared I won't be able to make it,’ ‘I'm sad about not getting the job,’ or ‘I'm excited about this new beginning.’

## It's just a wave...

You are neither your feelings nor emotions, no matter how intense or overwhelming they may be. You



Image by Pexels from Pixabay

are a human being experiencing them. Both will pass. The ocean does not define herself by the currents that run through her. Do not define yourself by feelings running through you. Breathe and connect with the sensations in your body, choosing to be fully present with the senses instead of focusing on the stories.

## Decide what waves to surf

The mind-driven feelings are the ones that usually get me in trouble (this is true for most people). My inner chatter and fears hijack my reasoning and steer me in the wrong direction. When I lead by my senses and respond to my body's intelligence, I make better, healthier decisions.

**NO WAVE:** Pay attention to your environment and look for signs of oncoming storms—aka challenges. They will initially show up as negative sensations in your body: tightness, difficulty sleeping, lack of energy, rapid, short, or hindered breath. If your body feels tight and contracted it's a “No,” steer away from this situation.

**YES WAVE:** Your body feels more relaxed, enjoys deeper breaths, and extra energy, your chest opens, and you feel light.. Trust the subtle hints and take a chance. If you feel this way about a situation, say “YES” to the wave! Even if you don't know where it's leading you, figure it out as you go, your body is telling you to go!

Nervousness can go either way. It feels the same way in the body as excitement. The more you trust your body the more you will differentiate the signs and decide if it's a nervous “yes” or a “heck, no.”

## More ways to navigate your feelings

- **Breathing exercises:** Breathe in for a count of four, hold for four counts, exhale for four counts, and hold for four counts. Repeat this cycle for four minutes.

- **Movement:** If you're struggling and pacing or standing, sit or lie down. Conversely, if you're struggling while sitting or lying down, get up and do some cardio to move your energy and break the stagnation. Do the opposite of how your body is currently responding to big emotions.

- **Journal:** Describe how your body feels and question what it's trying to tell you. Write non-stop for 10 minutes.

- **Reminder:** Set a timer for a daily mid-day break. Step outside for deep breathing and stretch your body, allowing your mental process to pause for a few minutes.

- **Support groups:** Reach out to local groups like NAMI Maine for emotional support, education, and assistance. Besides support

groups, they offer a wide variety of free classes teaching coping skills, strategies, and important information for yourself and your loved ones affected by mental health conditions. You can change the story's narrative inside your head. Use your emotions (senses) to align yourself with your intuition. Your body has your best interest at heart – literally!

Trust your inner navigator and remember, you are not the wave, surf on top of it, and enjoy the ride.

(Excerpted in parts from *SAIL ABOVE THE CLOUDS 2—Hot to Align Your Life* by Carole Fontaine.)



Carole Fontaine is a Certified Life Coach, Meditative Writing, Shakti Dance® yoga, and Reiki Master Teacher. She is the bestselling author of the S.A.I.L. ABOVE THE CLOUDS series which shares adventures from her 20 years of living aboard

a sailboat and uses the lessons she learned to teach empowerment, stress relief, and mental wellness.

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# Faith Organizations

## *Champions Against Addiction Stigma*

by **Lauren McCormack**

**F**aith organizations possess an inherent strength in leading the charge against addiction stigma, which is rooted deeply in their foundational principles of compassion, forgiveness, and communal support.

It's been said the opposite of addiction is connection; community and connection is what faith communities do best.

These institutions, revered and trusted by many, wield significant influence in shaping societal perspectives and behaviors.

Their teachings, which emphasize the intrinsic worth and dignity of every individual, can powerfully counteract the negative stereotypes often associated with addiction.

By embracing and advocating for those struggling with substance use disorders, faith organizations not only offer a sanctuary of

acceptance and understanding but also actively challenge and transform prevailing prejudices.

Their leadership in this arena serves as a beacon, guiding society towards a more compassionate and holistic approach to addiction and recovery.

Faith communities can play a significant role in reducing addiction stigma for several reasons:

**Shared values and principles:** Most faith traditions emphasize compassion, understanding, and forgiveness. These principles can create an environment where individuals with addictions are empathized with, rather than judged based on their difficulties.

**Community and belonging:** Faith communities strive to create a sense of belonging and fellowship. This supportive and accepting environment can help those struggling with addiction, by providing a safe space where they feel welcomed, and not isolated.

**Moral and spiritual guidance:**

Drug use and addiction can sometimes cause a person to struggle with moral and spiritual challenges. Faith communities can provide guidance, advice, and frameworks for understanding and addressing such challenges.

**Prayer and meditation:** Many faith traditions incorporate prayer, meditation, or reflection as a means of seeking solace, guidance, or healing. These practices can offer individuals in recovery an additional tool to cope with stress, triggers, and emotional upheaval.

**Structured environment:** Regular meetings, services, or group gatherings can provide a routine and structured environment, which can be beneficial for those in recovery, helping them maintain stability.

**Accountability:** Knowing that others in the faith community care about their well-being and progress can motivate individuals

in recovery to remain steadfast in their journey.

**Education and outreach:** Many faith communities actively engage in outreach and educational programming. This provides an opportunity to educate members about the nature of addiction, which leads to debunking myths, and promoting a more informed and compassionate viewpoint.

**Network of support:** Faith communities often have a wealth of resources, including counseling services, support groups, and charity initiatives that can be mobilized to assist individuals in recovery.

**Promotion of purpose:** Being part of a faith community can help individuals find a renewed sense of meaning in life, which can be a protective factor against relapse.


Faith communities, with their emphasis on compassion, community support, and guidance offer an ideal environment to combat the stigma associated with addiction.

By fostering understanding and providing resources, they can be pivotal in aiding individuals on their recovery journey.

*The Good Samaritan Network (GSN) is a non-profit organization dedicated to fostering recovery-friendly communities. At the heart of their mission is the revolutionary Recovery Friendly Congregation program. Reach out to Lauren McCormack directly to sign up your congregation or for help finding one in your area (lauren@goodsamaritannetwork.org)*



Lauren McCormack is the Executive Director of The Good Samaritan Network.




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# Your Brain and Addiction

**W**hen someone is struggling with addiction, their brain undergoes significant changes that affect judgment, decision-making, learning, and behavior. Science has come a long way in helping us understand the way the brain changes in addiction.



## Three Key Points:

### 1. Addiction Changes How Our Brain Works

Imagine if someone caught a cold, and it changed how their lungs worked. That's what addiction does to our brain. Pictures of our brain can show these changes. You might think of it like this: When our brain is healthy, it's bright and colorful like a sunset. When it's affected by addiction, it looks more like a rainy day. One important part of our brain, the frontal cortex, doesn't work as well with addiction. This is the part that helps us make decisions.

Quick facts about addiction:

- It is preventable
- It is treatable
- It changes biology
- If untreated, it can last a lifetime

### 2. Drugs Can Trick Our Brain

Our brain feels happy when we eat our favorite food or play a fun game. This happiness is a message sent by something called dopamine. But, some drugs make our brain send out way too much dopamine. At first, these drugs can make someone feel super happy. But over time, they don't feel as good, and they want more and more of the drug to feel okay. As anyone who has struggled with substance abuse disorder knows, this can lead to big problems in their life.

### 3. Our Brain Can Heal, But It Needs Time

Good news! Our brain can get better after addiction. Imagine someone with a broken leg—it doesn't heal right away, but with time and care, it gets better. Our brain is similar. Some studies say that when someone stops using harmful drugs, their brain begins to heal. But, more research is needed.

Emerging literature suggests that doing physical activity can help our brain recover faster. This could be a fun and healthy way to help the brain!

By understanding addiction as a neurological condition rather than a moral failing, we can approach those affected with compassion, support, and effective, evidence-based treatments.

## Enhancing Recovery Through Science

The Recovery Research Institute (RRI) is a leading nonprofit research institute of Massachusetts General Hospital, an affiliate of Harvard Medical School, dedicated to the advancement of addiction treatment and recovery. Founded in 2012 by Dr. John F. Kelly, RRI is a team of innovative scientists working through research, education and outreach to enhance recovery through science, conducting and disseminating the most up-to-date research findings for individuals, families, healthcare professionals, and policymakers alike.

Addiction is one of the greatest public health crises of our time, with staggeringly high rates of mortality, disease, and disability. Scientific research improves the effectiveness of addiction treatment and recovery efforts, to find out what is and what is not working,



and why certain pathways to recovery work for some individuals and not others.

They know that stable and long-term recovery from alcohol and other drug use disorders is possible and that rates of recovery can continue to be improved through focused scientific investigation and a commitment to public education.

RRI has given us permission to publish articles from their website ([recoveryanswers.org](http://recoveryanswers.org)) for this column. A special thank you to John Kelly and his team for allowing us to amplify their work!

Please visit their website — [recoveryanswers.org](http://recoveryanswers.org) to learn more about their important work.

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# Know Your Rights

## *Learn More About the New Good Samaritan Law in Maine*

by **Beth Ellis D'Ovidio**

**A**nyone may come across a person who is or seems to be overdosing.

Most people would want to help in this situation and call 9-1-1 or stay with the person until help arrives.

But ...

what if there's an outstanding arrest warrant for the would-be good Samaritan?

The person may be afraid to get involved because of the risk of getting in trouble or getting their loved one in trouble in the process.

In 2019 to encourage people to get the help they need at an overdose, Governor Mills signed the original Good Samaritan (Good Sam) bill into law. The intention was to make it easier to do the right thing — save a person's life — without worrying that you might ruin your own life (or theirs) in the process.

The law, while well-intended, was limited. It only protected the person who called 9-1-1 and the person who was overdosing from being charged with five minor criminal offenses. Oftentimes, there are a number of people at the scene of the emergency who are helping. The protection needs to extend to everyone present.

“In Maine, we are a very close community and everything comes from the grassroots up,” said Courtney Gary-Allen, Organizing Director of the Maine Recovery Advocacy Project (ME-RAP). “Within months of the signing of the first Good Samaritan Law, people in recovery and harm reductionists were hearing from our



Senator Chloe Maxmin and organizers, Courtney Gary-Allen, Wendy, and Rachel Allen, embrace outside the Maine State Senate after the successful bi-partisan vote in favor of LD 1862.

network that folks still did not feel safe calling for help when someone was overdosing.”

