

Journey

making recovery from addiction visible

Feb/March 2024 • Issue 31



Matt Senecal
Dreaming, Designing,
Building, and Living Life

Wellbriety
A Cultural Path
to Recovery

Eco-Spirituality
Discovering
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Carolyn Delaney

Partnerships & Engagement

Brenda Briggs

Karen Morton-Clark

Niki Curtis

Sales

Carolyn Delaney

Circulation

Brenda Briggs

Operations & Editorial

Gale Clifford

Joanna Free

Lisa-Marie Marr

Mickie Kucinkas

Peter Rosasco

Journey is a woman-owned, independent media brand launched in 2019.

Our mission is to amplify hope by making inspiring personal recovery stories, recovery programs and resources more visible.

Published 6 times a year by

Journey Enterprises, LLC

PO Box 15134

Portland, ME 04112

info@journey-magazine.com

(207) 679-5005

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Matt Senecal

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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



As we celebrate our 5th year as a media company, our mission remains unchanged: to make recovery from addiction more visible to more people, in more places.

We are a team of individuals with personal experiences, using media, marketing, and publishing

to work towards a future where recovery is widely accessible, understood, and celebrated.

Since February 2019, we've known that addiction is treatable, recovery is possible, and help and support are available. It saddened us that more people didn't know these facts. As a group, we set out to change that.

We're excited to introduce some new team members who are helping us amplify this message of hope. Lisa-Marie Marr has joined us with a focus on Operations & Special Projects as we continue to grow. Karen Morton-Clark will lead our Partnerships & Engagement efforts. Karen's deep understanding of recovery advocacy, her commitment to community engagement, and her experience facilitating events will be instrumental in helping us expand our reach and deepen our impact.

Lisa-Marie contributed her first article, titled, 'Finding a Path to Spirituality,' where she shared her exploration of various paths and offered some free resources for you to explore. As I finished reading her article, I reflected on my own spiritual connection journey, which certainly hasn't been a linear path.

During my initial twenty years in recovery, I had a deeply personal relationship with a higher power. It was so personal that I never used to say 'I'll pray for you' because I believed my god was too occupied with my issues; they were 'busy.'

Over the past decade, my concept has expanded, and my higher power is now 'bigger,' allowing me to pray for others. I nurture this connection through a daily practice I call my 'bench' mornings. I find a scenic spot by the water, where I sit, breathe, pray, meditate, and write. It's a commitment I make to myself, as I sense the presence of a higher power by the water, and the act of sitting reinforces the action I take to nourish this connection.

In this issue, we invite you to explore and nurture your own concept of spirituality as we share both personal experiences and ideas.

Enjoy your journey!

Carolyn



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ry saves lives

Matt Senecal

Dreaming, Designing, Building, and Living Life

by Amy Paradysz

Why would a successful business owner want to publicly share his story of addiction and recovery?

Because it's about hope—and smashing stereotypes.

Senecal Construction founder Matt Senecal will reach 11 years of sobriety on March 1, 2024.

“Addiction affects anybody—police officers, lawyers, doctors, painters, craftsmen,” he says. “And we're all telling the same painful story. My motivation for doing this is to let people know that there is hope. I have lived more life in the last decade than I ever lived prior.”

His story starts like so many others he's heard at 12-step meetings: He started drinking young, when he was 10 or 11, hanging out with older kids.

“The first time I drank, I felt like I had arrived and was finally accepted,” he says. “I continued chasing that feeling for the next—oh, close to 30 years. I got away with a lot in school because I was an athlete. Looking back on it, I learned a lot about stereotypes. I was in the jock crowd. And then there were ‘the druggies,’ if you will—but the jocks were more active in using drugs and alcohol, and we got away with a lot more.”

Matt was so successful in lacrosse at Morse High School in Bath that he was offered a full college scholarship.

“Then, while I was at college, drugs and alcohol completely took over,” he says. “I couldn't perform my basic tasks, like actually going to class and studying. In year two, after the lacrosse season, I was asked to leave and from there my use really kicked off.”

With college in the rearview mirror, Matt turned to what he knew: construction. He'd grown up building side by side with his father, and at the age of 20, he started a construction company.

“People would say that I worked hard and played hard,” Matt says. “I hid behind that like a badge of honor.”

By then he was using cocaine. Though he worried about the possibility of going to jail—of having a legal problem—he didn't believe he had a physical problem. How could he, when he was a husband, a father, a successful business owner, and the state's longest-running member of Business Networking International?

“I measured who I was based on how big my boat was, how many houses I had, my place at Sugarloaf,” Matt says. “Then, around 2008-2009, the market crashed and my net worth was cut by more than half. I was looking at the possibility of bankruptcy and foreclosure, and I had no identity left because my stuff was being taken away, and that accelerated my use.”



Matt Senecal, 50, will mark 11 years of sobriety on March 1.

He was able to get sober a couple of times, including seven months when he was training hard for a Tough Mudder competition. “That became my addiction,” Matt says, “and at the end of the race, they gave me a beer and I was right back to where I left off.”

Another time he tried to quit, seeing both his primary care physician and psychiatrist, who separately prescribed Valium and Xanax.

“Under the influence of both of those and alcohol, I was going to take my own life,” Matt says. “Thankfully there was some intervention, the gun misfired or was redirected and went through the ceiling of my garage. My wife and kids were scared and ran to a neighbor's house. I passed out on my bed, but police called it a standoff. Charges for that allegation were dropped within 32 hours, but that's something that follows me even though I wasn't convicted. That really brought me to my bottom.”

The illusion of having everything “under control” was completely shattered.

Matt's high school football coach showed up and brought him to a 12-step recovery meeting—something that is now a permanent part of his life.

“In recovery, I learned to love myself for who I am—not for my stuff—and I continue to grow as a person,” Matt says. “I didn’t know it was possible to enjoy life. I never thought I could ski without après-ski, go fishing, or camping without drinking. And I’ve learned that life is so beautiful and enjoyable—whether I’m boating, canoeing, fly fishing, skiing, or developing a trail system on my property in the woods in Brunswick. I feel gifted every day in all my relationships. I’m definitely more patient, more loving, more understanding.”

Matt’s professional relationships improved too once he was ready to surround himself with employees who would hold him accountable. “We’ve built an amazing team,” he says.

Senecal Construction has fifteen employees and, on any given day, there may be upwards of 100 people, including contractors, working on Senecal projects. The company’s value has more than tripled in the

nearly eleven years since Matt has been sober.

But, for Matt, it’s no longer all about the numbers or the markings and trappings of success. It’s about dreaming, designing, and building beautiful, sustainable homes—just as he’s continually working on dreaming, designing, and building a beautiful, sustainable life. And that has included reviving a childhood dream.

“I always enjoyed drawing houses, from a young age,” Matt says. “My mother’s boyfriends told me that I could never be an architect because I wasn’t strong in math. Well, our firm currently has nine homes under design. I couldn’t have accomplished that—any of this—without sobriety. I wouldn’t be here. And I don’t take that for granted.”



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

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*According to the National Safety Council

To explore marketing opportunities contact Carolyn Delaney (carolyn@journey-magazine.com)

Mindful Rituals

Nurturing Wellness Through Herbal Habits

by Paula Kersch

We hope the habits created for the new year bring us closer to the happier, healthier people we strive to be. There is a lot of pressure to “start the year off right,” no matter what your wellness goals are. You owe it to yourself and the people in your life to be the best possible version of yourself, right? I can already feel the anxiety set in as I write this!

Despite the shame or stress we may encounter along our path to wellness, it is a journey we all take step by step, day by day, so be kind to yourself.

There are many ways to create habits with herbs that benefit your health and wellness. The herbs themselves can be important, based on your goals, but the practice of choosing to sit quietly with a cup of tea and meditate can be even more powerful.

Choosing to spend time with myself is one of the best habits I have found for reflection and reaching my full potential. It doesn't cost anything to sit alone quietly, but if you are like me, it can be difficult to not have your hands and mind busy. If the only thing you do this year is create a mindful habit you enjoy, then pat yourself on the back for a job well done!

Keeping it simple is best. You can brew a cup of tea, go for a foraging walk, or use plants as part of your diet. When you find one that works well for you every day, you can start to set intentions by which herbs you use. Much like how Botanically Curious formulates items for clients, take stock of what you need in that moment.

Are you looking to be more calm? Using chamomile or warming ginger might do the trick.

Here is a recipe you can try! It is loaded with adaptogens to support the mind and body during this new year of adventures.



Centering Morning Chai

½ tsp. chai spice blend or warming spices of your choice (like cinnamon)

½ tsp. marshmallow root powder for that morning prebiotic to help your gut

½ tsp. roasted chicory root to support cleansing throughout the body

1 Tbsp. mushroom powder (I use a blend of Reishi, Cordyceps, Turkey Tail, Lion's Mane and Chaga)

1 Tbsp. tulsi herb (holy basil) for clarity from stress-related brain fog

Brew in a French Press or 10-inch saucepan on low heat with 1 ¼ cup of water for 15 minutes and enjoy!

Perhaps you seek greater peace of mind? Passionflower capsules in the morning may work. Maybe you are not a morning person and need to wake up the body! We've got you covered with the *Centering Morning Chai* recipe.

