

Journey

making recovery from addiction visible

April / May 2024 • Issue 32

**Edwin
McCain**
A Melody
of Recovery

**Couples in
Recovery**

**Removing
Stigma**
from the
Employment
Equation

Recovery Support & Information



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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



The human body is complex and complicated.

So complex and complicated that there are millions of books available to “help” us be our best human selves; Everything from personal development and motivation to health and wellness, relationships, finance, and spirituality. “Shelf-

help” is probably one of the largest sections in the bookstore due to the expansiveness of all the categories we could delve into — especially for the curious mind.

Embracing ourselves fully means accepting the journey of discovery, learning bit by bit what makes us thrive. We didn’t come into the world with user manuals. Learning how to take care of ourselves is a daily acceptance and practice of finding things that work in the season that we’re in.

In this issue of *Journey*, we explore one area of self-help: our physical well-being. If we are feeling good physically, we are more likely to spread positivity, make

a difference in our communities, and support the way we show up in the world.

In Edwin McCain’s personal recovery story, he talks about being properly treated for ADHD as playing a pivotal role in his sobriety. I also know from talking to him that he’s spent many days walking in our Maine woods with a good friend — and that time in nature supports physical well-being and feeds the soul like nothing else.

Allison Stowell, dietician for the Hannaford Guiding Stars program, writes about the many ways food takes care of our bodies and minds in her article, “8 Big Ways to Nourish And Nurture Your Body Through Food.”

In the article “Healthy Bonds,” a synopsis taken from the book “The Magic of Connection” by Stephen Andrew, we share some undeniable links between social connections and health.

Thankfully, we live in a world where information and experiences can be widely shared, allowing us to tap into lessons from others as possibilities to explore our own personal complex and complicated human body.

Grateful, *Carolyn*



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ry saves lives

A Melody of Recovery: Edwin McCain's Sober Journey

Sober since 2007, he says this is his 'favorite era'

by Amy Paradysz

How often do you go to a concert where the rock star advocates for sobriety?

Edwin McCain, the singer-songwriter behind '90s hits "I'll Be" and "I Could Not Ask for More," is playing Maine Savings Amphitheater in Bangor with Hootie & The Blowfish and Collective Soul on June 14.

"Depending on how the show goes, I'll mention something about going to rehab or being sober," Edwin says. "I joke around with it on stage a bit because I'm trying to chip away at the stigma."

He remembers when he, too, had misconceptions about addiction — when he thought he couldn't be an alcoholic because he could perform hundreds of shows every year, even if he got "blotto" after every single show. "I remember one time I made that argument with my wife, saying, 'Honey, I'm not an alcoholic. I have a tomato garden.' I used to think alcoholics were always incapacitated. Now I understand that people with substance use disorder populate every corner of the world."

He was doing about 25 shows a month — plus early morning radio interviews, events at record shops, meet-and-greets with fans, and sleeping little more than three hours a night.

"I didn't have any sense of healthy boundaries," Edwin says. "All I was doing was working and getting wasted in every town because there were people in every town who had waited for their big night out and I

didn't want to disappoint them. So I strung together a decade of big nights out. And the way I maintained that was with chemical 'help.'"

He had just one rule: that he wouldn't drink or use cocaine before shows.

Eventually, he didn't have that rule anymore, either.

With a national tour at stake and people's livelihoods depending on him "being out there earning," Edwin says he kept "limping along."

"I had friends who were older than me and were in famous bands," he says. "And I started to see that things went one of two ways: they got sober or they got dead. I could see that I was riding the same rails they were. I had some guys I really looked up to who got sober before me, and I knew it was something that I was eventually going to need to do."

Then, in 2005, Edwin found his motivation.

"We adopted our first son, and then the law of irony kicked in and my wife got pregnant about an hour after we adopted," Edwin quips.

After years of being responsible for little more than his career, he wanted to be a capable and present father.

He says, "I tried to modulate my intake, and I discovered that one of two things would happen: I would go out and have a few beers and it would be no problem. Or it would set off a chain reaction that would go on for days. And I couldn't legitimately tell you which would happen if I drank.



Alternative rock singer-songwriter Edwin McCain, 54, says he went to rehab in 2007 and "never looked back."

And that was the gong going off where I knew I had a serious issue."

He checked into Talbot Recovery Center in Atlanta, where he stayed 120 days — "extra innings," as he says — long enough to not only grasp sobriety but to also know what it feels like to slow down, be "mindful," and set reasonable limits.

"What I like most about life in sobriety is being dependable," Edwin says. "I'm somebody that people can count on, any time of the day or night. I'm capable and present for my family, friends, and community."

None of his three kids remember a time when he wasn't sober.

At first, touring was tricky because every show was a "trigger" for using. Being in a different city practically every night, people didn't always know or remember he was in recovery. Sometimes he'd just find drugs in a pocket.

“That was challenging until I established with everyone that I had made a change in my life,” he says. “I’ve been playing music on the road for 35 years, and this is by far my favorite era. The way my tours work now, I’m not being pulled in all those directions. I say no to lots of stuff — which I used to have trouble doing — and I have a schedule that’s manageable. My show times are earlier, too.”

Another secret to his ongoing sobriety was getting diagnosed with ADHD and being treated for that properly rather than trying to self-medicate.

“Had I not gotten on ADHD medication, I would have relapsed,” Edwin says. “I was under siege with thoughts of using and drinking. Every time my brain changed gears, it was an opening for a thought about using or drinking. And it was misery. I told my wife, ‘I’d rather die drunk than listen to my brain screaming at me all day long.’”

Thankfully, those weren’t the only options.

“I’ve been on medication since I got out of treatment,” he says. “I resisted it, and when I first took it, I realized, ‘Oh, this is what normal people feel like.’ I’ve been on the same dose for 13 years now and it’s been life-changing.”

He also had to change the way he reacts to conflict.

“I used to be super reactive,” he says. “When I first got out of rehab, I was still running in circles chasing my tail, and my sponsor Doug would say, ‘Edwin, the hardest thing in the world to do is nothing.’”

From that advice, Edwin implemented a four-day rule.

He says, “If a complicated situation comes up or everybody is freaking out, I quietly tell everyone involved, ‘Give me a couple days to think about this, and I’ll give you the best

and most reasonable answer I can. I respect you too much to just fire off the hip.”

Once Edwin started doing this, he was amazed by how often the situation handles itself within a day or two. “Not every situation requires input from me,” he says. That realization has been a gift of recovery.

Another gift is giving back and being a role model.