In response to these concerns, ME-RAP organizers began hosting listening sessions across the State of Maine with people in recovery, people who use drugs, and the reentry community to learn more about how the law should be expanded and what protections were needed to get people to call 9-1-1.

In partnership with Senator Chloe Maxmin of Nobleboro, the organizers drafted and proposed LD

1862: “An Act To Strengthen Maine’s Good Samaritan Laws Concerning Drug-related Medical Assistance.” The proposed legislation would cover everyone at the scene of an overdose from being charged with most non-violent crimes, including all forms of community supervision violations, and warrants for arrest.

The immunity would not extend to sex crimes, crimes against children, or violent crimes.

Passing legislation of this importance would take an all-hands-on-deck approach. Over

**The Good Samaritan Law protects the person who is overdosing and anyone who is helping that person from being arrested for most non-violent crimes, including all drug crimes, all forms of community supervision violations, and outstanding warrants. In an effort to protect the most vulnerable in our state, the New Good Samaritan Law protections do not extend to crimes against children, sex crimes, or violent crimes.**

the next few months, organizers launched the #ExpandGoodSam4ME campaign, a grassroots campaign led by and for the people most directly impacted by the Good Sam Law, and worked to enlist supporters across the state to stand in support of the bill.

Together, this coalition hosted informational sessions on the proposed legislation, organized over four hours of public testimony in support of the bill, and hosted press conferences, rallies, and demonstrations at the State House. They spent countless hours phone banking and teaching others why it was important to protect the lives of people who use drugs.

In the end all of the advocacy efforts resulted in overwhelming support from the legislature. On May 3, 2022, Governor Janet Mills signed into law the strongest Good Samaritan law in the nation.

“The expansion of the Good Samaritan law affirms what we already knew: People who use drugs do not deserve to die. It sends a clear message that in Maine, we believe saving peoples’ lives are more important than charging them with minor criminal offenses,” said Gary-Allen. “The challenge now is to let everyone know about the expanded law.”

In the coming months, OPTIONS (Overdose Prevention Through Intensive Outreach Naloxone and Safety), in partnership with many of the organizers who helped to pass the law, will be launching a public awareness and education campaign about the new Good Samaritan law. In the same way that the campaign to expand the law required an all-hands-on-deck approach, the campaign to teach people about the new law will as well. So, more positive changes to come!

Keep informed by following the OPTIONS Facebook page and sharing information about the law.



*Beth D'Ovidio is an enthusiastic PR/communications professional with extensive experience writing compelling content for PR, marketing, and social media. 20 years of experience resulting in proven success developing and implementing media strategies, plans and campaigns across traditional and digital channels to create and promote client/employers' brand.*




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# Religious and Spiritual Trauma

## 5 Ways to Start Recovering



by Rev. Lori Whittemore

**S**pirituality involves the recognition of a feeling or sense or belief that there is something greater than ourselves, something more to being human than sensory experience, and that the greater whole of which we are part is cosmic or divine.

Developing and maintaining healthy spirituality is an important part of everyone's well-being. Some of us are oriented toward a specific tradition and/or articulated belief system with specific beliefs and practices. Some of us subscribe to a less formal spirituality that may involve nature, individual connection to our "north star" and different ways we create community around our value system.

Spirituality is an important part of our wholeness and our humanity. Healthy spirituality can provide tools for navigating life's challenges. It can provide comfort in situations that have no easy answers. Sometimes religion or spirituality can cause harm. Religious and spiritual trauma occurs when a person's religious experiences are stressful, degrading, dangerous, abusive, or damaging. Traumatic religious experiences may harm or threaten to harm someone's physical, emotional, mental, sexual, or spiritual health. This can be

particularly damaging because your belief system and community are not providing you comfort at a time of need, and are also contributing to harm.

If you have experienced religious or spiritual trauma, seek help and support.

- 1.** Find someone safe and trustworthy to process your feelings with.
- 2.** Develop personal practices that connect to spirit. Consider yoga, dancing, prayer, and walking in nature.
- 3.** Participate in a community that supports healthy connection. AA, church, exercise groups, and recovery programs are examples of places to participate in a healthy community.
- 4.** Recognize that even in specific traditions, there is a range of expression. If you feel unsupported in one specific Christian or Jewish community, try another to see if feels like a better fit.
- 5.** Don't lose sight of the importance of nurturing your spirituality as a part of your overall wellness.

*SCS Maine provides inclusive spiritual care for people of any faith or tradition*

*or no faith or tradition. Support is offered in individual and group settings for stress and anxiety and crisis management. We support all people, and do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, age, ancestry, genetic information, addiction, incarceration, housing, or military/veteran status.*

*You can request a call from a chaplain by going to our website at [scsmaine.org/requestachaplain](http://scsmaine.org/requestachaplain) or leave a message on our confidential voicemail at 207-261-5200. A chaplain will get back to you within 24 hours.*



*Lori Whittemore is a chaplain and the director of Spiritual Care Services of Maine, the minister of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Saco-Biddeford and a chaplain trainer. Lori lives in Saco with her family.*

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# Are We Listening?

## *Listening Deeply: A Journey of Empathy*

by Joanna Free

“I’m truly irate right now,” he said.

These words came in response to a recent article, “Are You Willing to Go to Any Lengths?” which describes an interaction between a woman who desperately wanted to stop smoking, and a correctional officer who became her unwitting accomplice on that path when she ran into his patrol vehicle with her car.

I was sitting in the waiting area of a local service center, talking about the article with the business owner. We were both having a laugh about the story in the article when another customer spoke these words, “I’m truly irate right now.” The tone of his voice let us know he truly was irate. He made no eye contact as he spoke, staring down at the phone in his hands.

In the presence of anger, my early training was to go on the defensive or simply to go altogether. Fight or flight. That’s how I survived long enough to eventually get a different kind of training. Training that says, Don’t push back, and don’t run away. Lean in, as much as you dare, and stay curious.

“Tell me more,” I said. I leaned toward him, where his young son sat between us, playing a video game and quietly listening.

In the next few minutes he reminded me that the officer in the story was leaving his shift, and the woman who struck him had no idea what had transpired on his shift, what he’d been exposed to on that shift. “He could have been holding someone who died in his arms,” he said. And she took a great risk in hitting this officer who is tasked daily with suiting up, showing up and working many hours.



Correctional officers in many places work mandatory overtime. They are locked within a facility for the duration of each long shift where they are responsible for ensuring the safety of those who have little to no concern for their safety.

The more I invited, the more he spoke, and the more I listened and empathized, the warmer his voice became. Even the lighting in the room seemed to change to become gentler, and golden.

At one point in what had become a conversation between us, I realized—although I’d worked in corrections for several years as a counselor, and worked alongside officers who also worked mandatory overtime, as he and his fellow officers do now—until he spoke, I had not considered for one moment how they might have felt when they read the same story I did about this woman and this officer in Sacramento, California. I told him this, and I thanked him for speaking up, for staying connected, for talking it through, and for not making me The Enemy because I expressed a different point of view. “There’s too much of that in the world already,” he said. The conversation became calm and inviting, and in the end, his son and the business owner joined in. We shook hands and made eye contact as

we parted, introducing ourselves by name.

This man’s openness and willingness to keep talking about something thorny took us both to a place of deeper understanding.

While we’re on this topic of listening, here’s another we can explore more next time: tuning in to the voice within. Whenever someone refers to their inner critic, or to their addiction, or even to their aching knee as bad, my sense is they’ve missed out on another golden opportunity to lean in, to be curious, to ask, “What are you here to teach me, to have me know? Can we listen and respond in a different way than we have in the past?”

While I’ve agreed not to mention this man by name, I want to express my gratitude once more for the reminder to stay curious and present, to resist the urge to run away. There’s gold in these moments—when we speak up and when we listen.



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

# SOMERSET COUNTY NEW OPTIONS LIAISON SPOTLIGHT

## Providing Judgment-Free Support for Mainers

by **Beth D'Ovidio**

**K**eith Bellefleur, resident of Oakland, ME, has recently taken the position of OPTIONS (Overdose Prevention Through Intensive Outreach Naloxone and Safety). Liaison for Somerset County. OPTIONS is one of the state's strategies to reduce fatal and non-fatal drug-related overdoses in Maine. Liaisons provide judgment free support and connect people who use drugs and those who love them with resources for harm reduction, treatment and recovery. Each of the state's counties currently has one Liaison and the state is in the midst of doubling that number.

OPTIONS Liaisons work closely with first responders and are often embedded in police departments or health organizations. Keith is employed through a contract with Sweetser, a non-profit mental health provider with locations around the state.

His education and previous work experience in mental health and mobile crisis intervention position him well to be successful in the Liaison role. On a personal level he grew up in a distressed community and saw firsthand how substance use disorders can impact people and communities. "In my work with crisis intervention, I have noticed significant community needs and service gaps, and I feel working in OPTIONS is a great way to support these communities to identify and

fill these gaps to the extent possible," said Keith.

The help Keith can provide is dependent upon individual needs and goals. For some the assistance may include working with a person to develop some personal harm reduction strategies, obtaining supplies, accessing support, education and providing ongoing outreach. For others it may be more intensive and involve connecting a person to treatment, helping with transportation, coordinating with natural or professional support systems, and more.

One of Keith's first referrals on the job began as a law enforcement co-response for a mental health concern and while enroute the situation evolved into an overdose response. "The responding officer was able to revive the individual and we were able to get him into a treatment program that day," he recalled. "I stayed in contact after discharge and was able to provide support to him and his family to access outpatient treatment and other recovery supports."

Keith is impressed by the level of support and passion there is for the work throughout communities; particularly, by the law enforcement and corrections staff who have embraced OPTIONS and other community services as a way to assist them in their community work.

He feels that stigma is a barrier to people who use drugs getting the help



Keith Bellefleur

they need. "Stigma is a significant factor in many chronic health issues, but substance use disorders often have a strong emotional component. It is a condition that has been subjected to blame and shame for as long as it has existed," he said. "One of the biggest barriers to someone getting help is their fear of discussing this aspect of their lives due to their negative experiences or responses of others. SUD (substance use disorder) is simply not viewed the same as other chronic health conditions. There is lots being done to address some of this, but there is a lot more to be done. On an individual level, I try my best to help people reframe their understanding of SUD within the context of other chronic health issues."