Look back on previous articles or visit our Instagram page to get ideas on herbs that might work best.

DM us on Instagram and let us know what your herbal habits are, we would love to hear from you!

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Eco-Spirituality: Discovering Faith in Nature

Nurturing the Connection Between Faith and the Natural World

Eco-spirituality is all about understanding our connection to nature and the Earth. It's a way of looking at the world that helps us see how everything is linked together, just like how all the pieces of a puzzle fit together.

One of the most important ideas in eco-spirituality is that nature is sacred.

Nature is not just something we can use for our own needs, but a special place that we treat with respect. It's a bit like how we might treat a church or a temple with reverence.

People who follow eco-spirituality also believe that it's our job to take care of the environment. We can be

kind to the Earth and make choices that keep it healthy and safe. We are all part of a big, interconnected web of life on this planet. It's not just about us; it's about all the animals, plants, and even the rocks and rivers.

Eco-spirituality encourages us to see the big picture. Instead of only thinking about ourselves, we can think about how we fit into the whole world; understanding that our actions affect the planet and all its creatures.

And it's not just about the physical world; eco-spirituality is also about how our connection to nature can be a spiritual experience. We can find a sense of wonder and spirituality in the natural world around us.

People who follow eco-spirituality try to live in a way that doesn't harm the Earth. They use resources wisely and support technologies that are good for the environment. They also like to spend time outdoors to connect with nature, taking a break from their busy lives to appreciate the beauty of the natural world.

Many eco-spiritual people like to take action to protect the environment. They might join groups, speak up for the Earth, or work to make others aware of environmental issues.

They also like to celebrate the changing seasons and natural events, like the start of spring or the longest day of the year. It helps them feel more connected to the Earth's rhythms.

Eco-spirituality teaches us that all living things are important and connected. It's not about humans being more important than other creatures; it's about respecting and valuing all forms of life.

This way of thinking invites us to appreciate nature, take good care of our planet, and recognize that we're all part of a big, beautiful world that we cherish and protect.

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Embracing Our Wild Mind

Eco-Spirituality and Recovery

by Peter Wohl

I can distinctly remember going back into the woods with my father on a cool gray November day to make a fire and roast potatoes in the coals. Never have I tasted such sweetness as that potato, garnished with wood smoke and infused with the November scents of leaves and crisp air.

Whether we are in a great wood, seashore, or vacant lot, we can experience a connection to an expansive Presence that can restore, heal, and inspire us. Regardless of whether we call that the expression God, Goddess, Buddha, Gaia, the Divine Source, Our Higher Power, or simply nature, this experience of Presence is freely available.

When we were children, our minds were still “wild” and free. We enjoyed getting our hands and feet in the dirt. We danced in the rain and splashed wildly in puddles. We awakened every sense as we ran, crawled, climbed, and tumbled through mysterious forests and unexplored jungles on great adventures. We loved to walk barefoot on dew-soaked grass and sandy beaches in summer, play in the piles of fallen leaves in the autumn, and flop down to make angels in the cold winter snow.

As we grow up, our culture seldom tolerates this type of free-spirited excitement. “Don’t get wet, you’ll catch cold.” “Don’t get your dress dirty.” While some of these admonitions may be necessary for safety, the parent is often consciously or unconsciously giving the child the message that the sanitary orderliness of the human world is more desirable than the spontaneous reality of the wild.

This messaging is tearing out the roots of our fundamental relationship with the natural world. Unfortunately, our twenty-first-century minds have been so highly “civilized” that we can no longer simply walk out into the wild and have the intimate connection experienced by our ancestors. To cultivate a deep relationship with the natural world, we need to begin by relearning to experience the openness, joy, spontaneity, curiosity, and freedom that we once knew as children, our “wild mind.”

As adults in recovery, rediscovering our “wild mind” can be the gateway to restoring the full network of connections between us and our surroundings, including the natural world. Typically, recovering people either lacked these connections before their addiction or lost them as

a tragic consequence of trauma and/or the addiction itself. Consequently, recovery is most often begun in relative isolation, making it infinitely more difficult.

Eco-spirituality can serve as the key to building an extensive, stable network of connections. A relationship with wildness can allow our badly damaged senses of belonging, trust, and safety to heal if we make the effort to learn how to enter and experience this relationship. When we do that, we have a completely trustworthy platform from which we can rebuild our lives. It is also a place where we can temporarily lay aside our daily stresses and find immediate solace.

Eco-spirituality-based recovery can end that emptiness, filling our hearts and opening the path to healthy, fulfilling lives **in connection**.



Peter Wohl is a co-creator of Way of the Wild Heart, an eco-spirituality-based addiction recovery program. Through this program, he introduces the power of nature into the recovery process,

helping to heal wounded spirits and restore lives.



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Finding a Path to Spiritual Wellness

by Lisa-Marie Marr

Growing up in mid-coast and then southern Maine, my life was a blend of Marine discipline from my father and Irish Catholic traditions from my mother. Sundays meant church, catechism classes, and communion. There was no talk of spirituality and nature was enjoyed in a Winnebago with a TV.

My real journey into spirituality began in my 40s. Having stepped away from church for over two decades and in search of recovery, I found myself pondering what spirituality meant to me. As a child, I equated spirituality strictly with religion and felt disconnected from it. But I've since learned that spirituality is much more than that.

Spirituality: A Personal Journey

Spirituality is no longer just about religion. It's a broader concept, a belief in something beyond ourselves. It's about finding what practices resonate with your heart and soul, and they can vary greatly from person to person.

Here are some paths I explored.

Meditation and Mindfulness:

I started with meditation to quiet my mind. It helped me live in the present and appreciate the little things. It allowed me a deeper understanding of myself and the world around me. I set up an area in my home with a meditation pillow, incense, and crystals to bring me comfort. What could meditation look like for you?

Nature as a Sanctuary

(Eco-Spirituality): I found peace in nature's beauty, feeling a oneness with the world around me. This was as simple as taking a mindful walk around the Falmouth bird sanctuary or even my neighborhood. It also has included an annual 5-day wilderness retreat starting with paddling eight miles to a remote campsite at Baxter State Park (my favorite place in Maine) with just my partner. Is there a place you feel most at peace?

Yoga and Movement: Yoga and Tai Chi brought harmony to my body and mind, making me feel more connected. I have explored the many types of Yoga from Bikram to Vinyasa, Aerial to Yin Yang. The first are more intense and exercise-based, while the latter is designed for

movement and stretching. Have you tried channeling your inner Yogi?

Artistic Expression: I expressed my spiritual journey through knitting, woodworking, and music, finding a unique voice in each loop, stroke, and note. If you're not sure what your artistic passion is, it can be as easy as a trip to the local dollar store for a cheap introduction to various art forms.

Community and Fellowship: Joining groups for discussions and gatherings brought me a sense of belonging and shared growth. Not knowing what I was looking for, I joined in all types of activities that brought me to others with like-minded and vastly different thinking which opened my mind and nourished my soul.

Studying Spiritual Texts: I love to read and one way I learned more about the various forms of spirituality was through the library and local bookstores. Getting lost in a book on the written spiritual journeys of others brought me hope and experiences I otherwise would not have had. Through these books, I have traveled to Tibet, France, India, and beyond without ever leaving my living room.

Staying Open and Curious

Remember, there's no right or wrong way to explore spirituality. Be curious, try new things, and see what speaks to you. It's a lifelong journey, each step and each experience are part of your unique spiritual path.

During my exploration, I tried everything that piqued my curiosity, from sunrise services on a mountaintop to EFT tapping. I learned from others in meetings and therapy, seeing the light in their eyes when they spoke about their spirituality. I even tried mindful eating, inspired by Thich Naht Hahn, although it was challenging!

Your Unique Spiritual Tapestry

Your spirituality might look different. It could be in acts of kindness, studying religious texts, finding solace in prayer or indigenous rituals. What's important is that it feels right to you. Where can you find spirituality in the ordinary? Try finding something special in everyday things. Seeing kindness and beauty in small moments can make you feel connected and peaceful inside.

What Does Your Spirituality Look Like?

Think about what resonates with you. Do you find peace in nature? Have you tried meditation to bring clarity? Perhaps helping others fills you with a sense of purpose. Explore these feelings. What brings meaning and depth to your life?

Embarking on Your Journey

Spirituality isn't confined within walls or tied to a single belief. It's about what brings you peace, connection, and a sense of purpose. Stay open, curious, and true to your experiences. Trust your journey and the paths it takes you on, and allow yourself the space to grow and discover.

Finding your path to spiritual wellness is a personal, evolving journey. Embrace it with an open heart, and you'll find what you seek.

Lisa-Marie Marr is a new Journey team member!

Spirituality Spotlight

Learning more about yourself and spirituality doesn't need to cost money. Here are some free resources for you to explore.

Community and Fellowship: Phoenix Multisport | thephoenix.org

Free Yoga and Movement: YouTube (Try searching "Yoga for Beginners" or "Yoga with Adriene")

Journaling: Start a gratitude list or daily journal practice to keep track of your spiritual journey

Meditation: Download Insight Timer or visit www.plumvillage.org for access to free meditations.