“I want to be in service and available when people reach out,” he says. “Family members call me thinking that I have a magical sequence of words to convince their loved one to go to treatment. But I have to say, ‘I wish I could say hocus pocus and they’d say okay, but it could be years.’”

What makes the difference isn’t any magical words but the person being ready to make the change, like when Edwin decided he wanted to be what he calls a “living example.”

He says, “I work with a federal judge in Charleston who does a bridge program that intervenes on behalf of people with substance use disorder. One of the things I say to the drug court, and to anyone in this conundrum, is that recovery gives you an opportunity to pick what kind of example you’re going to be. You’re going to be some kind of example: Are you going to be a living example or a dead example? It sounds drastic, but it’s 100% true. When people die from this disease, people around them change. When people make the journey to recovery and become a good example, people change, too. It happens both ways. But I want to be a living example.”



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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Removing Stigma From the Employment Equation

Washington County's Recovery-Friendly Network

by Amy Paradysz

In a surprising turn, economists in Washington County, Maine, found that nearly 3,000 working-age people were missing from local employment figures. The question was, who were these people, and where were they?

A Deep Dive into the Data

“We did some work to break down overdose data by age and gender, and had major concerns for middle-aged males,” says Abby Frutchey, the Substance Use Response Coordinator for Community Caring Collaborative (CCC). “From that, we developed a theory that if we supported people with substance use disorder with training, education, and access to workforce opportunities, we’d see more people enter the workforce. The CCC has been working closely with Sunrise County Economic Council on a variety of projects to address complex needs, including the impacts of substance use disorder.”

The latest of those initiatives is the Washington County Recovery Friendly Workplace Network, which has three major goals:

1. Helping people in recovery find satisfying jobs
2. Helping employers hire and maintain workers
3. Strengthening communities by supporting workplaces that encourage wellness and recovery

Collaborative Efforts for a Comprehensive Solution

The team that created the network in 2023 included representatives from CCC, Maine Department of Labor, R.H. Foster Energy, Downeast Federal Credit Union, Sunrise Opportunities, Healthy Acadia, and Sunrise County Economic Council (SCEC). Washington County is sometimes called “Sunrise County” because it is where the sun first rises on the 48 contiguous states.

“Everything done well is done through collaboration, and the

Network is backed by a strong team of partners committed to supporting and sustaining network strategies and members,” says Denise Cilley, the Associate Director for SCEC. “As we move through our pilot year and beyond, we will learn and grow together — partners and network members alike.”

All members of the team have been impacted by substance use disorder — a family member, friend, or other loved one — or openly identify as people in recovery. In addition, the team engaged community stakeholders — including employers of all sectors and sizes, workforce specialists, and people with a history of substance use or incarceration.

“We asked what the program should look like, what they’re already doing and what’s missing,” Abby says. “What we found is that many employers were already recovery friendly in some way; they were already doing the work, but they were



Photo by Kelly Hinkle, *The Downeast Cowboy*

doing it in an isolated way. They were navigating the challenges and the successes, but they might not have known about all the resources.”

Designing the Network

In co-leading the design of the Network, SCEC and CCC discovered that Washington County employers, in large part, already support their employees and are committed to workplace wellness. In listening to employers and job-seekers, it became clear that the region’s employers need and want support and connection.

“The Network is designed to support member businesses of all sizes and structures,” says Denise, who has 20 years of experience in industry and business development in Washington County. “We realize that the majority of business owners we work with wear many hats, and they have been experiencing the same workforce challenges with limited capacity and resource access in rural settings.

Our goal is to support them by using strategies developed together with our community members during the planning of our network. We want to be an ever-strengthening web of resources and support for our network members.”

In this pilot year, Network strategies and resources include:

- Job search peer support workstations at the Peer Recovery Centers in Machias and Calais
- Partnership with Aroostook Mental Health Center to offer employers an Employee Assistance Program for clinical treatment
- Access to training and courses through Washington County Community College, with opportunities to earn credits or badges on topics such as supporting pathways to employment for justice-involved community members
- Access to Healthy Acadia’s expertise in recovery coaching and youth substance use prevention
- Networking opportunities for a

growing community of employers committed to being recovery-friendly

Empowering Employers and Job Seekers

As the number of employers in the Network grows to include all sizes and sectors, job seekers with recovery-related needs or a criminal justice history will find the list of recovery-friendly employers helpful in knowing where their past won’t be an obstacle to their future.

SCEC employee Dodie Emerson, who is the Business Advisor for the Network, says she got a call from a vocational rehabilitation specialist whose client was in pre-release and looking for employment upon his release. “I gave him the names of a half dozen employers,” Dodie says, “and I foresee more of that happening as time goes on.”

Both Dodie and Abby have extensive experience working with Mainers who have a history of justice



involvement and, often, substance use. And their work is informed by community feedback.

“Our stakeholders do surveys, and applicants say that the number one reason that they didn’t get hired was because of their criminal record,” Abby says. “But when we asked employers, they said the number one reason they didn’t hire the candidate was lack of qualifications.”

Where is the disconnect?

“We found that many people either didn’t even try to get the job, or, if they tried to get the job and didn’t get it, they *assumed* it was because of their criminal record,” Abby says. “It’s an internalized stigma.”

Imagine those same job-seekers equipped with a list of local businesses that have pledged to not overlook candidates solely on the basis of their criminal record.

“Businesses have many things they’re protecting: their financials, their customers, and their staff,” Abby says. “We want businesses to recognize that this isn’t just a social mission: it’s a good thing for business because keeping staff saves money, reduces risk, and contributes to the well-being of the economy in Washington County. We’re talking about a continuum of wellness.”

Abby continued, “Businesses are invested in their workforce around safety — physical safety, of course, but through the pandemic, we saw an increased focus on psychological safety and mental health. When we talk about recovery being equivalent to and part of mental healthcare, we see businesses being more understanding, less fearful, and more engaged. The fear comes from stigma, even if it’s unintentional or unrecognized.”

Small businesses that don’t have a Human Resources department or easy access to legal support are anticipated to lean on the Network as they create company policies about substance use disorder and recovery.

Abby met with one manager who said that being “recovery-friendly” wasn’t an issue in her workplace — but she did have an employee ask and receive a week off to help a family member access substance use disorder treatment. Supporting existing workers, Abby pointed out, is recovery-friendly.

“For example,” Abby says, “I told you I’m a person in recovery and I value having a workplace that has celebrations that aren’t about alcohol. When a workplace has events that are chem-free, they are recovery friendly, whether they realize it or not. You’re supporting

the needs of all of your staff, including those who may have a history of alcohol use.”