For more information about OPTIONS, visit the OPTIONS website, [KnowYourOptions.ME](http://KnowYourOptions.ME). You may contact Keith Bellefleur at [KBellefleur@sweetser.org](mailto:KBellefleur@sweetser.org).

*Article made possible with the support of the OPTIONS program and the Maine Office of Behavioral Health. [KnowYourOptions.ME](http://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.*

# Make EFT Tapping Your Recovery Discovery

by Karen St. Clair

Life can be filled with stressful events that can leave emotional scars. From heartbreak, grief, and anger to anxiety, depression, and PTSD, painful experiences often stay with us far longer than we'd like. While time may dull the pain, true healing requires mindfully processing and releasing of negative emotions. This is where Emotional Freedom Techniques, EFT can help.

While EFT isn't a cure-all, it can be profoundly effective at releasing deep-seated emotions and beliefs that stand in the way of recovery. This self-help technique makes it appealing for people who want emotional relief without the stigma or expense of traditional therapy. EFT delivers healing through self-care. If you or someone you love suffers from emotional trauma, consider giving EFT a try.

The best part about EFT Tapping is how quickly and effectively it allows people to let go of limiting beliefs, fears, and traumas. Unlike talk therapy or medication that can take months or years, it often produces benefits in just a few sessions facilitating emotional healing and release such as:

## Reducing Emotional Intensity

EFT helps calm heightened stress responses and reduce triggering of painful memories and emotions. The physical act of tapping while vocalizing issues sends calming signals to the amygdala, the brain's fear center. This lowers anxiety levels, allowing for inner peace and reflection. As intensity fades, it becomes easier to process traumas without becoming overwhelmed.

## Allows Forgiveness and Letting Go

A huge part of releasing trauma is

finding forgiveness—for yourself and others. But this is often easier said than done. EFT provides a means to get those stubborn mental blocks to forgiveness and acceptance out in the open. The spoken affirmations combined with acupressure help override strong emotions, opening the door for understanding. Letting go and moving forward becomes more attainable.

## Relieves PTSD and Phobias

EFT is especially helpful for alleviating PTSD and phobias resulting from traumatic events. Research shows that Tapping helps reduce symptoms like flashbacks, insomnia, and anxiety, giving those suffering a way to process the memory without reliving it. Fearful reactions become less and less intense as triggers lose their hold.

## Boosts Confidence and Empowerment

Working through feelings of victimization is vital to overcoming trauma. EFT affirmations help rewrite disempowering narratives and build self-confidence. Being able to voice troubling issues brings realization that one's circumstances can be overcome. Trauma no longer has to inhibit living your best life. Self-acceptance and emotional resilience grow with each EFT session.

EFT Tapping has been pivotal for our friends and neighbors in recovery:

*"As a life-long people pleaser, I struggled to set boundaries in relationships. It just wasn't something I ever felt brave enough to do. After tapping on my confidence issues with EFT, I started speaking up for myself more. I still have work to do, but now I feel so empowered."* —A.P.

*"As someone in recovery, I struggled with overwhelming guilt and shame. No*



*matter how much therapy I went to, I couldn't move past the self-hate. When I started EFT tapping and verbalized my feelings, it was like a pressure valve was released. Being able to acknowledge and let go of the past failings allowed me to start forgiving myself. I'm now able to recognize that I'm worthy of a happy life thanks to EFT."* —T.S.

*"Recovering from childhood trauma was never easy for me until I discovered EFT. Being able to tap while expressing my pain and anger just felt right. After a few sessions, it's like a weight has lifted and I don't dread my past so much."* —C.R.

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

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Karen is an Accredited Certified EFT International Practitioner/ Master Trainer NQT, Reiki Master of Masters, International Best-Selling Author, Speaker, Founder of Reiki Tap Renewal<sup>SM</sup> and a highly skilled professional with a true gift for facilitating her clients' life-changing outcomes.  
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# Rooted in Maine

by Abbie Rohde

**A**s Maine goes, so goes the Nation” — or so we hope.

This phrase was initially made famous after Maine’s gubernatorial election successfully predicted the elected party of the following presidential election throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While Maine’s voting practices may no longer foretell national elections, we continue to move forward with progressive, trauma informed and evidenced based approaches to addressing nationwide epidemics.

With the development of the Opioid Health Home, Maine’s Medicaid beneficiaries, and the Uninsured, are able to benefit from a holistic and comprehensive treatment program. This “Home” is not a residential home, but instead a program housing an entire team of multidisciplinary professionals, all who have lived, studied, focused and committed their specialties to reducing the prevalence of opioid addiction, within the treatment world.

While the model allows for various implementations, including complete telehealth and/or harm reduction practices, SaVida Health believes

this Home is a huge step forward in addressing the complexity of opioid addiction. Gap primary care provider coverage, co-occurring treatment, including individual counseling sessions with dually licensed providers and psychiatric medication management, Peer Recovery Coaching and Care Coordination are not only at the core of the SaVida Health treatment model, but available at each and every center.

Progressing beyond preventing return to use and/or incarceration, SaVida Health’s model of whole person Recovery Health capitalizes upon the Opioid Health Home’s designated roles. SaVida Health’s members work with their providers to develop individualized care plans with a person-centered approach to whole person healing.

For most members, this includes exploring the physical, emotional, relational, financial and spiritual injuries that occurred during active use. “Our program’s ability to move beyond return to use, and support our members as they navigate life, is not only what sets our programming apart from others, but is also empowering our members to have longevity within recovery” shared Abbie Rohde, the Director of Behavioral Health for SaVida Health.

“Sixty-three percent of our members have remained in treatment, without lapse in care or return to misuse, for over a year” Abbie further explained.

Medication, to prevent cravings and withdrawals and/or reduce the effects of an opioid overdose, are a critical component to saving lives; however, Maine policy makers have committed to expanding access to a full array of services, all necessary in building Recovery Health. Recognizing that those seeking recovery, and those who yet to believe they can recover, are capable of developing Recovery Health through access to holistic care, within Maine’s Opioid Health home, will remain SaVida Health’s commitment.

“As Maine goes, so goes the Nation” ...or so we hope.

.....  
*Abbie Rohde, LCSW, CCS has successfully developed and implemented two successful Opioid Health Homes programs, within Maine, since 2017. Navigating the challenges of in person treatment delivery, throughout rural Maine, Abbie is a well-known advocate for long term Recovery Health and is currently the Director of Behavioral Health for SaVida Health, Maine and New Hampshire.*  
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# Reframing Relationships

by Kristel Thyrring

I've lived on the edge of the recovery community for as long as I can remember. I grew up in the midst of an opioid resurgence on the West Coast and saw firsthand the pain that splinters through a community when there isn't a sense of hope.

About 15 years ago I met a now dear friend of mine who was struggling with active use to soothe her trauma. In getting to know this friend, I had the opportunity to step into her experience while establishing her path to recovery.

The piece that has stayed in my mind all these years is the notion of relationships. I truly believe the relationships that my friend formed with her peers at this time saved her life. I can be a support as an outsider, but there is nothing that compares to a shared understanding to begin healing.

It has been my understanding that we live in a world where romantic relationships are more valued than those of a platonic nature.

Partially through my time with this friend, I came to reflect on what relationships mean to me—do I need to subscribe to the cultural norm of placing a romantic relationship above all others or can I evaluate what I see as necessary and right for me as an individual?

I saw this friend's marriage dissolve, boyfriends that came and went,

and yet the relationships with these friends remained constant. They were the people that were there to help cook, wipe tears, and pick up her son from daycare as needed.

The relationships that we build with each other impact how we access resources, help, and support. These relationships impact how we feel about ourselves, and even how we feel about our circumstances.

Finding people with shared values, experiences, and goals helps us frame our future as part of community, rather than being disconnected and feeling isolated. Relationships are the foundation on which we build much of our lives.

As I reflect on some of the amazing things I've had the opportunity to do in life, the connections and relationships I've nurtured and grown with folks have been at the root of these experiences.

I have taken a child to their first day of kindergarten while they

nervously held my hand looking for reassurance. I've taken friends home from the hospital and cared for them. I've had so much joy and support from these friendships that I see them as an integral part of who I am.

I share this to remind you, as well as myself, that the positive relationships we foster with one another are valid and meaningful in whatever capacity they may be formed.

We can bolster our resilience with the support from loved ones that we have chosen to be in our lives. It is not about seeing relationships as an either/or type arrangement, but rather an addition.

Take the opportunity to grow those relationships that help you feel like your best self to see the positive impact you can make with your own well-being.

*Kristel Thyrring, LSW, is the Director of Youth Education at NAMI Maine.*



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# 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><b>What are they?</b> 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><b>What do they provide?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recovery coaching</li><li>• Technology and internet</li><li>• Peer-facilitated support groups</li><li>• Employment assistance</li><li>• Recreational activities</li></ul> <p><b>Is there a cost to participate?</b> No, these services are free for participants.</p> <p><b>What do we know about the benefits?</b> Preliminary evidence suggests benefits include improvements in living conditions, happiness, remission, and quality of life.</p> <p><b>What is the best way to learn more?</b> 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><b>What are they?</b> 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><b>What do they provide?</b> 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><b>What do we know about the benefits?</b> Studies examining them have shown significant improvements in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Employment</li><li>• Criminal justice involvement</li><li>• Remission</li><li>• Treatment engagement</li></ul> <p><b>Who runs them?</b> 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><b>Is there a cost to participate?</b> 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><b>How do I learn more?</b> 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 (<a href="http://MaineRecoveryResidences.com/">MaineRecoveryResidences.com/</a>).</p>	<p><b>What is it?</b> 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><b>What does it provide?</b> 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><b>What do we know about the benefits?</b> 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><b>Is there a cost to participate?</b> 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><b>What is the best way to learn more?</b> 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

### 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

## Addictionary

### 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/](http://recoveryanswers.org/addiction-ary/)). It is also a featured resource on Google’s Recover Together website ([recoverttogether.withgoogle.com](http://recoverttogether.withgoogle.com)).

## Recovery Bulletin

### 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](http://recoveryanswers.org)), where you can also check out hundreds of past articles in the online archive ([recoveryanswers.org/addiction-research-summaries/](http://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](http://RecoveryAnswers.org) for more information

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# Winter Warmers

Photography and recipes by Lauren Lear

Nourishing your body is a huge part of self-care and that starts with what we eat. It can be so daunting to think ahead with a recipe or two in mind and then find everything at the store. However, a little preparation can mean the difference between having fast food at the last minute or knowing you have the makings of a healthy satisfying dinner within your reach.