Mindfulness: The Free Mindfulness Project | freemindfulness.org

Nature as a Sanctuary: The Center for Spirituality in Nature | centerforspiritualityinnature.org

Wellness Tools: Forest Bathing, EFT Tapping, Nutrition and more at www.journey-magazine.com

Written Texts on Spirituality: Visit your local library

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Empowering Change from Within

by Elizabeth Hamill

The start of a new year feels amazing, doesn't it? It can prompt exuberant, bright, and shiny feelings where everything seems possible, where obstacles of the old can be overtaken by the new. A welcome, clean, fresh start.

Within such high-spirited positivity, great intentions — also known as New Year's resolutions — are set. And then ... whaddya know? Life gets busy!

The new year churns on through the first weeks of January, and for most, the bright inspiration starts to fade. Many folks simply stop there and get on with life, completely forgetting about their intentions. Others keep trying, but typically around the end of February, the intention that was so upfront has faded to the back burner.

Why does this happen year after year, why can't we change it, and why are unwanted habits so incredibly hard to break? Understanding this all-too-frequent issue is at the core of how the Weiss Method works.

The Weiss Method interrupts and disconnects unhealthy patterns with an energy-based treatment, working at the root cause of unwanted habits and addictions like alcohol, nicotine, harmful drugs, or refined sugars. (See Journey issues 27 & 28 to explore the Addiction Cycle and how it works.)

Let's look more at how and why those lovely fresh feelings that grace us every New Year can fade so easily, along with our hope of wanting to make changes. Most likely, we haven't generated enough 'gas in the tank' to accomplish our goal. So where does that fuel come from?



It's an inside thing...

Rest assured: we have everything we need to achieve what we want. Wait... what?! How does that work, you may ask? If we make a goal or an intention important enough by reasoning through *why* we want it in an ever-deepening way, we'll arrive at the core reasons and values that drive us. This type of internal work causes a vortex of energy that gives us the staying power for the longevity of our decision-making process.

Vortex of energy = gas in the tank!

We connect to our inner intelligence by focusing inwardly on our strengths. If the intention is important, it makes sense to help

it become a reality by fueling our intention with the best of ourself. High-octane stamina is crucial to our overall well-being and in trusting ourself.

One way to visualize this is to imagine we have a whole cast of characters that developed over our lifetime who live on our 'bus'. Think of the part of you that loves to help others, then the part that can complain about everything, and the part that's able to see the silver lining in everything, and so on.

We are not just one thing

Our hundreds of characters require our *leadership* to manage them and ensure everyone is working in the same direction. This is what allows

for successful navigation of all the warnings and excuses that will inevitably crop up along the way, despite our initial good intentions. When all characters on the bus trust us as their conscientious driver, so much is possible!

This is the best of how we, as humans, are designed to work. We're each supposed to be driving our bus, and not giving away our power by allowing anyone else to drive it for us.

Only you can **make yourself a priority**. No one else can do this! When we regularly focus on fixing things starting from inside ourselves because it matters to us, the force of the past doesn't get a chance to overtake our good intentions. When we make a reasonable plan to see them through and not let everything or anyone else's priorities hold us back, we **free ourselves to be ourselves**. This is the kind of energy that releases us from our past and keeps us going toward our self-chosen future — no matter what.

Remember though... this doesn't mean you can't ask for help when you need it to make changes. Sometimes energy comes to us through others, because of their expertise. This is how the Weiss Method works in partnership with a person's well-reasoned good intentions.



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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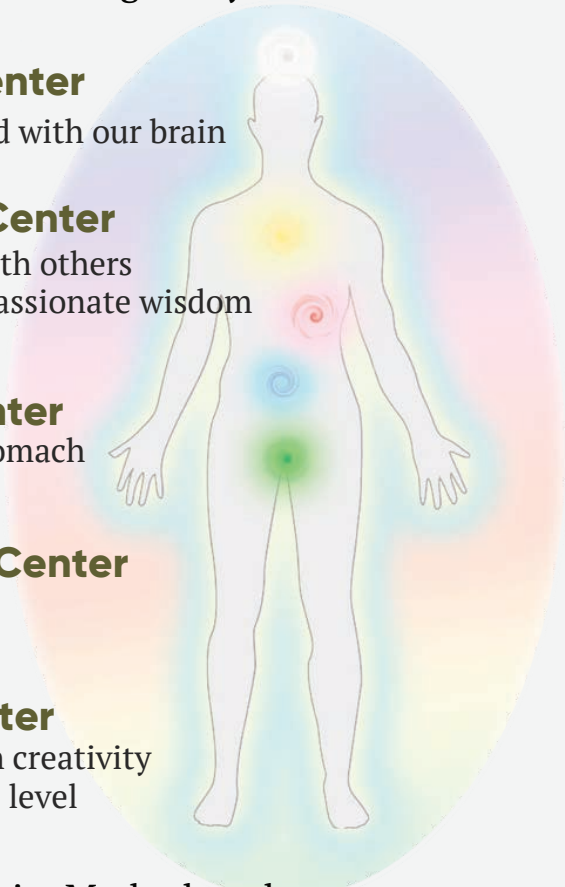


The Weiss Method

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Keeps us safe
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The Weiss Method works to clear these energetic centers.

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Cervical Cancer Awareness

Get Informed.
Get Screened.
Get Vaccinated.



Your Health, Your Future. Stay One Step Ahead.

Get Informed

Cervical cancer usually starts with no symptoms.

Screenings may find cell changes before they become cancer.

Most cases are caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV).

When found early, it can be easily treated.



Get Screened

Pap tests screen for cervical cancer.

Pap tests may find other conditions that are not cancer.

HPV tests check cells for high-risk types of human papillomavirus that can cause cancer.

HPV/Pap tests can be done together.

Get Vaccinated

The HPV vaccine can often prevent cervical cancer.

Do you need help paying for a cervical cancer screening?

The Maine CDC Breast and Cervical Health Program may be able to help.

To see if you qualify for the program,
call 1-800-350-5180 Press 1
TTY users call Maine relay 711

When to get Screened

Screenings should start at age of 21.

If a pap result is normal, you can usually wait 3 years until your next.

Women who are 30-65 can get a pap test alone, an HPV test alone, or an HPV/Pap test together.





Compassionate Conversations

When an Employee's Family Struggles with Substance Use

by **Bridget Kelly**

In the October 2023 issue of *Journey Magazine*, we talked about how to support an employee who may be struggling with a substance use disorder (SUD). But what if it's not your employee who's affected by substance use but their family member or loved one? How does that change the conversation?

Signs That an Employee May Have a Family Member Battling SUD

Substance use disorder affects the whole family. When one person struggles, the whole family struggles. There aren't always signs an employer can recognize when an employee has a family member with an active SUD, but you may see indicators like:

- Reduced productivity
- Becoming easily distracted at work
- Coming in late, leaving early, taking a lot of PTO
- Changes in attitude
- Irritability

Talking to a Family Member in Need

Conversations around substance use aren't always easy, but as an

employer, your goal is to express that you care about your employees and to provide them with resources. Following are some tips to have a productive conversation:

Set the Right Attitude

- Check your own beliefs about SUD. If you think addiction is a moral failing or if you think family members just enable people with SUD, it will come through in the conversation. It will not help your employees get healthy.
- Be non-confrontational. Ask them what type of support they need.
- Listen. You don't have to solve the problem. Just be compassionate.

Set the Meeting Up for Success

- Make it clear this is separate from any disciplinary action.
- Have the conversation at the end of the day.
- Ask them if it's okay to have an off-the-record conversation.
- Set aside time so they can talk.

Family members are generally looking for support. They may want to share more than if you were talking to someone about their substance use.

Share Resources

- Share a list of company support programs like EAPs. Walk them through how to access them and what services they provide. Let them know which resources are confidential.
- Provide a list of support groups for families like Al-Anon and Nar-Anon.

How employers talk about mental health and substance use matters. A compassionate conversation that provides resources for employees with family members struggling with SUD helps break down barriers that keep people from getting support and can lead to happier, healthier employees.



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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Alcoholics Anonymous Service Committees

*Ensuring the A.A. Message Reaches
People Who May Need It*



Alcoholics Anonymous can be found in approximately 180 nations worldwide. In the United States, A.A. consists of an estimated 61,900 groups and nearly 1.3 million members (as of January 2018).

Every member of Alcoholics Anonymous first learned about A.A. somehow. Perhaps a seed of sobriety was planted when they heard a public service announcement on the radio, read an A.A. pamphlet at a bus station, listened to their doctor ask about their drinking, or when a family member begged them to check out A.A.

Many alcoholics first hear A.A.'s message of hope thanks to the various service committees where countless volunteers reach out to people who need it.

Nationally, service committees span across eight different focus areas.

They are:

Accessibilities Committees: Assist those with significant barriers that must be overcome to ensure full participation in A.A.

Archives Committees: Collect, preserve, and share the history of A.A.

Cooperation with the Professional Community (C.P.C) Committees: Inform professionals who are likely to come into contact with problem drinkers about A.A.

Corrections Committees: Carry the A.A. message of recovery to incarcerated alcoholics.

Literature Committees: Ensure that the importance of A.A. literature is understood and available to A.A. groups and events, service meetings, and the general public.

Public Information Committees: Convey A.A. information to the general public.