Looking Ahead

During this first year of the pilot program, CCC and SCEC hope to grow the Network to 25 businesses. Early adopters range from small local businesses such as seafood company A.C. Inc. to large businesses such as energy company R.H. Foster. The hope is to incorporate all segments of the workforce, including the area’s large fishing and lobstering industry.

“We want those employers — those captains — to know how to deal with a medical emergency or how to access treatment for their workers when they may be out on the boat until 7 p.m.,” Abby says.

While it’s important to know what to do in a crisis, being “recovery-friendly” is about “supporting the existing workforce and those who are qualified and eligible for hire,” Abby says. “That may be someone who is stable in their recovery but who is having trouble getting hired because of reputation or a criminal record. Or they may be engaged in a treatment program or a court-ordered program. Or this may be their first job in recovery. Sometimes fear says, ‘I’m hiring someone who is high-risk and has severe or active substance use.’ No, we wouldn’t suggest that an employer hire someone who isn’t a good fit for the job; we’re saying, don’t *overlook* someone who is qualified because of their history.”

Denise says she’s proud that her employer, SCEC, joined the Network. “To me, a commitment to being a recovery-friendly workplace sends a clear message that we believe in second chances and providing a safe and supportive environment for colleagues, program partners, and community members,” she says.

During the 14 years that Abby worked as a clinical treatment coordinator, primarily with justice-involved Mainers, she saw many of

her clients struggle to find living-wage jobs. Working as a social worker at CCC on initiatives to solve complex community issues such as unemployment has been an opportunity for her to try to remove the underlying barriers.

“My husband and I are both in recovery,” Abby says. “And we’ve experienced the great benefits that healthy employment atmospheres can have in supporting recovery journeys and career pathways for those who have some additional barriers because of substance abuse disorder or justice involvement.”

The Network comes out of a grassroots commitment to investment in building skills, resource connections, and relationships that support and improve recovery, well-being, and economic outcomes in Washington County and Passamaquoddy communities.

“This is the beauty of economic development partners sitting at the table with public health experts and social workers and talking about how they see these numbers,” Abby says. “That really got this work going. I’m so excited to be supporting the development of programs and strategies to reduce the barriers that many of our community members are facing.”

For more information on the Washington County Recovery Friendly Workplace Network, please visit <https://recoveryfriendlydowneast.org>.

Recovery-Ready Workplace Resource Hub is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor (dol.gov/agencies/eta/RRW-hub), and is a free resource.



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

Maine’s Recovery-Friendly Workplace Initiative

The Maine Recovery-Friendly Workplace (ME-RFW) initiative, led by Pinetree Institute in collaboration with the Portland Recovery Community Center, is gaining momentum statewide. This program aims to assist businesses in fostering a culture of inclusivity and support for individuals affected by substance use disorder.

Leading the charge are businesses like Kennebunk Savings Bank and York County Community College, which are actively transforming their workplace environments to prioritize employee well-being and offer support to those impacted by substance use.

The vision of the initiative is for Maine’s businesses to spearhead the movement to champion recovery from substance use disorder as a strength. By intentionally working with people in recovery and their families, ME-RFW businesses aim to create healthy and safe environments where collaboration among employers, employees, and communities can eliminate barriers and promote positive change.

The initiative focuses on key objectives such as reducing stigma, providing support services, and offering training to create healthier, safer work environments. Ultimately, participating businesses will contribute to fostering a workplace culture where recovery is embraced as a strength rather than a stigma.

For more information and to get involved, please visit www.rfwmaine.org or contact info@rfwmaine.org.

Finding Direction

Navigating Recovery Through Nature's Compass



by Peter Wohl

There have been numerous occasions while I was out in the woods that I felt confused or uncertain about where I was, but these were brief and quickly resolved. One time, however, many years ago, I became completely disoriented. I had no idea how to get back to the road, and my initial feelings of confusion quickly turned into panic.

In a way, I felt that same sense of disorientation when I began my life in recovery. I felt confused and completely lost. While I might have appeared okay, I was an empty shell, wandering, unable to find a path in life. Until then, almost all my associations and relationships had involved drugs and alcohol.

When I stopped using, they were suddenly gone. The loss of those (incredibly unhealthy) social relationships left a large hole in my life, but that paled in comparison to the black hole at the center of my being.

I was lost to myself. I had no idea who I was, what I wanted, or where I was going in life. Furthermore, I was completely detached from my emotions — my heart was closed. I no longer had a network of connections to give me direction and stability. I was as lost in my life as I had been on that remote mountainside in Vermont.

When our lives are genuinely full, when we have a clear sense of purpose and direction, and when we know who we are, it is usually because we have numerous meaningful connections that form a rich matrix at each of the six levels of our being. Those levels are physical, psychological/emotional, relational, communal, eco-spiritual, and spiritual.

Humans are social beings who have relied on relationships with one another, our natural surroundings, and even with the great Universe itself. These relationships have helped us survive as a species. As individuals, they help us maintain our sense of identity and give our lives meaning and fulfillment.

When we come into recovery, we also often lack a basic sense of trust and safety. We have no idea what a healthy relationship (one that isn't indifferent, exploitive, or abusive) looks like. We can't experience many of the emotions that give life its richness. The temptation to leave this strange and fearsome place by running back to the well-worn paths of our former life is enormous.

This is where eco-spirituality can be invaluable. First and foremost, it offers us safe and consistent connections. Once we have learned to make those connections, the natural world is always there for us, regardless of what we may have done in the past.

Connection with the natural world can help reduce anxiety and lift depression. It can lead us to the direct experience of "something greater than ourselves," a genuine spiritual relationship that does not require allegiance to a specific faith or belief.

Eco-spiritual connections can greatly amplify our work in any treatment or recovery program, but making that deep connection is more than just going for a walk in the woods.

Developing transformative connections requires opportunities for learning and practice, and a skilled teacher can help us shed our rigid, human-centered way of relating to the world, and integrate nature into our overall recovery process. Like all recovery pathways, the eco-spiritual path requires patience, persistence, regular practice, and knowledgeable guidance. When we develop these connections, the possibilities for change and growth in our lives are limitless. It can bring us to a new richness of life and allow us to fulfill our potential as human beings.



Peter Wohl is the creator of *Path 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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Balance Your Physical Well-being with EFT Tapping

by Karen St. Clair

What does physical well-being mean to you? Is it having balanced nutrition, exercising regularly, maintaining steady blood pressure, or getting adequate sleep?

All these practices are indeed in tune with physical well-being, but they may be blocked by an array of emotional circumstances that keep us from accessing their value.