I chose these recipes because they are simple yet exciting enough to jump off the page and get you to the grocery store. Nothing is more satisfying than a meal you prepared yourself with care and attention to the fresh ingredients you are using to make a nourishing meal that not only tastes great but is good for you too. The best part is that you know exactly what you are putting in your body and that it is as fresh as can be. Plus, leftovers never hurt.

*You can't beat a classic like chicken soup, or can you? Upgrade this classic with zoodles of your choice and a kick of spice that could melt the frostiest of snowmen.*

## Spicy Chicken Zoodle Soup

### INGREDIENTS

- 4 c chicken stock
- 1 in ginger root
- 1 lemongrass stick
- 4 c cooked chicken, pulled
- 4 c butternut squash, spiralized
- 4 c cabbage (savoy and bok choy) cut into 1 in strips
- 1 jalapeno, thinly sliced
- 1 tbsp sriracha
- ½ c cilantro, trimmed
- 3 lime wedges

### DIRECTIONS

1. Heat chicken stock in a large stock pot on medium high.
2. Add ginger and lemongrass and let simmer on low for about 5 minutes. Add chicken, noodles, cabbage, jalapeno, sriracha and let simmer for 10 minutes.
3. Pour into bowls and garnish with cilantro and lime wedges.





*One of my favorite fresh comfort dishes is homemade pesto sauce with chicken. This pasta free pesto dish gives you the satisfying depth of flavors with fresh basil and gooey mozzarella.*

## Chicken Pesto Boats

### INGREDIENTS

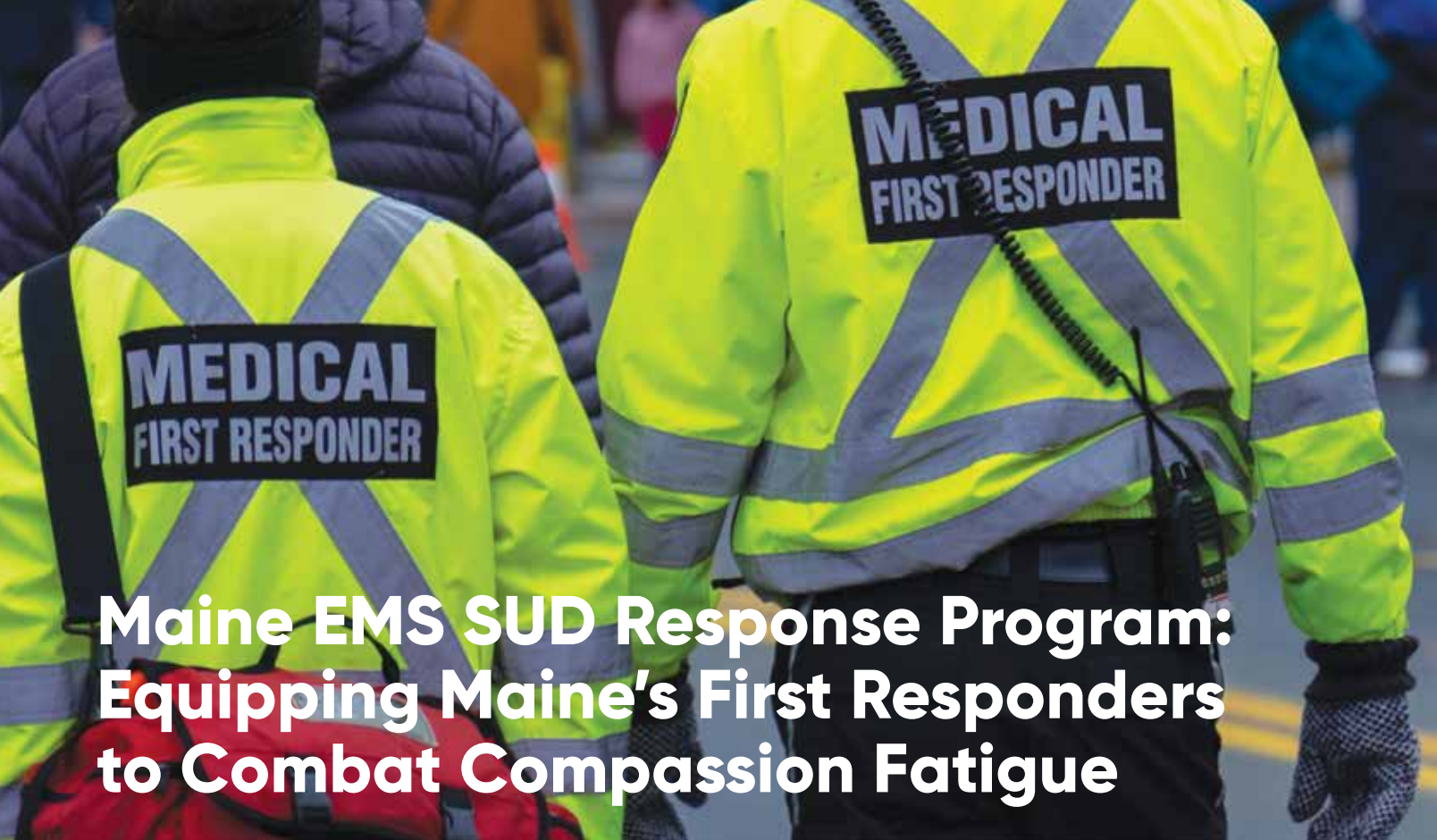
- 3/4 c fresh basil leaves
- 3 tbsp pine nuts
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/3 cup pecorino-romano cheese
- 1/4 c olive oil
- 2 1/2 cups cooked chicken, shredded
- 4 zucchini halved, ends trimmed and scooped out, (I used an apple corer)
- 1 c cherry tomatoes, thinly sliced
- 3/4 c shredded mozzarella cheese
- sea salt and black pepper

### DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350.
2. Using a food processor, combine basil, pine nuts, garlic, and romano. Pulse until fine and add olive oil while mixing.
3. Add chicken to a large bowl and add pesto mixture. Stir to combine.
4. Line baking sheet with zucchini halves. Brush edges with olive oil. Add the pesto chicken mixture and top with mozzarella and tomatoes.
5. Bake zucchini boats for 20 minutes until cheese is bubbly and slightly golden.

*Lauren Lear is a professional food photographer and stylist with a studio in the Dana Warp Mill in Westbrook. I started my photo business in June of 2010 doing portraits, but my first photo gig with The Holy Donut is what jump started my food photography career. Catch more photos and recipes on my site, [www.laurenlearfood.com](http://www.laurenlearfood.com).*





# Maine EMS SUD Response Program: Equipping Maine's First Responders to Combat Compassion Fatigue

by Jessica Schermer

**M**aine Emergency Medical Services (EMS) are trained to respond to different types of service calls. They are often first on the scene of an overdose-related event. In just September 2023, EMS responded to 276 suspected opioid overdose-related calls. EMS clinicians want to be part of the answer and to help people in the communities they serve. Maine EMS noticed that some workers are experiencing compassion fatigue after facing many tough situations.

Compassion fatigue is a term that describes the physical or emotional impact of helping others—often through experiences of stress or trauma. It can happen when people who are always helping others start to feel worn out and find it hard to care as much as they used to.

This year, Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC) and Maine EMS built a pilot program to train and empower EMS Care Ambassadors to support and educate local EMS staff. The Ambassadors

had conversations about managing stress, reducing stigma, and providing resources to patients who use substances.

This program was made possible through Maine's Project to Prevent Prescription Drug/Opioid Overdose-Related Deaths grant awarded to Maine CDC from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. This program came during a time when Maine EMS was updating their standards of care, which requires EMS to offer patients and their loved ones naloxone after an overdose event.

“During one of my round table discussions with one local EMS agency we were able to talk about people who use substances,” stated Laura Hohenstein, Ambassador. “We came to an understanding that this patient population is like any other call we receive as first responders and many in the room were one or two degrees separated from someone who uses substances. There are a lot of misunderstandings about this population and together we were

able to work through these tough situations.”

Four Ambassadors were trained to provide outreach and education to local EMS agencies. Their outreach and round table discussions were recognized as successful from the feedback and shared experiences among peers.

“It was great to hear points of view and personal experiences of the local EMS providers,” shared Andrew Fournier, Ambassador. “Peers connecting with peers is a unique experience and not many other programs get this opportunity for connection. As EMS clinicians, we are all part of the solution to substance use in our community.”

The Ambassadors are making a real difference. From a dedicated 121 cold calls, they've visited many EMS teams, holding 15 roundtable conversations across the state.

“I wasn't surprised about how open local agencies were to these roundtable discussions,” stated Sandy Staples, Ambassador. “Local

EMS providers truly care about the well-being of community members, and they want to be part of helping those with substance use disorder. This was a great chance for local agencies to learn about services and resources offered and how EMS can use them to make a difference in their communities.”

After just six weeks, 19 departments decided to join the naloxone leave-behind program. “It was important to discuss that people are more than just their substance use,” said Sandy Sikes, Ambassador. “There are many reasons people start to use substances and it is our job as first responders to help them through this difficult time by offering services and resources.”

Maine CDC and Maine EMS plan to continue these collaborative efforts as Maine EMS rolls out more substance use programming.

The future of the EMS Ambassador Cares Program is to continue providing peer-to-peer education for EMS staff by building from this year’s success and expanding the program to other areas of the state. The Maine EMS SUD Response Program team will bring on more Ambassadors in early 2024 to tackle new outreach efforts like the Overdose Prevention Through Intensive Outreach, Naloxone, and Safety (OPTIONS) Referral Pilot Program, and the upcoming Medication for Opioid Use Disorder Pilot Program. It is the goal of the program to continue to provide EMS with better tools to address substance use in their communities.

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*Jessica Schermer, MPH, is Program Manager for Maine’s Project to Prevent Prescription Drug Program at Maine CDC.*  
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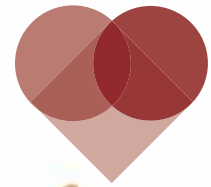
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# Couples Addressing Mental Health as a Team

## Couples In Recovery



by Elaine Shamos and Glenn Simpson

**N**urturing mental health as a couple in recovery is a vital component of building a strong foundation for lasting sobriety and a fulfilling relationship. Understanding what mental health disorders are associated with substance use disorder and how to address these as a couple can be helpful for both prevention and treatment.