Treatment Committees: Carry the A.A. message into treatment settings where there may be suffering alcoholics.

Remote Communities Committees: Work to bring A.A. to communities difficult to reach because of geography, language, or culture.

These may be represented slightly differently in your area, or through combined committees.

What does this mean for the State of Maine?

There are over 750 Alcoholics Anonymous meetings across the state weekly, with twenty-three active districts, and numerous

committees. The committees serve to make sure A.A.'s message of recovery is available within our state, so alcoholics and their families know that a fun and peaceful sober way of life exists.

Journey Magazine recently received an update from District 1, which serves the Greater Portland, Maine area.

These grateful A.A. members carry the message of recovery behind the walls of the Cumberland County Jail and Windham Prison through the work of the Corrections Committee and offer welcoming "A.A. contacts" to patients at the Milestone detox and local hospitals through the Treatment Committee.

They also aim to inform alcoholics, the public, and professionals like doctors and lawyers who often cross



paths with alcoholics about the life-saving fellowship. This service work is done through a combined committee (of both P.I.C & C.P.C referenced above) called the PICPC Committee: *Public Information and Cooperation with the Professional Community*.

In line with the tradition that “A.A. shall forever remain non-professional,” the work of the PICPC committee relies on the voluntary time of A.A. members who want to give back what they have freely received.

While the years-long pandemic interrupted this committee’s work, in the past months the PICPC Committee has roared back into action.

Here are the main things they’re working on now:

Literature Racks: filled with A.A. pamphlets and meeting lists have been placed at dozens of locations around Greater Portland, including libraries, town halls, the USM campus, and hospitals.

AA Presentations: In light of the fellowship’s experience that the best “advertisement” for Alcoholics Anonymous is through the words of sober A.A. members, they’ve embarked on a series of AA presentations to healthcare students and professionals. They recently met with a roomful of University of Southern Maine nursing students, and it was truly heartening to see the rapt interest with which they were asked

questions on sponsorship, types of AA meetings, and how best to encourage alcoholics to enter the halls.

Media PSA: If you live within the broadcast range of WMPG (90.9 FM), USM’s college radio station, you may already have heard a 30-second media PSA of stories by young people who have been helped to sobriety through A.A. These public service announcements covering every age group and demographic, plus a wide array of other informational materials, are made available through A.A.’s General Service Office in New York City.

Healthcare Packet: The average doctor or dentist in the US gets only a day or two of education on addiction in their twelve or so years of education and residency. In response, A.A.’s General Service Office offers a healthcare packet for A.A. members to pass along to their health providers. Since active alcoholics often end up in desperate straits in the medical system, educating providers on the recovery program of AA can be a lifesaver for fellow alcoholics. These packets are available at the A.A. Central Service Office in Portland.

For more information or to get involved with the numerous meetings, committees, and districts within the State of Maine visit CSOAMaine.org.

For information on national events, committees, recovery resources, and daily reflections visit aa.org.



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

WHAT WE OFFER:

- Family support services
- Scholarships for treatment and personal enrichment
- Recovery housing for men
- Education and outreach

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
for meeting links

Visit our website for information on other meetings
www.thefamilyrestored.org

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
207-387-0015
info@thefamilyrestored.org

www.thefamilyrestored.org
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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.



EFT Tapping

A Path to Spiritual Wellness

by Karen St. Clair

We do just about anything we can to help our bodies recover when we're not feeling our best. Perhaps we might add extra leafy greens into a smoothie or spend more time resting.

We all have physical, emotional, and spiritual needs; we are mind-body-spirit and the three are deeply interconnected. Sometimes, our body lets us know it needs some extra love and support through various symptoms like shifts in energy or changes in our emotions.

For many people, it may seem easier to address physical needs, however, the reality is that our emotions reach far below the surface, even down to a cellular level, and can profoundly impact our physical well-being.

In our busy lives, it can be difficult to find time to nurture our spiritual health; yet making space for spiritual wellness promotes inner peace, purpose, and connection. These are all vital for overall health and happiness.

How EFT Tapping Works

EFT tapping utilizes the body's energy meridians [paths, much like a highway system, that can be mapped out throughout the entire body], which are used in acupuncture and acupressure. Studies confirm that stimulating these meridian endpoints while focusing mentally on issues we wish to resolve can restore balance and flow to the body's energy systems. This release of energetic blocks then allows for physical, emotional, and spiritual healing.

In EFT tapping, we mentally focus on a problem while using our fingertips to tap on specific meridian points.



We tap the body's acupressure points in conjunction with voicing the feelings that describe our specific issue to clear the energy disturbances. This restoration of harmony on an energetic level then facilitates elevated well-being, including spiritual connectedness.

Benefits of Tapping

There are several ways EFT tapping powerfully supports spiritual health.

Here are a few examples:

- Calms anxiety by shifting the body into a more relaxed state allowing extraneous worries to fade
- Lowers cortisol (stress hormone) to restore a sense of calm and peaceful focus
- Unblocks energy, freeing creativity and inspiration
- Clears unhelpful programming from life experiences
- Multiple research studies show that it is an effective treatment for Pain, Anxiety, Depression, Food Cravings, Trauma, PTSD, and Peak Athletic Performance.

By releasing what no longer serves us, we open space for inner peace. Living in this space provides the spiritual balance our bodies seek.

For more information visit <https://bit.ly/discover-eft-science>

"In as little as three sessions of tapping, Karen has given me the gift of releasing decades (and I am in my sixth!) of life's firmly anchored punches. I have tried several different modalities, but none have relieved the relentless self-imposed weight of unforgiveness, and its ensuing burdens, like this. Tapping with Karen has given me this almost childlike freedom to find joy in life again. "Thank You" can't begin to sufficiently express my gratitude." — P.L., Ontario

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

Karen is an Accredited Certified EFT International Practitioner/ Master Trainer NQT, Reiki Master of Masters, International Best-Selling Author, Speaker, Founder of Reiki Tap RenewalSM, and a highly skilled professional with a true gift for facilitating her clients' life-changing outcomes. karenstclairEFT.com

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The Practice of Listening: Cultivating Connection

by Joanna Free

*“Consider every individual you meet as a garden to be tended, not a machine to be repaired.” — Stephen R. Andrew, in *Listening Deeply* (2023)*

Who taught us how to listen? Chances are, no one. We were told to listen, but who taught us how to be quiet with presence and without judging or mental chatter?

Listening is a practice and one of the most fruitful places to practice it is with ourselves.

Have you ever heard someone refer to one of their knees as their “bad” knee? I have a knee that sometimes gives me trouble. When it acts up, it’s doing its best, as a knee, to let me know it needs some care. I’ve pushed and stressed that knee over the years.

Since I’m no knee specialist, I’m learning from people who are. As a result, I’m learning how to

listen and respond to the knee’s complaints. Turns out, my knee needs a lot of stretching, way more than I thought. It’s a complicated part of my body that does a lot for me. It helps me to stand, and stand up for myself. When I respond to that knee with the respect it deserves, it’s a happier and more effective knee.

In some paths of addiction recovery, a “searching and fearless” inventory is recommended. What does this inventory require? A kind of deep listening to our past, our past selves, and with the knowledge we have now. Tuning in with the ear of a friend, and writing things down to share with another. Some of what we tune into will become part of the stories we tell of ourselves.

Sometimes the challenges we go through, the problems we face, and even the not-so-great choices we make can bring us closer to others as powerful points of connection. If we are lucky, these moments can

be a source of humor — some of the finest comedy springs from a combination of tragedy, time, and tuning in.

Can we learn to listen? We can, although it may help to know that, even amongst those who do it for a living, it’s still a lifelong practice. With the multitude of distractions served up to us online and in the world around us, tuning in — like gardening — is both an art and a science.

Fortunately, like tending the knee and the garden, there are resources for listening practice, too. There’s a richness in listening, and in being heard. Here’s to more richness, and more fruitfulness in all of our lives.



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

RECOVERY SUPPORT SERVICES & INFORMATION

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

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



Mutual Help Organizations

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/). It is also a featured resource on Google’s Recover Together website (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), where you can also check out hundreds of past articles in the online archive (recoveryanswers.org/addiction-research-summaries/).

Each article answers these questions...

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

Recovery Research Institute at Massachusetts General Hospital
Visit RecoveryAnswers.org for more information



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Holistic Recovery

Blending Traditional and New Therapies

In partnership with the Recovery Research Institute

What is Holistic Medicine?

Holistic medicine is a unique way of healing. It combines the usual medical treatments with new, alternative methods. This approach doesn't just focus on one problem, like addiction. Instead, it looks at everything — your body, mind, spirit, and emotions — to help you heal completely.

Why Holistic Therapy?

Even though some of these therapies don't have a lot of scientific proof, they're becoming more popular. More and more, traditional programs for addiction include these new methods. People are finding them helpful, even if we still need more research to understand why.

Types of Holistic Therapies

Aromatherapy: This therapy uses good-smelling oils from plants to improve your mood and health. It's about balancing your mind, body, and spirit with these scents.

Art Therapy: Here, you can express your feelings through drawing, painting, or crafting. It's a way to explore your

emotions without needing words.