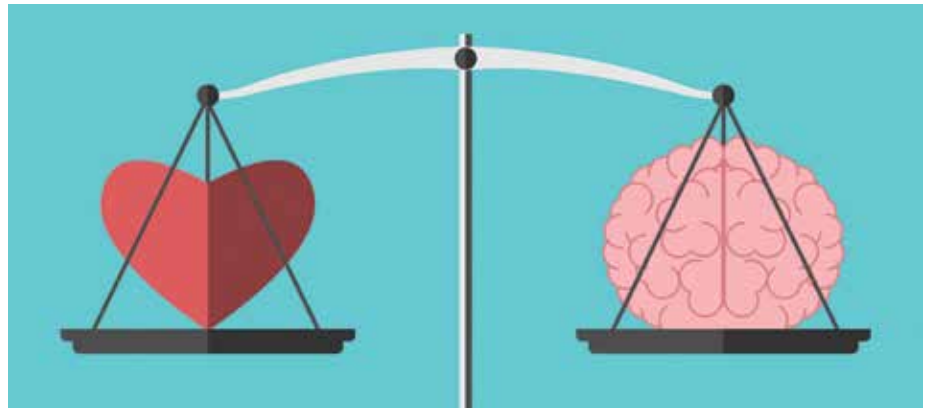
How can emotions keep us from physical well-being? Without realizing it, we function physically according to how we feel emotionally. Think back to a time when you felt upset or angry about an issue that seemed impossible to resolve. At that time, was it possible to think about taking care of yourself in a healthy way? Challenging feelings can often take over our moods completely and block our ability to achieve physical well-being.

The good news is that we CAN in fact calm our emotions naturally and quickly with the Emotional Freedom Technique, also known as “Tapping,” an alternative self-help technique of gently tapping on certain acupressure points around your upper body.

Here are some of the key ways EFT Tapping can promote physical well-being:

Lowers Cortisol & Stress Hormones

Chronic stress contributes to nearly every modern health condition by elevating inflammation, weakening immunity, and throwing hormones out of balance. Tapping releases pent-up anxiety, trauma, and triggering emotions. This reduces stress hormone surges, lowers cortisol and adrenaline levels, and



allows the body to relax, rebalance its chemistry, heal faster, and function optimally.

Activates the Parasympathetic Nervous System

EFT Tapping elicits the “rest and digest” functions of the parasympathetic nervous system. This allows digestion, tissue growth and repair, improved reproductive system function and inflammatory balance. Activating restorative parasympathetic activity through Tapping is powerfully healing.

Releases Tension & Pain

Emotional issues such as anger, grief, fear, and resentment can manifest physically as muscle tension, headaches, and body aches. By releasing old emotional energy patterns, Tapping frees the body from blocks caused by unresolved toxic emotions and alleviates pain, allowing the body to return to flexibility and ease.

Improves Sleep

Sleep is vital for every bodily system. When emotional turmoil, anxiety, and over-activity in the brain disrupt healthy sleep patterns, risk of disease rises. EFT Tapping reduces racing thoughts and stress hormones, allowing the body to fall into deeper, more restorative sleep. This enhances tissue repair, mental

health, metabolism, and immunity.

As our minds and bodies are intrinsically connected, releasing emotional burdens through EFT Tapping allows your whole physical self to heal and thrive.

“I first learned about EFT Tapping when struggling with chronic back pain. Painkillers and physical therapy provided only temporary relief. On a friend’s suggestion, I started Tapping while mentally focusing on releasing the emotional stress I carried in my body. Amazingly, after just 5 minutes, I felt a wave of relaxation come over me and my pain subsided. I continued using EFT when flare-ups occurred, and over time completely healed my back pain of 3 years. EFT quite literally helped me walk freely again.” M.T., South Portland, ME

.....
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 Renewal and a highly skilled professional with a true gift for facilitating her clients’ life-changing outcomes. karenstclairEFT.com
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8 Big Ways to Nourish And Nurture Your Body Through Food



In partnership with
Hannaford Supermarkets

by Allison Stowell

When you think about eating right, do you think *diet* first?

How about nourishment or self-care?

While it's true that picking healthy foods is important for our goals, it's also a way to nurture ourselves. Here are eight simple ways to do just that.

1. Add a Splash of Color: It sounds simple, but we eat with our eyes first, so give them something to be excited about. When we add color, not only does this make our meals look inviting, but it also packs them with vitamins and antioxidants our bodies love.

2. Listen to Your Hunger: Food does amazing things for us, from giving us energy to helping us avoid chronic illness. Food, however, cannot fix our problems, help us manage a difficult day, or fill our time. Eating when we are really hungry means we are listening to what our body needs, nothing less.

3. Connection Through Food: Sharing recipes, cooking, and eating with others can be a special time. Each week, try to make a mealtime a chance to connect with loved ones. We all benefit from sitting a

bit longer, sharing more, and from moments of nurturing ourselves.

4. Keep it Fun: Preparing food should be enjoyable, not a chore. There's no reason to make it complicated yet every reason to make it fun and worthwhile. Try something new, experiment with flavors, and create meals that suit your taste.

5. Simplify Meal Prep: Planning meals should make life easier, not more stressful. Aim for simplicity in meal prep that doesn't cut into your relaxation time. A little planning goes a long way in nurturing yourself through a busy week. If you find that food prep is cutting into your down time, maybe another approach should be considered.

6. Support Your Community: When we buy from local growers, visit farmers' markets, and support local food companies, we're acknowledging that food is not just about caring for ourselves, but also about caring for our community and environment.

7. Pick Mood-Boosting Foods: Certain foods, such as seafood, berries, whole grains, and nuts can make you feel better. Including these in your diet can be part of taking good care of your mental health.

8. Focus on Nutrient-Rich Foods:

Aim for nutrient-dense foods that satisfy and also truly nourish. Use a tool, such as the Guiding Stars nutrition guidance program, to help you easily find nutritious foods and recipes that align with what your body needs to support a healthy lifestyle.

Remember, food is more than just fuel. It is a way to take care of yourself, connect with others, and bring joy into your day.

As you continue on your journey, let these tips inspire you to make choices that nurture not only your body but also your spirit.

We are grateful for the chance to share in your story of growth and recovery.

Here's to finding joy and health in every bite.

For more information on nutrition, visit guidingstars.com. For new meal ideas, go to hannaford.com/recipes.



Allison Stowell MS RD CDN serves as a dietitian for Hannaford Supermarket. The Hannaford Dietitian team offers free online classes, in-store tours and more for the communities it serves. Visit Hannaford.com/dietitians for more information.