### What is comorbidity?

Comorbidity is when two disorders occur in the same person, simultaneously or one after the other. Research surveys have found that about half of those who experience a mental illness during their lives will also experience substance use disorder (SUD) and vice versa. The disorders can interact and exacerbate each other, which can significantly affect progress, especially as symptoms overlap, which makes diagnoses difficult.

### What are the mental health disorders associated with SUD?

Research shows high rates of anxiety disorders, depression, bipolar disorder, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism spectrum disorders, psychotic illness, or borderline and antisocial personality disorders as common comorbidities for SUD. Just to take ADHD as an example, several large studies have found ADHD is five to ten times more common among those with SUD than in people without the condition. Among adults being treated for SUD, the rate of ADHD is about 25 percent.

### What are the treatment challenges and opportunities?

The challenges of having SUD with comorbid disorders can present



more difficulty in diagnosis, sticking to treatment, severity of symptoms, and receiving a coordinated approach to treatment. However, research is promising for a more integrated treatment which is preferred to separate treatment of each diagnosis. Cognitive behavior therapy has been found to be helpful as an integrated treatment.

You and your partner can help by becoming educated and advocating for the best treatment strategies. If either of you suspect an undiagnosed mental health issue, it is important to obtain a comprehensive assessment from professionals who also understand the complexity of SUD. The current “gold standard” for SUD with comorbidity is: therapy, medication, and community. It is important to resist the stigma against medication promoted in some 12-step programs.

### What can you do as a couple?

Mental illness can affect many aspects of life. This includes intimate relationships where communication and education are paramount. Explaining how your symptoms impact you and defining boundaries

to provide a safe space for both you and your partner is crucial. Communication around both parties’ needs during acute episodes and how to ask for help when needed is an important planning conversation.

If your symptoms have elevated or you and your partner need extra help for growth in the relationship, it may be time to seek couples’ therapy. Independent therapy for both parties can bring clarity to what each person is bringing into the relationship. The better we can be individually, the better we can be in the relationship.

By prioritizing open communication, seeking professional help, setting boundaries, and practicing self-care, you can navigate the challenges of recovery together. With patience, compassion, and resilience, you can emerge from this experience stronger and more connected than ever before.

.....  
*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. Glenn Simpson, LCSW, CADC, 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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# Life Beyond Addiction is the Highest Goal

by Kim Wilson

**S**MART is an acronym for Self-Management and Recovery Training.

SMART Recovery is a nonprofit organization that offers support to anyone who desires to abstain from addictive behaviors, whether that be substances or activities; it offers this support primarily through online and/or in-person meetings.

“We refrain from using stigmatizing language” says Josh Warren, a SMART Recovery meeting facilitator. “Recognizing that not everybody here is an addict or an alcoholic opens it up to all sorts of behavior that people are trying to change,” he continues. “We get a diverse group of people who are trying to change their unhealthy behaviors into healthier behaviors. We really talk more about the behavior than the label that is often implied or assigned to it.”

At its foundation, SMART Recovery relies upon cognitive behavioral techniques. The goal of all cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is to illuminate the influence of thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes on the resulting emotions and actions.

SMART Recovery is founded on a 4-point program:

**1. Building and Maintaining Motivation:** Helps individuals identify and keep up their motivation to abstain from addictive behaviors, recognizing the benefits of change and the costs of addictive behaviors.

**2. Coping with Urges:** Teaches strategies for dealing with urges and cravings, such as understanding the triggers and developing methods to resist or manage these urges.

**3. Managing Thoughts, Feelings, and Behaviors:** Focuses on understanding and changing the thoughts and feelings that influence behaviors. This includes learning problem-solving tools and techniques derived from Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT).

**4. Leading a Balanced Life:** Aims to help individuals create a balanced and fulfilling lifestyle, which can reduce the appeal of addictive behaviors. This involves setting goals and taking steps to build a life where addiction has less of a place.

Various tools for addressing each of the four points are shared in the meetings, as well as in worksheets which can be downloaded at no charge from [smartrecovery.org](http://smartrecovery.org). But Josh emphasizes the benefits of attending meetings.

“Consistent engagement, building relationships, sticking to routine and building structure...those are some key elements that make SMART Recovery work,” he says. “If I didn’t have some sort of structure coming to these groups every week, if it was just up to me to work out of my workbook and practice the tools on my own, I think I would struggle,” he adds. “Especially when it comes to things as challenging as cravings, urges, or addictive tendencies.”

In a SMART group meeting, a facilitator will kick things off, but

the group discussion is the heart of the program. “The great thing about SMART is the conversation,” says Michael Mihailos, the regional coordinator for Maine and a meeting facilitator for five years. “If somebody relapsed that week,” he continues, “the conversation would be about trying to figure out why. What was going on last week with work, or family? Trying to understand, so it doesn’t happen again. Trying to get people to think.”

As a facilitator, Josh says, “Ideally, there’s a lot of benefit from having the members themselves interact with each other and open up the discussion. I think the least involved the facilitator can be, the better.”

“I usually go in with some kind of plan,” he adds, “but for example after the Lewiston shootings, I said, ‘This is a safe place to share how something like this can impact your recovery, or how you manage thoughts, feelings, and emotions when something like this happens.’”

Before becoming involved with SMART Recovery, Josh, like many others, was unsure of how to get started.

“One of the things discussed in those early SMART meetings was managing thoughts, cravings, and emotions, and that really spoke to me,” he says. Having used drugs since he was 12 or 13, he needed help to think clearly about how to make his recovery stick. It was like OK, I’ve stopped using, now how do I stay stopped? How do I prevent myself from sliding back into that thinking where I think a drug or a drink is a good idea?”

## Purposes and Methods Statement

1. We help individuals gain independence from addictive behavior.
2. We teach how to enhance and maintain motivation; cope with urges; manage thoughts, feelings, and behaviors; and live a balanced life.
3. Our efforts are based on scientific knowledge and evolve as scientific knowledge evolves.
4. Individuals who have gained independence from addictive behavior are invited to stay involved with us, to enhance their gains and help others.

His involvement with SMART Recovery helped him change his own narrative. “If we can change the way we think, we can manage the way we feel, and then make healthier choices with that new insight,” Josh says.

Of his own path to recovery, Michael says, “I wasn’t from Maine, and I didn’t know where to go. I went to the Portland Recovery Community Center where Nancy Cormier, who is now a very dear friend, suggested I go to a SMART Recovery Meeting. I went into that meeting and I never left. Jim Horowitz, who was running them at the time, became my mentor. It all just clicked with me.”

He points to SMART Recovery as helping him stay the course.

“It’s not easy to stay off a substance. People who can do it for a month, a year, five years, 10 years — that’s powerful. That’s a story to tell.”

For more information, visit [smartrecovery.org](http://smartrecovery.org).

.....  
*Kim Wilson is a freelance writer and editor who lives in Bath. She enjoys volunteering, renovating her World War I-era home and exploring the Midcoast.*  
.....

## Principles and Positions

**Mission Statement:** To empower people to achieve independence from addiction problems with our science-based 4-Point Program.®

**Recovery Through Self-Empowerment:** Our mission is to help participants gain independence from any problematic addictive behavior. We believe that individuals seeking change should be fully informed about the range of options available and free to choose among them. We encourage participants to take responsibility for their own change. Our meetings support their capacity to regulate their own behavior.

**Mutual Help:** As participants progress, their focus can shift to enjoying the activities of a healthy, fulfilling, and productive life, including the satisfaction of assisting new participants in SMART Recovery.

**Volunteer Management:** SMART Recovery is operated almost entirely by volunteers, including the Board of Directors and meeting facilitators. Facilitators may have had addictive problems, or individuals without addictive problems who learned to lead SMART meetings as a service to their communities.

**Acceptance:** SMART Recovery participants are welcome to discuss addictive behavior with any substance or activity. SMART Recovery encourages participation by persons of any race, color, religion, disability, gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity. We do not tolerate harassment of any kind in our meetings.

**Participant Support:** Our meetings and online services are offered free of charge. Donations are requested. We are funded primarily through training fees, literature sales, and personal contributions. We accept funding from other sources provided that receiving such funds does not interfere with our purpose and mission.

**Evidence-Based Practice:** SMART Recovery uses evidence-based methods, including cognitive-behavioral, non-confrontational motivational enhancement, and other methods. Our meetings focus on the application of these methods, as guided by our 4-Point Program®: 1) Building and Maintaining Motivation, 2) Coping with Urges, 3) Managing Thoughts, Feelings, and Behaviors; and 4) Living a Balanced Life. The methods used in SMART Recovery evolve as scientific knowledge evolves.

**Collaboration:** Some participants may choose to augment their SMART Recovery experience with professional therapy, medications, or other mutual help groups. Treatment professionals may volunteer to facilitate meetings in their community or at their facility. When doing so, they switch from “therapist” to “facilitator.” Professionals are encouraged to incorporate SMART Recovery principles and tools into their work.

**International Presence:** SMART Recovery is an international organization. We support local volunteers so that our meetings can be available in every country. We support national health services and professionals so that SMART Recovery International oversees our global operations.

# Nature's Healing Touch in Recovery

## *Exploring Eco-Spirituality for Emotional and Psychological Healing*

**T**here is considerable evidence that spending time in nature is beneficial for human well-being.

Eco-spirituality takes this concept further to say that the human connection to the natural world can be a form of faith practice. When the principles of eco-spirituality are applied in the context of recovery—from addiction, trauma, or other forms of emotional or psychological distress—the healing power of nature and spiritual practices are integrated to support recovery processes.

Here's a more detailed look:

### **Healing Through Nature:**

Eco-spirituality in recovery often involves immersing oneself in nature as a therapeutic practice. Nature is seen as a source of renewal and healing. Activities like walks in the forest, gardening, or simply spending time in a natural setting can be crucial components of this approach.

**Spiritual Connection:** The spiritual aspect of eco-spirituality in recovery emphasizes a connection to something greater than oneself, which can be particularly powerful in

overcoming feelings of isolation or hopelessness often associated with recovery processes.

### **Mindfulness and Awareness:**

Practices such as mindfulness meditation in natural settings can be a part of eco-spirituality in recovery. These practices help individuals become more aware of their surroundings, their inner experiences, and the interconnectedness of all things.