Equine Therapy:

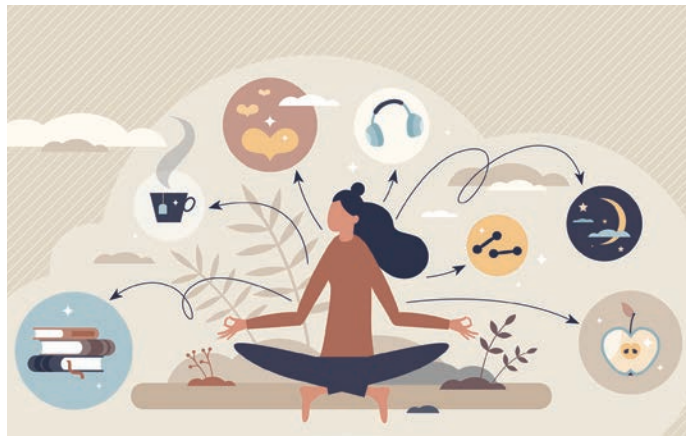
Spending time with horses can be healing. You might learn to take care of them, or even ride them. Studies show this can help people feel less stressed and more at peace.

Guided Imagery: This therapy is like a mental vacation. You imagine peaceful scenes and focus on breathing to relax. It's shown to lower stress and improve your mood.

Massage Therapy: A massage therapist uses a gentle touch to relax your muscles. It's known to help with pain and can also lift your spirits if you're feeling low or anxious.

Meditation & Mindfulness:

This practice involves quieting your mind and paying attention to how you feel, without judgment. It's been found to lower blood pressure,

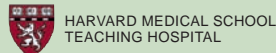


ease pain, help with sleep, and quit smoking.

Music Therapy: Using music can be very uplifting. Whether it's singing, dancing, listening, or playing instruments, music has been shown to ease pain, reduce stress, and improve sleep.

Learn More

For more information on these and other recovery services, visit the Recovery Research Institute at recoveryanswers.org. Remember, each step you take is a step toward healing.



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. RRI knows 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) for this column. A special thank you to John Kelly and his team for allowing us to amplify their work!

Please visit recoveryanswers.org to learn more.



A Changed Message: Embracing Stress for Growth

In partnership with mentalhealthliteracy.org

Have you ever said, “That stresses me out” or “That makes me so anxious”? We often mix up stress and anxiety, but it’s important to know that feeling stressed is a normal part of life. It helps us grow and learn new things.

What is Stress?

Stress happens when we face challenges, like a big test at school or juggling many activities. Our bodies react with signs like a fast-beating heart, feeling tense, or having trouble sleeping. This is our body’s way of preparing us to handle these challenges.

Understanding Stress Better

Think of stress like a signal. It’s like our body saying, “Hey, there’s something here we need to deal with!” When we face our challenges, even if they’re tough, we learn and get better at handling them for next time.

Two Ways to Look at Stress

- Path A might be thinking, “I’m so stressed out. I can’t handle this.”
- Path B is more like, “This is hard, but my body is getting ready to help me through it.”

Choosing Path B helps us in the long run. It’s not always easy, but with practice we get better at facing our challenges. Avoiding things that stress us out might feel good at first, but it’s better to face them. This way, we learn how to handle them better in the future.

Stress Can Be a Good Thing

Yes, stress can help us! It can motivate us to study for that big test or to handle the long lines at work. By taking a 3-step approach we can handle our stress proactively. What are the 3-steps?

1. Reframing our thoughts about stress as useful for skill-building
2. Using a calming strategy (if needed)

3. Making a plan to face the stressor (which may include enlisting support)

Tips for Managing Stress

- *Talk to someone:* Sharing your worries with friends, family, or a teacher can make a big difference.
- *Breathe deeply:* Try breathing in slowly, holding it for a few seconds, and then breathing out slowly. This can help calm you down.
- *Stay active:* Playing a sport, dancing, or just going for a walk can help reduce stress.
- *Mindfulness:* Take a moment to notice the world around you. What do you see, hear, or feel? This can help you focus on the present and worry less about stress.

Learn More and Practice

The more we understand stress, the better we can manage it. For more tips and information, visit mentalhealthliteracy.org. Remember, feeling stressed is normal, and you’re not alone. With each challenge, you’re getting stronger!

Understanding Stress

(and what to do about it)

MYTH

Stress is bad for mental health & should be avoided.

FACT





Most stress is actually good for us & avoiding it can be harmful!

MENTAL HEALTH




is the capacity to successfully adapt to life's challenges. It includes a wide range of thoughts & feelings.

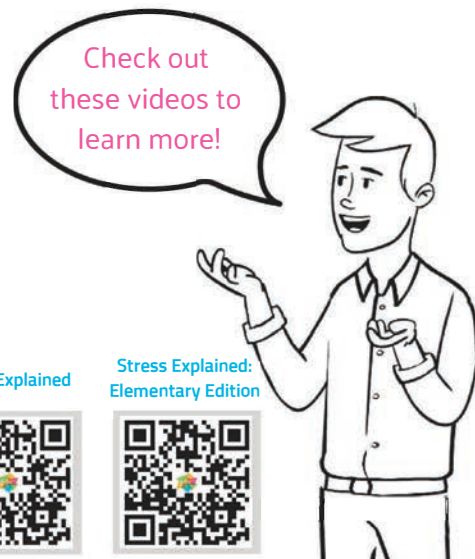
Good mental health isn't about avoiding or protecting ourselves from experiencing stress. We can strengthen our problem-solving skills & build resilience.

Not all stress is the same

-  **Positive:** Positive stress is short-term and it helps us adapt, learn & grow. Situations that cause positive stress (e.g., writing an exam, giving a presentation, calling someone you don't know) happen daily – often multiple times.
-  **Tolerable:** Tolerable stress includes situations where there is more serious impact (e.g., someone dying, parents' divorce). Tolerable stress can occur multiple times throughout our lives. As long as we have supportive relationships around, it is unlikely to have any lasting negative consequences.
-  **Toxic:** Toxic stress is prolonged and extreme (e.g., abuse, neglect, violence). Practical and professional supports may be necessary. Some people will go their whole lives without experiencing toxic stress.
-  **Remember:** Toxic stress is the only type of stress that's actually bad for us. Experiencing positive or tolerable stress can help us become stronger, healthier and more understanding human beings!

So what can we do?

-  **Change** how we think about stress. Reframe the stress response as our body preparing to tackle a challenge. Stop using the word anxiety when we mean stress response.
-  **Choose** a calming strategy to help face the stressor. Sometimes our stress response can feel intense (especially if our previous pattern has been to avoid it). Breathing or other strategies to lower our stress response may be helpful.
-  **Engage** in planning strategies to face the stressor (eg., create a study plan for an upcoming exam, reach out for support, etc.). When we face the stressor & solve the problem, the stress goes away. We are left with new skills for the future. We have successfully adapted!



Stress Explained



Stress Explained: Elementary Edition



Wellbriety

A Cultural Path to Healing and Recovery

by Kim Wilson

Wellbriety is a culturally-based program that provides healing opportunities geared toward indigenous people. While it is a 12-step initiative, Wellbriety strives to help people heal from addictions by tapping into cultural and spiritual practices that may have been lost to many Native people along the way.

According to White Bison, Wellbriety's parent organization, the 'Well' in Wellbriety pertains to the journey beyond sobriety, to a life of everyday wellness, healing, and community. Native culture and spirituality play a large part in achieving this state of recovery.

Angela's Story of Wellbriety

Angela was born into the Sicangu Sioux Tribe in Rosebud, South Dakota. She was removed from the reservation as a child, and adopted by a Mormon family. One of only three children of color in her Maine community, she was ridiculed in elementary and junior high school.

"As a kid, I didn't ask any questions," she says. Because of the teasing she endured "My culture became a negative thing for me."

Angela has been in recovery now for three and a half years. "In my recovery journey, I participated in a 12-step program, but I ended up feeling like something was missing in my life. I've always been missing the culture part of my life."

That changed when she discovered Wellbriety. The Native cultural rituals became integral to her recovery. "I enjoyed cleansing my spirit, opening up to the Creator, and welcoming Wellbriety into my life," she says.

The more she participated, the more clarity she achieved. "Getting into

that spirituality part of my culture, I thought, maybe this is what I've been missing. Maybe this is it."

Angela shares that it was a little unsettling when first walking through the gates of the Southern Maine's Women's Re-Entry Center due to her previous incarceration. However, upon visiting there she reminded herself that she was doing this for other women. She spoke about how it was "less about me and more about how my recovery journey can help other women."

"I pray to my Creator, I attend Wellbriety meetings," she shares with the women. "This is what works for me." She talks about seeing hope in the women's eyes and how it "makes it all worthwhile."

"In my recovery journey I feel like I'm home. Recovery is a way of life for me now. I feel like that piece that has been missing for so long, I've finally found it. And I know beyond a doubt that it's coming into Wellbriety that made it happen for me."

Melody's Story of Wellbriety

Melody had a very different experience growing up. Born in Nova Scotia, Melody was raised among her people, on the Eskasoni reservation in Cape Breton, the largest Mi'kmaq community in the world.