Breaking Free

Confronting Processed Food Addiction in Recovery

In partnership with WebShrink

Have you ever thought about how some foods can hook us like drugs or alcohol? If you're on the journey to recovery, it's really important to understand this. Knowing about processed food addiction can help us make better choices and keep our minds healthy.

Why Processed Foods Can Be Tricky

When we talk about recovery, we often think about staying away from drugs or alcohol. But what about the food we eat every day? Foods that are heavily processed and full of fat and sugar can be just as addictive. It's not just about trying harder to resist them; these foods actually change the way our brains work.

Remember the famous Lay's chips slogan, "betcha can't eat just one"? It was a catchy phrase, but it also points to a big problem: how processed foods can be really tempting.

Understanding Food Addiction

A study from the University of Michigan found that about one in eight adults might be addicted to processed foods. This means they have strong cravings and find it hard

to stop eating these foods, even when they want to. They might even feel grumpy or get headaches when they don't eat them.

Imagine eating a sweet snack and feeling a rush of happiness. That's your brain releasing a chemical called dopamine. Processed foods can make your brain release a lot of this feel-good chemical, which can affect your mental health.

Processed Food Addiction and Mental Health

There's a surprising link between loving processed foods too much and not feeling great mentally. People who don't feel good about their mental health are three times more likely to be hooked on processed foods.

This makes us wonder: Do processed foods make us feel worse mentally, or does feeling down lead us to eat more of these foods? It's probably a bit of both, creating a cycle that's hard to break.

What Can You Do?

Here are five simple tips to help you stay away from processed foods:

1. Get to Know Processed Foods:

Learn why these foods are addictive and how they affect your body and mind.

2. Spot Your Triggers: Figure out what makes you crave these foods and find ways to deal with these triggers.

3. Keep Healthy Foods Around: Have fruits, veggies, lean proteins, and whole grains ready when you're hungry.

4. Eat Mindfully: Pay attention to your hunger, eat slowly, and stop when you're full.

5. Seek Support: Surround yourself with friends, family, and professionals who understand and can offer help and encouragement.

Every step toward eating healthier is a step forward in your recovery journey.

Your choice to eat better is a big win for you!

For more information visit www.webshrink.com.



Mind Matters: Navigating the Maze of Brain Injury Symptoms

What Does a Brain Injury Look Like?

by Sarah Gaffney

Brain injury symptoms can look very similar to symptoms for other conditions, such as substance use disorder and mental health disorders; and brain injuries can happen in many ways — you can have a brain injury without ever hitting your head! Because of this overlap in symptoms, it is important to share any events that may have impacted your brain with your healthcare providers for further screening.

Brain injuries happen a lot in car accidents, falls, assaults — even concussions can have long-term effects on the brain. There are also non-traumatic causes such as diseases (including Covid-19), strokes, and tumors.

Brain injuries can also happen when the brain doesn't get enough oxygen, including overdoses, poisonings, near drownings, and other medical emergencies such as when a person's heart stops or they stop breathing. Sometimes people experience

symptoms right away, and other times it can take weeks or months for symptoms to show up.

Some symptoms of brain injury include:

Problems with Memory

Many brain injury survivors struggle with their memory — possibly both short- and long-term. You might easily forget someone you've met, something you've read or been told, or important things you need to do, such as when to go to work, take medications, or be somewhere for an appointment.

Delayed Processing

After a brain injury, it can take longer to process what someone is saying, and it can often be hard to follow conversations and multi-step instructions.

Attention Problems

It can be hard to concentrate and complete tasks. You might also notice that it's hard to focus in loud places, and you might find that you are easily distracted.

Impulsive Behavior

Many people struggle with inhibition and impulsivity after a brain injury. This could look like interrupting conversations, not following directions, or saying and doing things without thinking — even when you know you shouldn't.

Physical Challenges

Pain, fatigue, light sensitivity, hearing and vision changes, and difficulty with moving and coordination can all happen after a brain injury.

Language Problems

We communicate in many different ways, and after a brain injury, there are often challenges with speaking, understanding, reading, and writing.

Organization

Sometimes it is very hard to stay organized after a brain injury. You might have trouble finishing or starting a task, sticking to a schedule, and doing important things on time, such as paying bills.

Mental Inflexibility

Mental inflexibility might look like having trouble with decision-making, changing a decision after receiving new information, or being open to learning new ways to do things. Sometimes this involves decreased self-awareness, for example, being told by several others you have behaviors that you don't think exist, and difficulties with personal insight. Mental inflexibility is a common symptom of brain injury that can be a challenge to success in recovery.

Emotional Shifts (Ups and Downs)

This can include feeling anxious, irritable, depressed, and being prone to overreactions.

Issues with Sleep

Problems with sleep are very common after a brain injury. You might sleep a lot, take more naps than usual, or have trouble falling asleep.

Brain injury can impact every part of who we are. There are many other brain injury symptoms, and if you think you may have experienced a brain injury, it's important to seek medical attention as soon as you can.

Brain Injury Association of America — Maine's resource facilitation team is here to help with navigating life after brain injury. BIAA-ME offers information and resource services, as well as long-term one-on-one support through NeuroResource Facilitation, and these services are FREE.

Call BIAA-ME's Brain Injury Information Center at 1-800-444-6443 for help navigating brain injury resources, and stay tuned for our next article discussing accommodations that can be made if you are experiencing some of these symptoms.



Sarah Kilch Gaffney, CBIS, is a writer and brain injury advocate living in central Maine. She is the Program Coordinator for the Brain Injury Association of America — Maine Chapter.

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



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Healthy Sleeping: Your Guide to Restful Nights

In partnership with [MentalHealthLiteracy.org](https://www.mentalhealthliteracy.org)

Sleep is important for your physical and mental health. For Harry Potter fans, it's like a magic wand for your mind and body, helping you make sense of your day, getting you ready to learn new things, and giving your body a well-deserved rest.

Did you know your brain cleans itself while you sleep? Cerebral spinal fluid flushes the brain and removes waste products — like a biological dishwasher. Amazing, right? Good sleep is like a battery charger for your life, helping us handle anything that comes our way.

Catching Zs can be tough. But don't worry, we've got some cozy tips to tuck you into the land of dreams.

What is on Your Plate Matters

- **Food:** Eating too much before bed isn't great, but don't go to bed hungry, either. A small snack can be just right, but skip the chocolate — it might keep you awake.

- **Caffeine:** Coffee, tea, sodas, and some OTC medicines have caffeine. Find out how it affects you, and try not to have any six to eight hours before bedtime.