### **Sustainable Living as a Recovery**

**Path:** Adopting a lifestyle that is in harmony with the environment can be a transformative experience for individuals in recovery. It provides a sense of purpose and responsibility, which can be empowering and healing.

### **Community and Support:**

Eco-spirituality in recovery often involves community-based activities. Being part of a group that shares similar values and practices can provide a strong support network, which is essential in any recovery process.

### **Integration of Traditional**

**Therapies:** This approach can be integrated with more

traditional forms of therapy and recovery programs. It's not necessarily a replacement but can be a complementary practice that enhances the overall recovery experience.

### **Personal and Ecological Healing:**

There is an understanding that personal healing and ecological healing are interconnected. By healing oneself, one contributes to the healing of the planet, and vice versa.

### **Coping with Eco-Anxiety:**

For those who are in recovery and also dealing with eco-anxiety or distress about environmental issues, eco-spirituality can offer a path to manage these feelings by fostering a deeper connection and understanding of nature.

In summary, eco-spirituality in the context of recovery is about using the principles of interconnectedness with nature and spiritual practices to aid in healing from various forms of emotional or psychological distress. It's a holistic approach that sees the health of the individual and the health of the planet as deeply connected.



# Coming Home

## *Eco-Spirituality and Recovery*

by Peter Wohl and  
Bethany Leavitt

We can see ahead of us, a small wooden footbridge across Hubbard Brook. The clear waters of this brook rise less than a mile from here and will soon merge with the Flye Brook. Then, under the cloak of the thick alders, their waters will join in the fertile womb of the marsh before resuming their seaward journey. Lately when I approach the stream, I am anxious to see how much of the flowing water is still visible, as with each wintry night, sheets of ice creep outward from the shoreline. Today, only a couple of patches remain open to reflect the glow of the late-afternoon sun.

Hubbard Brook may lack poet Gerard Manley Hopkins “of a pool so pitchblack, fell-frowning, it rounds and rounds Despair to drowning,” but despair has no home here. Hopkins was right, despair cannot survive in those places where Gaia, our Mother Earth, pours forth her wild abundance. The softly fading light dancing on the snow, the murmured voices among the rippling waters, the piercing call and response of the ravens passing on their appointed rounds— these cannot hold our human misery. Nor can our pain, fear, and depression reside amid the streaks of pink, orange and purple that are ever shifting against the deepening blue of the late-day sky.

Disconnection from our Mother Earth and the many wild beings that surround us is common in this culture. Our lives are marked by alienation and fear, as these relationships along with many traditional avenues of community and spiritual connection have broken down, leaving many of us isolated, depressed, and **addicted**.

As Anna Lembke points out in her book *Dopamine Nation*, substance addictions are but one of the many compulsive behaviors that are hijacking our ability to live meaningful lives.

In addition to our overconsumption of mood-altering drugs (both legal and illegal), we wander endlessly through desolate lands of compulsive behaviors, including obsessive use of porn, sex, and gambling, all the while seeking “feel good” neurotransmitters. We no longer have guideposts that can point us to a truly rich, fulfilling way of living.

Intimacy with the world is our birthright, the deepest longing of our souls. The shift towards reconnection and wholeness is one that we all can make. No matter how lost we may feel, how far we have drifted away from a life that is infused with authenticity, genuine fulfillment and happiness, the natural world is there waiting to offer a gateway to restoration and recovery.

Eco-spirituality is establishing a deep, healing connection to the more-than-human-world. It has no dogma, no set of required beliefs, and it is completely experiential. Therefore, it can be integrated with almost any spiritual or religious perspective, but it is also fully welcoming to those who do not have any such perspective or beliefs. Even though we do not necessarily see it, we are ALL quite literally, a part of nature.

Every cell in our bodies is comprised of materials from the Earth herself. It is from Her that our own bodies are formed. Once we learn the simple techniques and establish a regular practice that allow us to

“come home,” the potential for our eco-spiritual relationship is limitless. It can be the basis for completely transforming our lives if we choose to pursue it that far.

There is a recovery parable about a newcomer to recovery who asks an “old-timer,” “I have heard that in recovery we have to change everything, is that true”? The old-timer smiles and responds that it isn’t true, we only must change one thing. Greatly relieved, the newcomer asks what that one thing is. The old timer replies, “Everything.” The newcomer is asking these questions because they are quite understandably fearful. The prospect of changing everything, of giving up our ways of being, even when those are harmful and destructive, is terrifying. The hopeful piece that the old-timer didn’t mention is that **we don’t need to change everything all at once**.

Recovery is a journey that can be fulfilling if we simply continue to put one foot in front of the other. Feeling the welcoming presence of nature’s unconditional embrace of safety, acceptance and faithful companionship can help sustain us, as we face the challenges on that path.

.....  
*Peter and Bethany are co-creators of Way of the Wild Heart, an eco-spiritually-based addiction recovery program. Through that program, they introduce the power of nature into the recovery process, helping to heal wounded spirits and restore lives.*  
.....



# The Cycle of Sugar Addiction

## More Than Just a Craving

by Elizabeth Hamill

**W**hy is it that many of us crave sweet foods? When we're happy, we want to celebrate with a sweet treat. When we're sad, we console ourselves with ice cream or chocolate. After a special dinner, we often have a special dessert.

Industrialized refined sugars are well integrated into our psyche in so many ways, starting when we're very small with our parents using them as part of a reward system.

Our brains get trained to crave sweets for so many habitual reasons that, for some, satisfying the cravings becomes an addictive behavior.

**Our brain likes sugar because it releases the feel-good hormone dopamine**, and since we're hardwired to enjoy pleasure, sugar gets us there fast and leaves us hungry again when the sugar high dissipates.

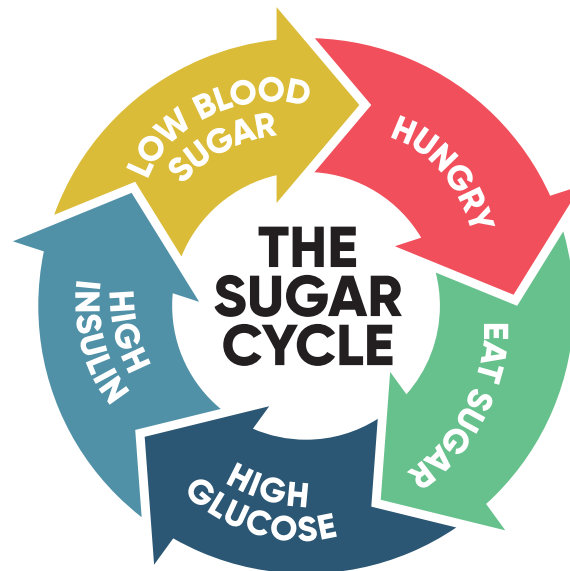
Sugar acts like a drug because it stimulates the same part of the brain that harmful drugs like nicotine and cocaine stimulate.

Food manufacturers figured out long ago that if they added sugar to processed foods, their products would "taste better" and be more popular. Something like ketchup doesn't need added sugars when tomatoes are naturally sweet, but sugar is routinely added to it.

Like any addictive substance, the more a person ingests, the more they need that release of dopamine to get another feel-good hit.

Is ingesting refined industrialized sugars really that big of a deal?

Well, start with the fact that it can lead to many diseases, including diabetes, fatty liver disease, obesity,



inflammation – and now even cancer is being linked to refined sugar intake. These reasons alone should convince you to quit – right? Yes, for some, especially if they've had a health scare, this can be enough to quit refined sugars. Others tend to lead their life thinking, "it won't happen to me."

Nutritionally speaking, industrialized refined sugar is stripped of all of its natural micronutrients and fiber. This is why it causes a fast spike in our blood sugar, which then quickly plummets again, causing more cravings and reaching for more quick fixes.

Excessive sugar consumption also can cause a considerable increase of triglyceride levels in the blood that can lead to cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, heart attacks, immune system weakness, hyperactivity, fatigue, anxiety, lack of concentration and headaches.

Sugar also increases bacterial and yeast fermentation in the intestines that can increase insulin secretion and overload the pancreas, causing harmful chronic inflammation.

The first cause of pancreatitis is often assumed to be excessive alcohol consumption, but in acute attacks of pancreatitis, a high level of amylase – a digestive enzyme produced by the pancreas, is found in the blood. The blood levels of calcium, magnesium, sodium, potassium and bicarbonate are also altered.

With these altered blood values, pancreatitis can be diagnosed—and, in many cases, it's not caused by alcohol, but by sugar consumption. Once sugar consumption is reigned in, inflammation can heal, and blood values can return to normal.

And then there is the obvious issue of weight gain when refined sugars are overconsumed. It doesn't help that when food manufacturers started pushing "fat free" decades ago, they loaded up products with refined sugars instead—in forms that made it hard to discern this when reading labels.

Consumers have been deceived for far too long, and many of us are paying the price with one third of the U.S. population suffering from obesity and a massive two thirds of us are considered overweight.

**It's a huge misconception that drinking diet soda helps a person lose weight.** It's a fallacy that artificial sweeteners help us lose weight. Products that contain these highly processed chemicals can be worse for our health than those that use refined sugars. Recent studies link these products to cancer and other diseases. Unfortunately, our brain treats artificial sweeteners like refined sugars and stores them in our fat cells.

Having deep care and understanding for our complex body we are gifted with at birth is essential for taking charge of our well-being.

Our body does need natural sugar to function. Healthy sugars found in fruits and vegetables that also contain vitamins, minerals needed for our metabolic processes and fiber which is crucial for effective digestion. The good news is that once refined sugars are eliminated from our diet, our brains can be retrained to not crave that sweetness.

The Weiss Method can help you to interrupt the sugar cycle and put you in charge of your health. This energy-based, one-on-one treatment cleans and rebalances the systems at the root cause of a problem. It's non-invasive and does not incorporate medication, needles or hypnosis. Visit [weissmethodusa.com](http://weissmethodusa.com).



*Elizabeth Hamill found the Weiss Method to quit nicotine and from that experience, trained in Germany to become a Weiss Method Certified Practitioner. As a Certified Life Coach, she is passionate about helping others reach their highest potential by overcoming the impediments*

*that hold them back.*

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# Looking for a safe place to live in recovery in Maine?

The single most important question to ask is, "Is this house MARR certified, and if not, why not?"