On her recovery journey, she "first heard about Wellbriety through an elder," she says. "I grew up speaking my language and knowing the culture, so I connected to this in a deep way. I was instantly hooked." In Wellbriety meetings, she says, "I feel comfortable. I can be myself. I don't have to hide that I am Native."

Melody describes the meetings as "a sacred circle, where everybody has a chance to smudge [*the ritual of cleaning the energy of a physical space, object or person*] to help get their



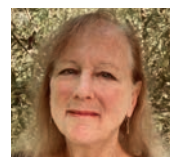
energy going." She also discusses the traditional use of a talking stick [*allows for multiple people to speak in turn*], to "...talk about nature, and the Great Spirit."

"The meetings are pretty powerful," she concludes. "You can feel the energy in the room."

As a facilitator, Melody leads approximately 19 meetings each month, as well as working with the incarcerated population. She has talked to rehabilitation facilities about Wellbriety as far away as New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. She proudly claims the title of "Firestarter," which is the term White Bison assigns to those leading meetings.

"My dream would be to have Wellbriety in every county in Maine because it's helped me so much. It's a sacred thing, especially growing up on a reservation, being with my elders, and going to powwows and knowing my culture. The more meetings we can start in Maine, the better," Melody says. "I'm a Wellbriety warrior."

For more information about Wellbriety, please visit whitebison.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.

The White Bison Vision

Mission

White Bison is a Native American-operated 501(c)3 nonprofit dedicated to creating and sustaining a grassroots Wellbriety Movement – providing culturally-based healing to the next seven generations of Indigenous People.

The Wellbriety Movement

To be sober and well. That's what White Bison wants for our community, that's why we're a proud facilitator of the Wellbriety Movement. We must find sobriety and recover from the harmful effects of drugs and alcohol.

To Go Beyond

The "Well" in Wellbriety is the inspiration to go on beyond sobriety and recovery, committing to a life of wellness and healing every day. Many use White Bison's healing resource products, attend its learning circles, and volunteer their services to help themselves and others achieve wellness.

A Resource to the Community

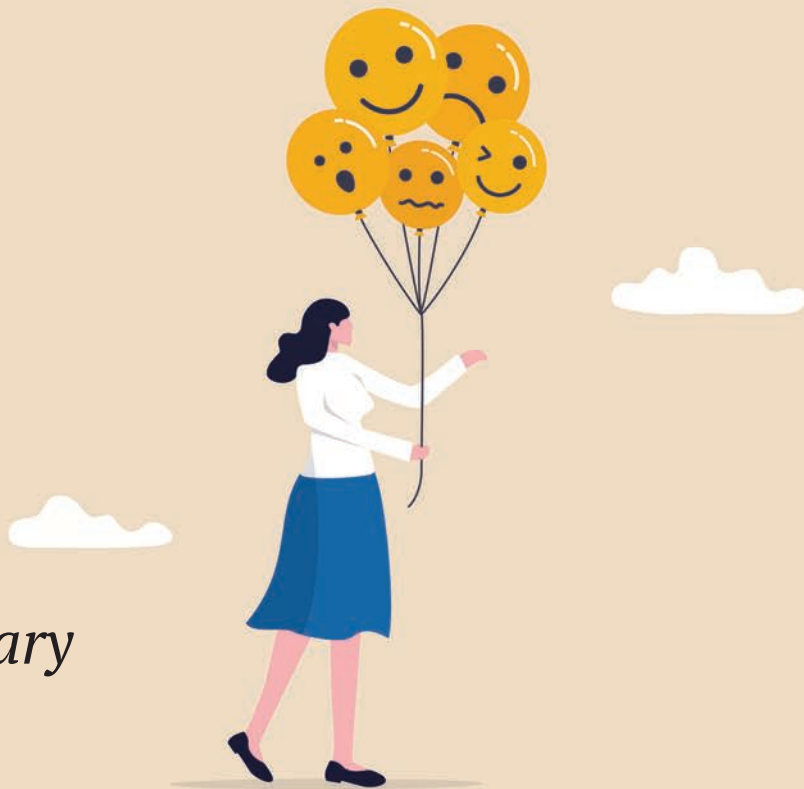
White Bison offers sobriety, recovery, addiction prevention, and wellness/Wellbriety learning resources to the Native American/Alaska Native community nationwide. Our resources are also available to non-Native people.

White Bison's Philosophy

- A set of Principles, Laws, and Values governs Mother Earth
- Leadership exists to serve the people first
- Leadership existence ensures Truth is given to the people
- Changes are the result of implementing Natural laws
- All Native people believe in a Supreme Being
- Elders and teachings are a guiding force to direct ourselves, our families, and our communities
- There is a natural order running the universe
- That our traditional ways were knowledgeable about the natural order
- When the community leads, the leaders will follow
- Alcohol and drugs are destroying us; we want to recover
- Change comes from within the individual, the family, and the community
- Within each person, family, and community is the innate knowledge for well-being
- The solution resides within each community
- Interconnectedness – it takes everyone to heal a community
- Healing will take place through the application of cultural and spiritual knowledge
- Alcohol, drugs, and domestic violence are all symptoms, not the cause. To "heal a community" it must deal with the cause
- The Circle and the Four Directions are the Teachers in the Four Laws of Change
- Change is from within
- For development to occur, it must be preceded by a vision
- A great learning must take place
- You must create a Healing Forest
- OUR CULTURE IS PREVENTION

Holiday Blues vs. SAD

Distinguishing temporary from seasonal sadness



In Partnership with Webshrink

What is Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)?

Seasonal Affective Disorder, or SAD, is a kind of sadness that happens at certain times of the year. Since SAD is often linked to the lack of light, some are affected during cloudy or rainy weather at any time of the year, or those that work in offices without windows or live in basement apartments. These lower light environments tend to also create a drop in your Vitamin D levels which can impact SAD.

Many people feel this way in winter when it's cold and there's less sunlight, but others feel sadness in the summer with the change of seasons.

How Can You Tell If Someone Has SAD?

If someone has SAD, during certain seasons they might:

- Feel really sad or tired.
- Want to sleep a lot or eat more, especially sweets and starchy food (in winter).
- Have trouble sleeping or not feel like eating much (in summer).
- Not want to play or hang out with friends.
- Have difficulty concentrating

Why Do Some People Get SAD?

• Doctors aren't totally sure why SAD happens. They think it might have to do with less sunlight, which can affect our body's clock and make us feel sad.

• Our body makes certain things like serotonin (a brain chemical that makes us feel happy) and melatonin (a chemical that helps us sleep) that can get mixed up because of the change in light.

How Is SAD Different from Just Feeling Sad Around the Holidays?

SAD is different from feeling a little sad or grumpy during holidays. SAD lasts longer and happens around the same time every year.

Who Usually Gets SAD?

SAD can happen to anyone, but it's more common if:

- You live far from the equator where there are big changes in weather during the year.
- You're a young adult or woman.
- Someone in your family also gets SAD in certain seasons.

How Do Doctors Know If Someone Has SAD?

Doctors can tell if someone has SAD by talking to them about their

feelings and when they feel sad. They have special questions to figure out if it's SAD or something else.

What Can You Do If You Have SAD?

- *Light Therapy:* Sitting near a special light that's like sunlight can help.
- *Talk to Someone:* Sometimes talking to a therapist can make you feel better.
- *Medicine:* In some cases, doctors might give medicine to help with the sadness.
- *Take Vitamin D:* Supplements may help for individuals experiencing SAD.

What Can You Do To Feel Better?

- *Spend Time Outside:* Even when it's cold or cloudy, being outside during daylight can help.
- *Stay Active:* Play sports, go for walks, or do fun activities.
- *Talk About Your Feelings:* It's okay to tell someone if you're feeling sad, especially during certain seasons.

Remember, if you or a friend feels sad when the weather changes, it's important to talk to someone or a doctor. Visit webshrink.com for more information.



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**



Understanding Brain Injuries, Mental Health, and Substance Use



by Sarah Gaffney

The connection between brain injuries, mental health (MH), and substance use can be a tricky puzzle. It's like trying to figure out a complicated maze for people, their families, and the experts helping them. But don't worry, the Brain Injury Association of America – Maine Chapter (BIAA-ME) is here to help. We have resources and services to support survivors, families, and professionals.

Brain Injuries and Substance Use: A Risky Mix

Brain injury survivors are at higher risk for substance use disorder (SUD), and SUD puts individuals at higher risk for a brain injury. Individuals with an acquired brain injury are at an increased risk for SUD due to many factors like higher rates of chronic pain, higher risk for pre- and post-injury substance misuse, injury-related behavioral changes, the over-prescribing of opioids, and barriers to treatment.

Brain injuries can happen from accidents, like car crashes, playing sports, falling, or even infections, tumors, and overdoses. Concussions are also classified as mild traumatic brain injuries, and repeated concussions can lead to long-term damage.

Here are some surprising facts.

- If someone was already using drugs or alcohol before a brain injury, they are ten times more likely to keep using them after the injury.
- More than a third of people seen in the hospital for a brain injury have a history of substance use.
- Studies have shown that a good number of people getting treatment for substance use, had a previous brain injury.
- People with a brain injury are eleven times more likely to accidentally overdose or get poisoned.