- **Nicotine:** It might feel calming, but smoking actually signals your brain to stay awake. Tricky, right?

Create a Sleep-Friendly Space

- Make your bedroom a cozy cave for sleep — dark, comfy, and not too hot.
- Keep your bed just for sleeping. Avoid homework, phone chats, or TV there. Let your brain link your bed with snoozing.
- Electronics should be out of the bedroom, or on silent mode, so they don't tempt you or wake you up.

Daytime Dos for Dreamy Nights

- **Exercise:** A 30-minute workout can do wonders. Just figure out if working out before bed fires you up or winds you down.
- **Bedtime Routine:** Find your natural sleep time and stick to it. Keep things calm around this time.

- **Relax Before Bed:** Brush your teeth, wash your face, maybe write in a journal or read a little. Steer clear of screens 30 minutes before bed — they're like an alarm clock for your brain!

Falling Asleep Made Easier

- Try to push worries aside. Meditation, deep breathing, or imagining something peaceful (think: ocean waves) can help.
- Keep a notepad by your bed. Write down any nagging thoughts so your mind can relax.
- Don't clock-watch. If sleep's playing hard to get, read a bit and then try again. This helps your body learn that bed means sleep.

Remember, you're unique, and what works for others might not be your cup of tea. Play detective to find what works best for you.

Sleep tight and dream bright!

For more tips, check out [mentalhealthliteracy.org](https://www.mentalhealthliteracy.org).



EFT Tapping with Karen St. Clair

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Peter Wohl is a person in long-term recovery with over 25 years in addiction treatment and has led eco-spirituality workshops for over 20 years. He holds an MA, LADC, and CCS.



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Get Moving, Feel Better: Exercise in Recovery



In partnership with the Recovery Research Institute

Did you know that moving your body can do wonders for both your physical and mental health? It's true! Exercise isn't just about staying fit; it's a powerful tool to feel less anxious, more upbeat, and even boost your self-esteem. For those on the journey of recovery, staying active can be a real game-changer and make it less likely to fall back into old habits.

We get it – starting to exercise can feel like a big step, especially if you don't have a gym nearby. But don't worry, we've got you covered with some simple, doable tips:

Create a Routine

- Pick a time each day for your

workout. Soon, your body will look forward to this exercise time!

- Start with simple exercises such as push-ups, sit-ups, or planks right in your living room.
- Enjoy the outdoors? Go for a walk, jog, or take a hike.
- Buddy up! Team up with a friend or family member to keep each other motivated. Or, set an alarm to remind you it's time to move.

Set Realistic Goals

- Begin with a few days a week, then gradually add more to your routine as you start feeling better.
- Remember, every bit counts. Even a 20-minute session three times a week can make a big difference.

Discover Fun Ways to Exercise

- Check out groups such as The Phoenix (thephoenix.org). They offer indoor rock climbing, crossfit, and other cool activities, and it's free to join with just 48-hours of sobriety. Plus, you'll find people who understand your journey and support you.

Good News for Everyone

Research shows that even 12 minutes of aerobic activity can lower cravings, boost your mood, and ease anxiety — especially for those overcoming alcohol use challenges. The best part? You don't need to be a gym expert. A little exercise goes a long way in making you happier and healthier.



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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 a public health crisis with staggering 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 SOBER ACTIVE COMMUNITY

The Phoenix helps anyone impacted by substance use heal by leveraging the transformative power of social connection and activity. We're building a movement that changes how we look at addiction and recovery in this country, and beyond. We welcome everyone - whether you're in recovery, choose to live a sober life, are sober curious or want to support as an ally.

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RECOVERY SUPPORT SERVICES & INFORMATION

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

Recovery Community Centers	Recovery Residences	Recovery Coaching
<p>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

Navigating Sobriety with Self-Compassion and Courage

by Gabrielle Gilbert

Erin Hamlin is an inspired and inspiring radical self-love coach in Maine. She is also a proud mother of three, a fitness instructor, an educator, a recovery advocate, and a two-time contestant for the Mrs. Maine America pageant.

As is the case for so many Mainers, drinking was normalized from an early age. As she got older, she began to use alcohol to drown out negative feelings of self-judgment, self-loathing, guilt, shame, and fear. The more she drank, the sicker she felt, and the less control she had over her actions and decisions.

As a young woman, Erin thought she — not alcohol — was the problem. She remembers thinking, “My favorite characters on TV shows were drinking wine all day and were high functioning. There must be something wrong with me because everyone else seems to have a handle on this.”

After experiencing postpartum depression following the birth of her first daughter and recognizing the impact alcohol was having on her life, she decided to prioritize her well-being. “I had to explore my relationship with alcohol and ask: is this really serving me?”

Prior to her sobriety date, Erin tried the 75 Day Hard Challenge, developed by Andy Frisella. The program is centered around building self-worth and improving fitness, health, and mental strength for 75 days straight. Erin’s main goals for 75 Hard included working out twice a day and not drinking.

“For me, being sober has been amazing,” she says. “I love it. I don’t ever want to go back. I am going to take it one day at a time, but I have zero desire to drink. I never thought that that would be possible for me.”

Erin’s journey through recovery has been largely self-led, leaning on the teachings of therapists and sober mentors through podcasts and books. She has received invaluable help from hired coaches and therapists alike.

Also central to her recovery is the practice of self-compassion and patient curiosity — concepts she learned through her education in trauma-informed practices. She emphasizes the importance of creating a safe space within oneself to process emotions and heal from past wounds.

As a mother, Erin is committed to combating the glorification of alcohol in the media by providing her children with a different experience, one that prioritizes honesty about addiction and the value of sobriety. She actively involves her children in recovery-based events and educates them about the dangers of drinking while encouraging them to make informed decisions.

Erin’s dedication to sobriety not only benefits her and her own physical and emotional well-being, but it also allows her to be fully present in her children’s lives. “I am here. It’s hard. I am in it. I am present with my kids,” she says.



Photo by Tess Johnson Photography

“I am most thankful to my sobriety for the ability to be 100% present. It is the best gift I could give myself and my children.”

Erin is on a mission to be as healthy and as happy as possible and encourages others daily to do the same. Each week you can find her teaching group fitness classes around the state as well as working as a Substance Abuse Educator for RSU 16. She hopes to represent Maine at the Mrs. America Pageant nationals this year as a face and voice of recovery to reduce stigma and spread awareness that recovery is possible.



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

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where recovery lives.