Maine Association of Recovery Residences [MARR] manages the ethical and safety standards for recovery residences and provides certification as an affiliate of:



## NARR's four levels of service



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



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**Find a safe, certified house NOW!**



# Recovery Allies

## *Supporting the Pillar of Health*

**R**ecovery is multifaceted, and one of the foundational pillars that supports this journey, is health.

As discussed in Alison Webb's book, *Recovery Allies*, the pillar of health is recognized as essential by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. This pillar emphasizes the importance of addressing the health conditions and concerns that come from years of substance use.

Those in recovery often struggle with a range of health issues—both physical and mental. Years of substance use can lead to various health conditions, from dental problems to more severe issues like cardiovascular diseases, respiratory problems, and even cancers. It's not just about the physical toll; the mental and emotional toll are equally significant. Substance use disorders often coexist with other mental health conditions, making the path to recovery even more challenging.

Addressing these health concerns is not just about treating the symptoms or the immediate problems. It's about holistic well-being, ensuring that individuals in recovery are equipped to lead healthy lives in every sense of

the word. This includes regular medical check-ups, mental health counseling, nutritional guidance, and physical fitness.

As she mentions a few times in the book, every individual's journey is unique.

The common thread is the need for comprehensive health care that addresses the root causes and not just the symptoms. The pillar of health in the recovery journey underscores the importance of holistic well-being. It's a reminder that recovery is about rebuilding one's life — physically, mentally, and emotionally.

Here are five things a recovery ally can do to support the pillar of health:

**Educate Themselves:** Recovery allies can learn about the health challenges faced by people in recovery. This includes understanding the physical and mental health consequences of substance use and the importance of holistic well-being.

**Promote Access to Healthcare:** Allies can advocate for better access to healthcare services for those in

recovery. This includes supporting initiatives that provide integrated care, combining conventional medical care with addiction or mental health counseling.

**Support Mental Health Initiatives:** Recognizing the significance of mental health in the recovery journey, allies can promote and support mental health counseling, traditional healing practices, and peer group sessions that cater to the unique needs of those in recovery.

**Encourage Regular Health Check-ups:** Allies can emphasize the importance of regular medical checkups to monitor and address any chronic health issues, ensuring early detection and treatment.

**Raise Awareness on Holistic Health:** Beyond just physical and mental health, allies can champion the cause of holistic health. This includes promoting practices that cater to emotional, spiritual, and social well-being, ensuring that individuals in recovery are equipped to lead fulfilling lives in every sense.

By focusing on these actions, allies play a pivotal role in ensuring that health, as a crucial pillar of recovery, is addressed and supported.



**HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM PRCC**



Wherever you are, you can do this.

## **Tips to thrive during the season**

### **stay connected**

attend a meeting, sign-up for telephone recovery support & get a recovery coach, or visit your local recovery community center

### **practice self-care**

find ways to relax, listen to your gut, get outside and do something you love

### **be kind to yourself**

let go of judgement- nobody is perfect. practice pausing and offer yourself kind words

### **know your resources**

call a safe friend, family, or sponsor.  
call 211, maine crisis hotline 1-888-568-1112,  
or the never use alone hotline 1-800-484-3731

Remember, you are not alone. There is an entire recovery community here in Maine that is rooting for you!

For the full Holiday Thrive Guide:  
[portlandrecovery.org](http://portlandrecovery.org)

# Stories Restoring Hope

## Harmony in Healing *Notes of Recovery and Music*

by Jamie Lovley

This November, Brian Burch celebrates three years of sobriety and successfully completes his three-year probation, signifying the beginning of a new chapter filled with music, connections, and giving back to the community that helped him get here.

Among other things, he hopes to return to the reentry center in Belfast—where he learned guitar—to teach others to play.

Brian was born and raised in Rockland. At 13, he had already begun smoking cigarettes, using cannabis, and drinking, but his introduction to painkillers at 14 made him feel like a switch had been flipped.

Opioids gave him the confidence and motivation that so many teens struggle with. By the time he turned 18, he already had multiple warrants for his arrest. From 18 to 27, he was in and out of jail and prison, with the longest period of freedom being just eight months.

Brian's mindset, victim mentality, and perception of authority were heavily influenced by his formative years spent in incarceration and active addiction. He believes that the legal system is structured to see people fail, especially those with

substance use disorders. "Putting someone behind bars without any resources is like stopping a clock," he says. "That clock just continues where it left off when they're released."

In 2018, Brian became one of the first seven people offered an alternative sentence of two years at the Maine Coastal Regional Reentry Center (MCRRC) in Belfast, followed by three years of probation...

Founded by Volunteers of America Northern New England in partnership with the Maine Department of Corrections and other local agencies, the center helps incarcerated men develop the skills needed for a successful return to their communities.

Brian credits the MCRRC and Volunteers of America with saving his life and the lives of others who are ready for change.

An act of mercy played a significant role in Brian's readiness for change. When he failed two urine tests while at the MCRRC, he was sure he would be sent back to prison. However, the reentry team decided to give him another chance.

This instilled determination in Brian to prove to himself and others that he could change. "I could tell it



was different this time; my family could too," he says.

Brian played a role in advocating for some of the center's policy changes, such as revising zero-tolerance drug testing and allowing residents to start medication-assisted treatment before leaving the center.

For those like Brian, whose journeys involve medication-assisted treatment, learning how to take these medications responsibly before reentry can make the transition smoother. Brian believes this was a matter of relapse prevention, and life or death.

At the MCRRC, Brian had to unlearn years of distrust of law enforcement, selfishness, and feeling victimized. He was able to build relationships with residents, staff, and corrections officers who made him feel seen and valued.

One particular corrections officer, who engaged in conversations and

played chess with the residents, remains a friend to this day.

Brian's family has been a constant support during his journey.

Following release from the center, Brian moved to Belfast to put distance between himself and the places where the crimes of his youth had been publicized. "Getting your reputation back is hard work," he says. "You make peace with the fact that some people will never believe you can change, and move on."

In the years following his release from the MCRRC, Brian developed a deep passion for music that continues to drive him today. He performs at recovery events and in the community, using music as therapeutic expression to replace the void left by addiction. "Addiction is all-consuming, and I didn't have the patience to enjoy anything then," says Brian. Before recovery, I never had the time, patience, or

willpower to pursue my dream of being a musician."

Today, Brian maintains connections with the people he met and formed close bonds with during his time at the MCRRC. Musical expression continues to play a large role in his recovery and is a gift that gives back to all those who get to hear him play.

Whether it's spent making music, or going to work, every day is a chance for Brian to be grateful for an opportunity to build for his future.

"When I head home I feel like I've done something every day. I'm going to do whatever it takes to build this thing into something to be proud of."



Jamie Lovley is a Certified Prevention Specialist and LMSW at Penobscot Bay Community Health Partnerships. 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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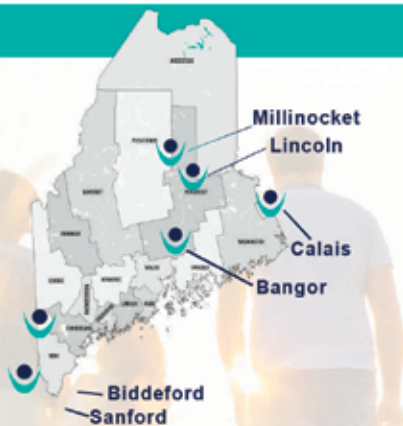
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# Recovery Coaches

## *Their Role in Recovery*

*“A recovery coach is a person who helps remove personal and environmental obstacles to recovery, links the newly recovering person to the recovery community and serves as a personal guide and in the management of personal and family recovery. Such support is generated by mobilizing volunteer resources within the recovery community, or provided by the recovery coach where such natural support networks are lacking.” — William White*

*“A recovery coach is anyone interested in promoting recovery by removing barriers and obstacles to recovery, and by serving as a personal guide for people seeking or in recovery.” — CCAR*

**M**any individuals may not know where to start on their recovery journey. Others may have an established program and are looking for added support. Some may be transitioning out of treatment, into sober living, or going through a significant life event. Regardless of where they may be in their recovery journey, coaches meet them where they are, as they are.

One of the most valuable aspects of having a coach is the one-on-one connection that comes along with having someone in your corner all along the way.

Coaches help bring connection, empathy, and understanding to a challenge that can seem overwhelming and deeply personal. Every step of the way, a coach provides a lifeline to an immersive community of compassion, support, and resources.

By employing motivational interviewing and various strengths-

based approaches, coaching becomes a synergistic partnership where both individuals contribute their expertise. This approach acknowledges and values the shared experiences that bind the two together, fostering a supportive environment for mutual growth, recovery, and community building.

In addition to their lived experience, coaches go through extensive training to learn motivational interviewing, intentional peer support, resource navigation, and effective planning and goal-setting. With these skills, coaches cultivate an environment that is warm and compassionate while also structured and goal oriented.

Coaches play a crucial role in the recovery process that transcends any one pathway, empowering people to develop the lifestyle and skills to live a life free from addiction.

With guidance, accountability, and encouragement, coaches can help connect those in recovery to a sense of confidence and sustainability, knowing that they have a community of support behind them.

Some of the roles a coach can adopt are:

• **Motivator and Cheerleader:** coaches build a relationship based on trust and respect to help encourage and empower those in and seeking recovery to accomplish their goals. Since the coach has lived experience, they understand that everyone has the capacity to change and can share in celebrating milestones and accomplishments.

• **Ally and Confidant:** coaches genuinely care and listen, honoring confidentiality. coaches build a rapport that is fostered in collaboration and community.

• **Problem-Solver:** coaches help solve personal and environmental obstacles to recovery by utilizing the mutual expertise within the coaching relationship to brainstorm solutions.

• **Resource Broker:** coaches link individuals to resources for harm reduction, detox, family support and education, recovery residences and housing, recovery-conductive employment, health, social services and other forms of support.

• **Lifestyle Consultant:** coaches assist in developing recovery-based rituals for living, creating healthy habits for sustainable recovery, stability, and connection.

• **Recovery Planner:** coaches assist in creating a unique plan of recovery and regularly check in to identify goals, successes, and difficulties, based on the strengths the person seeking recovery brings to the collaboration.

As people explore their recovery journey and build their support system of coping skills and resources, a coach ensures that they do not have to do it alone.