The Emotional Struggle: Brain Injuries and Mental Health

After a brain injury, things can get tough emotionally. Brain injury is commonly associated with changes in mood, personality, and behavior. Brain injury survivors also experience higher rates of depression, mania, obsessive-compulsive disorder, PTSD, and personality changes than the general population. Some even face thoughts of hurting themselves. A study from Denmark found that the risk of suicide triples in the first six months after a brain injury and stays elevated in the long term.

But don't lose hope; there's help!

BIAA-ME's NRF Program: Your Guide to Support

BIAA-ME has the NeuroResource Facilitation (NRF) program to help guide those on this complicated journey. Patty King, one of BIAA-ME's NeuroResource Facilitators, helps people who have both brain injury and substance use disorder. She's all about connecting people to resources and support. She helps individuals and professionals find new tools, look at situations in a different light, break down barriers, and help people forward in their journey.

Patty has witnessed many moments where the potential impact of brain injury on the individual's recovery patterns and attempts have been understood. BIAA-ME shares tips and tricks with professionals in recovery and harm-reduction fields, allowing them to incorporate those concepts into what they are already doing.

Working Together: BIAA-ME and TCMHS Collaboration

BIAA-ME is working closely with Tri-County Mental Health Services (TCMHS) as a pilot site to help even more. They are training TCMHS to understand brain injuries better, providing tools to check for brain injuries, and connecting them with NRF services. The goal is to find people getting help for substance use who might also have brain

injuries and make sure they get the right support.

This collaboration helps people understand brain injuries better and how common they are in people with substance use issues. “I have seen many people who, once they understand a brain injury may be part of their story, are relieved that it’s not ‘their fault’ and there is renewed hope for more solutions or support out there they haven’t yet tried,” Patty shared.

Getting the Right Help: Identifying Brain Injuries

Brain injury symptoms can look a lot like those found in substance use and mental health issues. It’s essential to tell doctors about any possible brain injuries to get the right treatment. Sometimes brain injuries affect skills that are important for recovery and counseling, like time management, planning, and staying organized.

Some brain injuries develop immediately, but others can take weeks or months to surface. This can be an added challenge, but help is possible even years after the injury.

Reach Out for Support and Hope

If you think you might have had a brain injury, see a doctor as soon as possible. BIAA-ME’s resource team is here to help you navigate life after a brain injury. We offer information, resources, and one-on-one support through NeuroResource Facilitation, and it’s all FREE.

Remember, you’re not alone in this journey. BIAA-ME’s Maine Brain Injury Information Center at 800-444-6443 for help finding brain injury resources. Together, we can light the path to recovery and hope.

Acknowledgment

We want to thank the Administration for Community Living and the Office of Aging and Disability Services for supporting this pilot project.

References: <https://bit.ly/bnia-help>

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/>



SCAN ME

Find a safe, certified house NOW!

Gaining Peace of Mind from My Financial Past

by Karen F

I bought a recommended financial book by a famous female author to try to understand money and why I had such a hard time making a viable living.

The introductory assignment made me want to slam the book shut. The honesty required was more harrowing than my painful, post-divorce therapy sessions. This dreaded exercise simply stated: “Write your family history around money.”

I hadn’t forgotten it, but I did not want to look at it. I remembered the bankruptcy, our house on the auction block, and the utilities being shut off during my father’s downward spiral into alcoholism. I recalled my mother’s exhaustion from raising three kids, working both full-time and often part-time simply to keep a roof over our heads. Years later, even with Dad’s many years of sobriety, my parents lost their second small business and their home, as their unpaid taxes built up penalties of \$450,000.

I wrote it all down. The panic I had as a kid when the sheriff’s department came to our house repeatedly looking for my dad, with a summons for his arrest for overdue bills. I felt my mother’s anxiety and fear as we teetered on the brink of homelessness.

I also knew it was the main reason why I had stayed in a lonely marriage and 25 years of rejection. We had two children, he made a good living, and somehow despite many attempts, I could never make that happen for myself.



So now, I am sitting in a room in a 12-step recovery program listening to stories like mine. As people untangle the wreckage of their financial past to move toward, they often achieve a much brighter future.

Debtor’s Anonymous is more than just about money. It is a journey into the fears, resentments, and beliefs we carry in our psyches. While the steps are similar, the verbiage varies a bit to address this particular issue. We admit our powerlessness, call on a Higher Power, do our personal inventories, and the subsequent steps.

We look at the stories we tell ourselves and the beliefs that get revealed. Some people spend their money the minute they get it in their hands, terrified to save it. Others hoard it and live a threadbare existence. Some people are afraid to ask for what they are owed, or they ignore the unpaid tax bills. The lack of self-esteem, the desire to be rescued, the magical thinking that money will somehow

appear – any or all of these can be at play.

Some come with huge debt, like my Dad. With the tools and support of the program, they can learn helpful skills to reverse that. Some, like me, have been spending down a settlement, or have lost it all and don’t know how to change or fix it. Others have a serious fear of success and thus have undervalued and underpriced their services. The common denominator is that we are terrified to look at the numbers and also recognize our compulsive behaviors around money.

There are as many reasons as there are solutions. There is also an emphasis on self-care as we try these new practices of doing our numbers, budgeting, getting a sponsor, working the steps, and asking for help. As we practice new habits and shift our beliefs, new stories emerge; success stories as we take new actions that bring clarity, solvency, and peace of mind.

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

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The Power of Asking

Strategies for Creating a Healthy Relationship

by **Elaine Shamos
and Glenn Simpson**

Co-dependent relationships are often misrepresented as “sick” or “unhealthy.” This can be very confusing for couples who are working on their co-dependency issues in therapy or as agreed upon goals with each other. The reality is that all relationships are codependent on some level because we are humans with needs. The trick is to find balance and not be totally dependent on any one person for our happiness — which we all know is an inside job.

People sometimes feel unable to make requests of their partners, believing their requests may be “too much.” Perhaps they came to believe it wasn’t safe to ask, or they are trying to cope with poor self-esteem and chronic anxiety. The key to expressing one’s needs is to come to an agreement as a couple on how to do this successfully. This takes time and sometimes requires a therapist to help with setting boundaries

and learning communication skills. Experimenting with asking for what one needs and how each partner can respond is a healthy exercise that can bring the couple much closer together. Continuing to review how these requests are working, is an opportunity to grow as a couple.

Healthy requests may look like this:

- Asking for clarity about commitment to the relationship.
- Wanting to schedule time together.
- Setting up daily or weekly “check-ins” to catch up and feel reconnection.
- Requesting your partner let you know when they are leaving the house and an estimated return time as an act of kindness and respect.

Some strategies for expressing one’s needs:

- Explore the way you make requests. Does it include shaming or blaming? Always use “I” statements.
- Ask yourself if you are “hinting” at what you need or expecting your partner to “read your mind.”

- Set healthy boundaries to not allow behavior that doesn’t work for you.
- Listen to each other’s needs without interruption and repeat back what they told you for clarification and questions.

The nature of all relationships includes a level of codependency. We expect to have some of our needs met by the other, along with meeting some of our partner’s needs. When the couple trusts each other, making requests becomes easier. If you are having trouble with making or receiving requests, it is worth exploring your own barriers and consider therapy. The bottom line is you are never wrong for asking.



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, CADAC, has a private practice specializing in substance use disorder, and couples therapy. They are working together on a book for couples in recovery.



MaryBeth Murphy Leads Maine's SHE RECOVERS Sharing Circle

MaryBeth Murphy is a woman in long-term recovery from alcohol and codependency. Her recovery began after sustaining an ankle fracture that landed her in a cast. The pause in her mobility led her to take a hard look at her life and where it was headed.

Two and a half years into her recovery, she was looking for more connection and found SHE RECOVERS online. She booked a retreat with them at Kripalu, where she met co-founders Dawn Nickel and Taryn Strong, as well as Payton Kennedy, their event planner. The connection was immediate.

SHE RECOVERS believes that we are all recovering from something and honors all pathways to recovery while criticizing none. These beliefs were in alignment with MaryBeth, so she became a SHE RECOVERS Coach and a SHE RECOVERS Trauma-Informed Yoga Teacher.

MaryBeth attributes her continuous long-term recovery to the relationships she has formed through the community and now leads the Maine Sharing Circle in York.

Find more information online at marybethmurphy.net/sherecovers-sharing-circle.com or email MaryBeth directly - Mbrncoach@gmail.com.

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Maine CDC



Recovery Allies

Spiritual Health in Recovery: A Unique Path for Each Individual

When people are recovering from addiction, spiritual health can be important. The book *Recovery Allies*, written by Alison Webb, dives into how different people view and use spiritual health during their recovery journey.

One of the main points in the book is that everyone experiences spirituality in their own way.

For some people, spiritual practices and beliefs are a big part of their recovery process. But for others, spirituality doesn't play a major role.

The book notes that there is surprisingly little research on why spirituality is important for some people in their recovery and not for others.

In *Recovery Allies*, there are many personal stories that show how spirituality can positively impact the recovery experience. For instance, a woman named Sarah talks about how spirituality has deeply influenced her life. She describes finding a sense of wonder and peace in everyday moments,

even in simple tasks like washing dishes or mopping the floor.

Sarah's story illustrates how embracing spirituality can help people find contentment and joy in the small, everyday parts of life.