LifeRing Secular Recovery is an organization of people who share practical experiences and sobriety support. There are as many ways to live free of drugs and alcohol as there are stories of successful sober people. LifeRing provides support through local in-person meetings, online meetings, a variety of publications, and other online resources.

by **Kim Wilson**

LifeRing is a recovery organization that originated in California and now has an international presence. At its heart, it is a meeting-based program where members support and encourage each other on their various paths to sobriety.

The organization is based upon the philosophy of the “3 S’s” — Sobriety, Secularity, and Self-Empowerment.

Sobriety

The program is abstinence-based. According to Byron Kerr, a long-time LifeRing member and meeting convener with 13 years of sobriety under his belt, “The only specific thing we advocate is sobriety. We define that as complete abstinence from alcohol and all non-prescribed drugs.” (Prescribed drugs include medication-assisted treatment for addiction.)

Secularity

Byron explains the second “S,” Secularity, when he says, “Your personal view [on religion] remains your business. A devoutly religious person should feel as equally welcome as a godless communist. They should all feel welcome in LifeRing.”

LifeRing teaches that regardless of your religion, the success of your sobriety is based on your motivation and efforts in your path to recovery.

This tenet resonated with Byron. “I’m not anti-religious,” he explains. “I was raised in a religious family; my father was a full-time minister. My

entire family is religious, and my former spouse was a devout person. It’s just not part of my worldview. I appreciate the philosophy [of LifeRing] in that the individual is responsible for their own sober path,” he continues. “That’s what I identified with. Nobody else made me have a problem with alcohol, it was all me. And I’m the one who’s responsible for correcting it.”

Self-Empowerment

Byron’s beliefs coincide with LifeRing’s third “S” — Self-Empowerment. This piece of LifeRing’s philosophy has, at its foundation, what is known in the program as a Personal Recovery Plan (PRP).

Mary Beth O’Connor, another longtime LifeRing member, board member, and head of the Speakers’ Bureau, explains more about the PRP. “It is a key part of our philosophy. One size does not fit all. We encourage members to attend meetings, to read, to listen. These are all sources for your ideas for a plan.”

She stresses the importance of having a PRP. “I had 30 years sober on January 13,” she says, “and I did it by building an individual plan. One of the advantages of an individual plan is trusting my judgment and figuring out who I am, and what might work for me. I set goals and built plans for my sobriety and it turns out that same skill set applies to everything else in life too.”

She continues, “As part of a PRP, some of our members also do other

programs. They might do AA and LifeRing, for example, and we support that 100%. If you think going to both a 12-step program and LifeRing gives you the best sobriety foundation, we support that.”

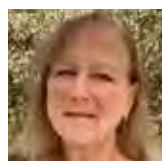
One important element of any PRP, Byron explains, is a plan regarding relapse. “Relapse is a common denominator in the recovery world,” he says. “I like to suggest that people have a plan regarding that. How are you going to navigate temptations or urges? Know how you’re going to encounter it. Know how you’re going to navigate it. Have that as part of your plan.”

That is where the meetings come in. LifeRing meetings are discussion-based where conversations between members are the heart of the meetings, and the dialogue focuses on the present, not the past.

“We start with the question ‘How was your week?’” Byron explains. “Each individual has an opportunity to check in and to say how it’s going regarding their sobriety, and discuss any challenges they’d like to talk about.”

By having smaller meetings, attendees have more opportunities to share and learn from each other.

For more information, visit lifering.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.

Mary Beth O'Connor

When I entered rehab for my lengthy meth use disorder, I was ordered to submit to the 12-steps, a program that helps many but wasn't right for me.

So, I searched the books for concepts consistent with my worldview, analyzed all the ideas presented to me, and applied those I found useful.

I then located other peer support options, such as LifeRing Secular Recovery's predecessor, and built a PRP tailored to my needs and goals.

Taking control of my recovery turned out to have many positive impacts.

I reconnected with my natural strengths in reading and analysis.

I made a list of all the areas in my life on which I needed to

work, filtered this for my highest priorities, set goals in those areas, created detailed plans, and then implemented them.

I adjusted my approach based on successes and failures. I set new goals as I achieved those on my initial list. And I did this over and over, month by month, and year by year.

Using this process over time, I made great strides in every area of my life. I've been sober since 1994, have a great marriage, and show up for my family and friends.

I attended Berkeley Law, and was appointed a federal Administrative Law Judge.

I now speak about and advocate for multiple pathways to recovery.



I even wrote a memoir, *From Junkie to Judge: One Woman's Triumph Over Trauma and Addiction*, which chronicles my journey and provides useful tips and guidelines for those seeking recovery.

Self-empowerment doesn't mean shutting yourself in a box...there is great value in learning from others, getting ideas, and asking for support.

LifeRing – Frequently Asked Questions

What is the LifeRing program?

The hallmark of a quality treatment program is to match the treatment to the individual. LifeRing adopts that same approach in their self-help work.

They encourage each participant to work out their own particular path and to use the group process as a workshop for that purpose.

LifeRing publishes a workbook, "Recovery by Choice," as a tool for building one's "Personal Recovery Program" or PRP.

What is the LifeRing meeting format?

Formats vary, but at most meetings, the topic is "How Was Your Week?" Each person reports on the highlights and heartaches of their past week and plans for the decisions of the coming week.

Conversation ("cross-talk") is encouraged. Personal drinking/drugging histories ("drunkalogues") are discouraged.

The meeting ends with a round of applause to one another for staying clean and sober.

Does LifeRing have sponsors?

Participants of LifeRing each work out personal programs, so there is no real role for a Program guide. They do very much value supportive contacts between meetings and circulate phone and email lists at meetings for that purpose.

Where can I find out more information about LifeRing?

This website is a good place to start (lifering.org). For a fast response, check out the online connections. To contact LifeRing, please email service@lifering.org or call 1-800-811-4142.

Rise to Recovery

Maximizing Your Time in Treatment

by Stan Popovich

Starting treatment at a rehab facility for the first time can feel scary. You might be wondering what you should do and what you shouldn't do while you're there, which is completely normal!

Here are five tips to help you make the most out of your time in rehab.

Follow the Rules

The most important thing to remember is to follow the rules. Your main goal is to get better, so focus on that. Avoid doing anything that could cause problems, and keep your attention on finding ways to succeed in your recovery.

Listen to the Professionals and Ask Questions

The counselors at the treatment facility are there to help you. They've worked with many people in different situations. Following their guidance can help your recovery and get your life back on track.

Don't be afraid to ask questions if there's something you don't understand. Going to treatment might be new and stressful, but the staff is there to help.