Sometimes we need someone to show us where to start. Other times, we may need a helpful hand to guide us in the direction we wish to go.

.....  
*Josh Warren, Statewide Recovery Coach Coordinator*  
.....

# The Healing Connection

## How Recovery Coaches Bridge the Gap in Addiction Treatment

by Kristé Sprague

There's a critical moment when a person asks for help and realizes they can't do what they've been doing anymore.

For people struggling with substance use disorder (SUD), support and encouragement are critical to long-term success. Rather than focusing on the devastating effects of addiction, recovery coaches believe in the capacity for self-directed change and encourage paying attention to the strengths that lie within us. A coach focuses on recovery potential, while at the same time meeting people where they are spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically.

Because coaches are non-clinical, the service is not meant to replace a formal treatment program such as counseling, psychological testing, medicated assisted treatment, etc. Rather, coaches are meant to be a part of the recovery team with a goal to help improve quality of life and connect the person in recovery to resources that will help them reach their goals.

There is sometimes a wait for clinical treatment, a coach can bridge the gap with their skills as a motivator and cheerleader. They are allies and confidants, always prepared to actively listen, provide honest feedback, and be a positive role model. They can provide links to the recovery community, explore a multitude of treatment options and other community supports, advocate, and focus on changing recovery language to reduce

negative self-talk and stigma. Working with a coach helps reduce relapse rates, lowers overall substance use, and decreases criminal justice involvement.

The coach may work to remove barriers to success by connecting people to resources such as child care, a good mechanic, stable housing options, programs for professional development, and locating a doctor who understands addiction. They can also help explore options for treatment, employment, and new hobbies, among other services. Coaches also provide a safe, supportive, and confidential space for people in recovery to share their feelings without judgment and without being told how to "fix" themselves. Coaching sessions bridge the gap by allowing the person to receive self-directed care with a coach advocating for informed choice.

Through the assistance of a coach, many people in recovery have found a sense of belonging to a larger recovery community and are able to get their lives back while being treated with dignity and respect. Coaching helps bridge the gap between professional treatment and sustainable recovery within a client's natural environment.

Many coaches have successfully overcome their own addictions and are compassionately dedicated to helping others achieve their recovery goals. Using the peer-to-peer model alongside a coach's personal lived experience grants them unparalleled insight into the many unique challenges someone with substance use disorder faces, and the joy of

triumph that comes along with the journey to recovery.

Peer recovery support services can be delivered across a full continuum of recovery, regardless of whether or not a person uses clinical treatment services. They can be offered before an individual enters treatment or when they are waiting for a service opening. They can coincide with treatment services, providing a connection to the community while a person is in treatment. Following treatment, coaching support services help people manage their own recovery by developing recovery skills, accessing resources to support ongoing recovery, and giving them an opportunity to further enrich their recovery.

A key factor that coaches understand is that everyone's struggle with addiction is unique and so is their recovery process. Coaches demonstrate that recovery is possible.

*"I put my hand in your hand and together we can do what we could never do alone."*  
~ Unknown

Learn more about recovery coaching, and request a free recovery coach here: <https://healthyacadia.org/need-help>



*Kristé Sprague serves as the Maine Recovery Core Program Director with Healthy Acadia and provides leadership, skills training, professional development, workforce development, supervision, support for data collection, and technical assistance to Maine Recovery Core recovery*

*coaches serving recovery centers and various other settings across, Aroostook, Franklin, Hancock, Kennebec, Knox, Penobscot, Piscataquis, Somerset, Waldo, and Washington counties.*



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## Meeting Guide 12+ A.A. World Services

Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.

Brought to you by Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., Meeting Guide is a free of charge meeting finder app for iOS and Android that provides meeting information from A.A. service entities in an easy-to-access format.

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.



# Bangor Area Recovery Network

Supporting life beyond addiction

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www.bangorrecovery.org



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

## 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](http://portlandrecovery.org) — **and find your people.**

Portland Recovery Community Center  
102 Bishop Street Portland, ME 04103  
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### INSPIRE RECOVERY CENTER

*In Support Of People In Recovery*  
A Project of Healthy Acadia

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Believing recovery is possible, our mission is to strengthen and support families affected by addiction

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- 12 Step focused recovery residence for men
- Family wellness retreats
- 12 Step workshops for families and incarcerated individuals

### FAMILY SUPPORT GROUPS

The Family Restored Support Group is an educational support group for families having difficulty navigating a loved one's addiction.

**Falmouth, Maine**  
Tuesdays, 6:00-7:30pm  
Falmouth Congregational Church

**South Portland, Maine**  
Wednesdays, 6:00-7:30pm  
The Point Community Center

**Portland, Maine**  
Thursdays, 6:00-7:30pm  
Portland Recovery Community Center

**Virtual - Tuesdays and Wednesdays & Thursdays, 6:00-7:30pm**  
email: [virtual@thefamilyrestored.org](mailto:virtual@thefamilyrestored.org)  
for meeting links

Visit our website for information on other meetings  
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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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://ca.org)

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

**COSA** is a 12-step recovery program for those whose lives have been affected by compulsive sexual behavior. [cosa-recovery.org](http://cosa-recovery.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](http://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](http://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](http://daausa.org)

**Food Addicts in Recovery Anonymous (FA)** is a program based on the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). It is designed for individuals who have problems with food such as overeating, under-eating, food addiction, bulimia, anorexia, or anyone who is obsessed with food, weight, or dieting. [foodaddicts.org](http://foodaddicts.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](http://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](http://gamblersanonymous.org)

**Millati Islami** is a fellowship of men and women, joined together on the Path of Peace. 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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://oa.org)

**Recovery Dharma** uses Buddhist principles and practices to recover from addiction. [RecoveryDharma.org](http://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](http://saa-recovery.org)

**SMART Recovery** is an abstinence-oriented program 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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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

### LINC Center

38 Memorial Drive, Augusta  
207-530-0391 / 207-430-4001



### Lincoln County Recovery Community Center

3 Hall Street, Newcastle  
commons spacemaine.org

### 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



**PROBLEM  
GAMBLING  
SERVICES**

# Gambling Problem?

## Now you can access self-exclusion services online!

Is the money or time you're spending gambling 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 gambling in all casinos and/or with all sports wagering operators 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](mailto:problemgambling@adcareme.org)**

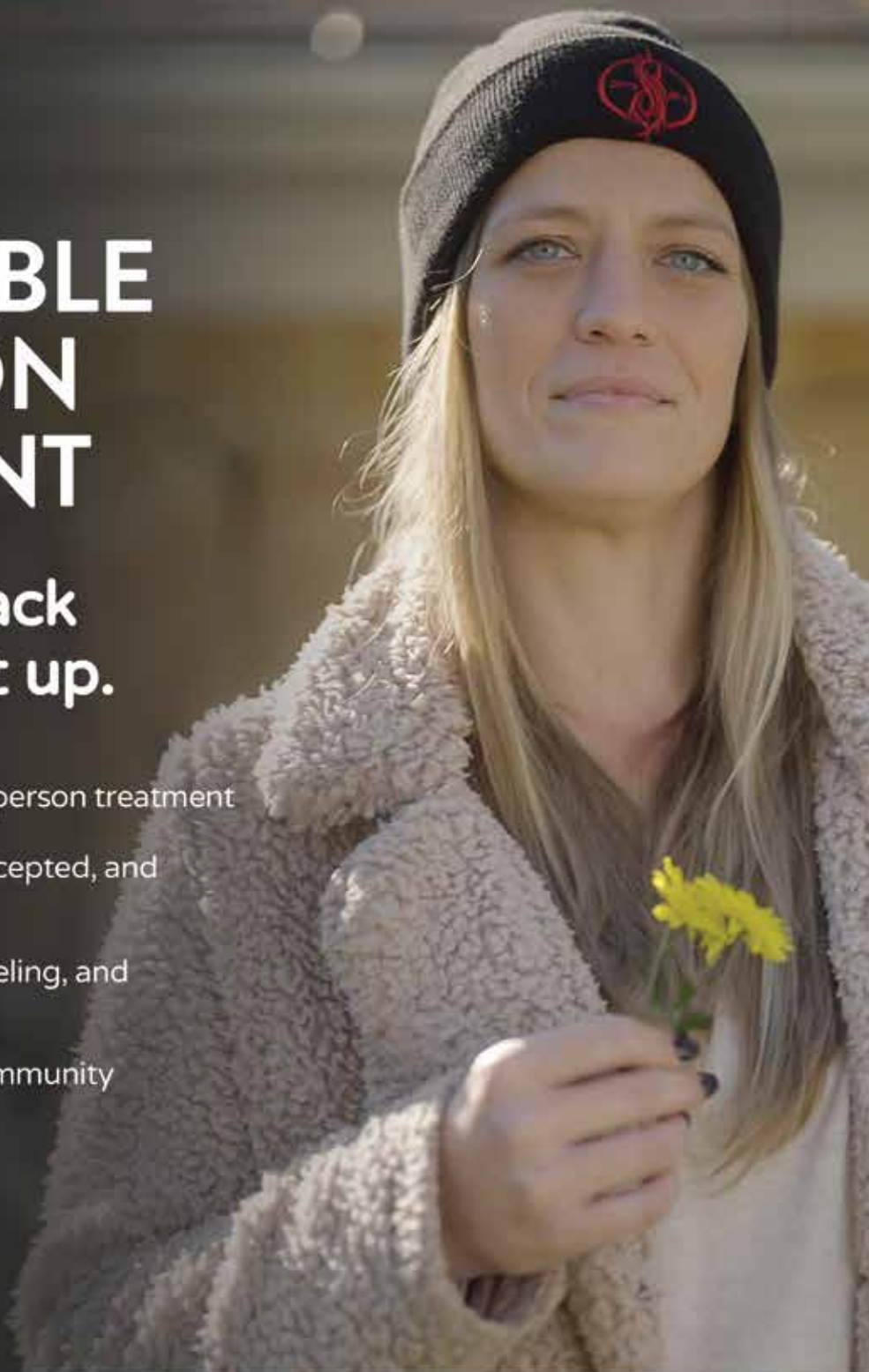




# GET FLEXIBLE ADDICTION TREATMENT

Take your life back  
without giving it up.

- ✓ Rapid access to virtual or in-person treatment
- ✓ Insurance and MaineCare 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**

[WWW.JOINGROUPS.COM](http://WWW.JOINGROUPS.COM)