The book also talks about the healing power of love and forming connections with others throughout recovery.

It discusses how individuals who have gone through trauma or lost relationships due to their addiction can find comfort and hope in spiritual connections.

Alison explains that reaching out for love, building connections with others, and feeling a part of the larger universe can help people better understand their struggles with addiction. It can also help repair damaged relationships, forgive oneself and others, and move forward.

Recovery Allies gives readers a detailed and interesting look at how spiritual health is part of the recovery process. It shows us that for some people, spirituality is a crucial and personal aspect of their healing journey, while for others, it might not be as important.

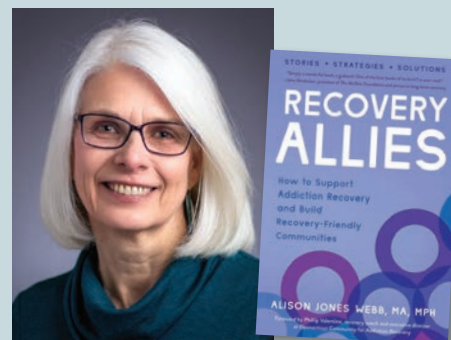
**Find out more about
Alison Jones Webb and
her book *Recovery Allies***

LinkedIn

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/alisonjoneswebb/>

Website

<https://www.alisonjoneswebb.com/recovery-allies/>



Stories Restoring Hope

Bethany Johnson *Compassion in Action*

by Jamie Lovley

Bethany Johnson welcomes everyone into the Coastal Recovery Community Center (CRCC) with a warm smile and a safe space for individuals seeking help, those in recovery, and affected others. She works as the Office Manager of CRCC in Rockland, Maine — the town she grew up in, experienced 17 years of addiction in, and where she now devotes her life to helping others.

Bethany has experienced and overcome significant challenges since her youth. In her twenties, a car accident left her learning how to walk again, all while caring for her infant daughter. She was prescribed benzodiazepines and opiates to manage pain and complex post-traumatic stress disorder. As her tolerance to the medication grew, lies became the way to secure more of the medication she was dependent on.

Years later, when her husband passed away, Bethany fell apart. She placed her precious belongings in storage and moved out of state to seek help. When she defaulted on the storage fee and lost all of the items inside, Bethany felt that she had truly lost everything to the disease of addiction.

After detox in a Psychiatric Addiction Recovery Center (PARC), Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT), and going through an Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP), Bethany found the resources she needed to stay sober. The continuous support of her

daughter and the memory of all she lost became her primary motivation to stay sober. Today, being a support to others, like others once did for her, is her driving force.

Eight years into her sobriety Bethany was recruited by CRCC, a decision that changed her life. As Office Manager, Bethany keeps a work phone that consistently rings with people seeking recovery resources and next steps. When someone makes that brave first call, she makes sure they get connected to the resources they need and have an invitation to the recovery center.

The center is also a safe space for youth in the community seeking a substance-free place to hangout or get community service hours, and Bethany is someone they trust. She hopes to travel to other recovery centers and share tools to grow their reach and impact. As she describes, “Before I started at CRCC, I was just existing in sobriety, not living in sobriety.”

When she’s not directing people toward the next steps, running recovery center events, or doing jail outreach, Bethany is also a recovery coach to over a dozen community members. Individuals who once bought drugs from Bethany now seek her help for recovery coaching. The metal bracelets Bethany gives to people seeking help are inscribed on the inside with three simple words, “Keep ****ing Going.”



If you have the pleasure of meeting Bethany in person, you will see firsthand the passion and commitment she has for the individuals she serves. While handing a community member a folder full of applications for local resources, she shares, “I want everyone to know this: We do recover and we are never alone. There is always someone in the recovery community here for you.”



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.

Maine Voices of Recovery is a series written by Jamie Lovley and created by Penobscot Bay Community Health Partnerships with the help of the community. The goal of the series is to share the hope of recovery, dispel misunderstanding about substance use disorder in the state of Maine, and record stories of how long-term recovery works.

From Darkness to Light

Personal Stories of Recovery Coaches in Maine

by Denise Black

Our stories can offer a reflection of the strength and determination of those who have overcome the grip of addiction and entered a life of recovery. Those same stories may offer inspiration, support, and encouragement to those who are still struggling.

As the recovery movement continues to gain momentum locally and nationally, our stories are being told to a variety of audiences. This helps to advance the field of recovery in many ways.

In serving others as recovery coaches, we act as a bridge to resources and provide mentoring, resource navigation, and general support to individuals as they move through their recovery journey. And perhaps most importantly, we offer support, hope, and optimism that recovery is possible.

As recovery coaches, our lived experiences and stories play a role in why and how we help others.

Our personal stories and experiences with substance use disorder, either personally or as an affected other, have shaped who we are and how we have moved from darkness to light. This month will highlight the stories of two recovery coaches.

Bill

The initial reason I became a recovery coach was I wanted a way to serve my community after leaving EMS due to a long-term injury. I was looking for a new identity. While taking the Recovery Coach Academy, it became clear that I had the opportunity to impact other's lives. I had the chance to take what I'd always thought of as a very dark time in my life and use it for good. I could take my experiences and use them to show someone else that they could do it too. I truly love what I do, probably more so than just about any "job" I've had before. Watching someone climb out of the depths of substance use and begin to live again is beyond explanation. The rebirth, the growth, the reconnections with family they thought they'd lost, second to none. THIS is why I do what I do.

From Kristen

Throughout my recovery journey, I have faced the stigma, shame, and bias that continues to exist in our society for people living with substance use disorder. The feelings of being alone and disconnected. I was also fortunate enough to experience genuine empathy and compassion; people who held hope for me when I couldn't find it for myself. Everyone should be offered the opportunity to be seen, valued, and listened to.

As a peer recovery coach, I believe in the power of connection. Each person I connect with is unique; their life story is still being written. We create a safe space together, building a foundation of trust and understanding. Through active listening and motivational interviewing, I gain insight into their self-identified strengths and goals. As they navigate their chosen paths, I encourage self-empowerment while offering motivation and resources. It's my privilege to meet people where they're at on their recovery journey and a true honor to walk beside them.

.....
Denise Black serves as the Co-Director of the Maine Alliance for Recovery Coaching with Healthy Acadia.
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Recovery Coaches

Empowering the Recovery Journey with Empathy

by Josh Warren

Early in the journey of recovery everything can feel distant, unknown, and daunting. Hope can seem elusive when despair and darkness have become all too familiar. The person staring back from the mirror may appear as a stranger, and it may feel like no one truly comprehends the pain that's deeply rooted within. As a recovery coach, I've witnessed firsthand the profound and transformative power of empathy.

Empathy as the Universal Language of Connection

Empathy is the unspoken language that binds us together. It is the reassuring silence met with understanding, where the emotions in someone's eyes convey more than their words ever could. It is the knowing nod of recognition that silently says, "I've been there too," and the warm embrace that whispers, "You are not alone."

The Role of Empathy in Recovery Coaching

Recovery coaching is grounded

in the belief that lived experience creates an opportunity for mutual understanding and connection. When working with individuals in recovery, it's crucial to build an empathetic connection patiently. Before delving into problem-solving and planning, they need to know that their feelings are understood and validated.

Empowering people in recovery to develop autonomy and self-advocacy is essential for fostering their sense of control. Trust often hinges on vulnerability, and as a recovery coach and peer, our role is to understand without judgment and to empower without dictating.

This approach builds a bridge of trust, allowing individuals seeking recovery to open up about their fears, doubts, and dreams. Together, we create personalized strategies for overcoming obstacles, emphasizing that recovery is a unique and evolving journey for each person.

Empathy as a Catalyst for Change

Empathy is not merely a comforting

presence; it is a catalyst for change. Through recovery coaching, we can provide support throughout the entire treatment process, from detox to community reintegration by recognizing and appreciating the unique challenges at each step.

Recovery coaching encourages a holistic approach to healing, navigating various transitional stages of recovery. A recovery coach offers compassionate motivation and support without judgment, exploring multiple pathways, lifestyle changes, and a multitude of new resources.

As a recovery coach, I strive to continuously approach each day with compassionate curiosity and empathy for understanding others, just as those who sought to understand me when I first asked for help.

.....
Josh Warren is the Statewide Recovery Coach Coordinator for the Maine Recovery Hub at the Portland Recovery Community Center.
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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

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

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

Pir2Peer Recovery Community Center

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FREE RECOVERY PROGRAMS

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

MUTUAL AID PROGRAMS

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

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

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

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

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

COSA is a 12-step recovery program for those whose lives have been affected by compulsive sexual behavior. 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

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

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

Food Addicts 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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SMART Recovery is an abstinence-oriented 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

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

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

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

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

FIND RECOVERY ONLINE

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

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

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

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

Statewide Resources

CRISIS HOTLINES

Maine Crisis Hotline

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

National Human Trafficking Resource Center/Polaris Project

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

Safe Voices (domestic violence)

800-559-2927

Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault

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

Maine Access Points

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

POISON CENTER

Maine Medical Center

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

HOTLINES

Intentional Warm Line

50 Moody St Saco
866-771-9276
Confidential telephone support services for non-crisis situations.

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
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