Asking questions can make your stay more comfortable and help you get the information you need.

Be Friendly

It's normal to feel scared and frustrated, but try not to take it out on the staff or other residents. Blaming others won't help with your recovery.

Being kind to others can help create a positive atmosphere, and most

people will treat you with respect in return.

Attend Programs and Meetings

Treatment facilities usually offer programs and attendance at recovery meetings throughout the day and evenings. Make sure you attend these programs regularly, even when you are feeling tired, overwhelmed, or just do not want to.

Remember, your time there is limited, and these programs provide valuable information that can help with your recovery.

Take Notes

When you talk to the professionals or attend groups, it's easy to forget what was said. Taking notes can help you remember later. This information is important for overcoming your fears and anxieties, and in gaining useful tools for the future, so it's worth writing down.

Every treatment center experience is different, so don't assume anything based on past experiences. Each situation is unique, and it's important to approach it with an open mind.

By following these tips, you can make the most of your time in treatment and work toward a healthier, happier life.

You've got this!



Stan is the author of *A Layman's Guide to Managing Fear*, which covers a variety of techniques that can drastically improve your mental health. For more information, please visit Stan's website at www.managingfear.com.

Questions to Ask Before You Go

What addiction specialties does your program focus on, and what evidence-based approaches do you use?

How long is the typical treatment program, and is there room for adjustment depending on my progress?

What are the qualifications of your staff and counselors?

What kind of living arrangements and amenities do you provide? Do you have a list of things I should bring?

What meal options are available, and are there any rules about personal items I should be aware of?

Do you offer therapy beyond substance use disorder treatment? (Ask questions that relate to your recovery, like: Veteran, LGBTQIA+, dual diagnosis, etc.)

Could you walk me through a typical day in the program?

How will I be able to communicate with my family and friends? Do you offer counseling and support to my family while I am there?

How do you address relapse prevention and ongoing support for long-term recovery?

What are the costs involved, and what options do I have regarding insurance and financial assistance?

What is your policy on smoking or vaping, and do you offer support for those looking to quit?

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The Maine Department of Labor provides equal opportunity in employment and programs. Auxiliary aids and services are available to people with disabilities upon request.



Recovery Allies

Steps to Well-being: Navigating Recovery with Hope and Support

Recovery from addiction isn't instant — it's a journey that takes both time and effort. But here's something hopeful: Every little step you take makes a big difference.

Imagine you're on a path to finding yourself again and it's totally okay to move at your own pace. When you choose to stop using harmful substances, you're allowing your body and mind to heal and grow stronger. Yes, there will be tough days, you may feel down or won't sleep well, but these are just temporary and not the end of the path.

Here are a few things to keep in mind on your recovery journey:

Mental Health: Healing Starts on the Inside

Feelings such as sadness, worry, and other tough emotions can show up during the early stages of recovery. It's important to know that taking care of your mental health and getting the right kind of support are big steps in overcoming these feelings.

Healthcare: Getting the Help You Need

Getting the medical help you need might seem hard at first, but there are ways to make it simpler. Start with finding a doctor who gets what you're going through. They can tackle any health issues, big or small, and connect you with the resources you need.

If traditional medicine isn't your thing, no worries. Exploring

acupuncture or natural medicine might suit you better. Remember, your health matters and you deserve the best care.

Nutrition: Feeding Your Body and Soul

Eating healthy foods is really important during recovery. You might crave sweets or feel low because your body is missing nutrients. Start by learning about healthy eating and planning your meals.

A balanced diet helps your body heal. Meeting with a nutritionist and setting small, achievable goals can make a big difference. Plus, cooking can be a fun way to connect with others.

Physical Activity: Moving Your Way to Healing

Experts are learning more every day about how moving your body helps you heal and reduce stress. Try different activities to find out what you enjoy most, as what works best can change over time.

Stress: Keeping Calm and Carrying On

Feeling stressed? There are many methods for managing it in a healthy way. Counseling, support groups, exercise, mindfulness, recovery meetings, and yoga can all help reduce stress during recovery. Take a deep breath — you have many tools to help you stay relaxed and focused.

Sleep: Finding Rest and Renewal

Sleeping well is very important, especially when you're healing! Trouble sleeping can be a challenge, but there are ways to improve your sleep and feel refreshed. Making a cozy bedtime routine, cutting back on caffeine, and getting regular exercise can all help. Good sleep is a gift that supports your journey to feeling your best.

Recovery is a journey that needs time and patience. Even when it's tough, with support and your own strength, feeling better is within reach. You're not alone, and every day is a new opportunity for growth and wellness.

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/>



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Embracing Change

Insights from BUTTKICKERS

In *BUTTKICKERS: Twenty Ways to Leave Tobacco*, Joanna Free offers a candid, engaging, and often humorous look at the journey toward a healthier life. The book is filled with practical advice, heartfelt stories, and a refreshing take on changing behaviors that hold us back. Let's dive into some excerpts that capture the spirit of this transformative book.

One of the most striking pieces of advice comes from the chapter "Look Crazy, Get Sane." Here, Joanna encourages embracing what might seem absurd to achieve sanity and health. "Put your arms around yourself and rock and hum. Put a pacifier in your mouth when you need to calm yourself down. Or your thumb," she suggests. This playful yet profound advice highlights the importance of self-comfort and breaking free from societal norms that dictate our actions.

In the chapter "Laugh Your Butt Off," Joanna emphasizes the power of laughter as a tool for change. "If you can make or let yourself laugh HARD for even thirty seconds, you can change your perspective, your brain chemistry — your actual, physical brain — without a single puff of smoke," she writes. This section underlines the transformative power

of humor and its role in altering our mindset and actions.

The book also includes inspiring stories of others' journeys, as seen in "The Grand Adventure." Joanna shares, "One great story came from a man who was a regular at one of the groups I'd visited... He said, 'I dreaded it for a long time. That attitude never got me what I wanted. One night, I thought back on my life and all of the times I'd done things I didn't really want to do, and how I felt proud afterwards.'" Such stories serve as powerful reminders of our capacity for change and resilience.

Lastly, *BUTTKICKERS* isn't about "quitting bad habits;" it's about a deeper transformation. In the summary, Joanna reflects, "This

is not when I say, time to smoke your last cigarette! Or time to set your 'quit date'!... This is a very individual process. We're learning to respect and truly honor our own individuality, in our butt-kicking and in all areas of our lives." This encapsulates the book's core message: Embracing change is a deeply personal journey, one that encourages self-respect and honors individuality.

In essence, *BUTTKICKERS* is more than a guide; it's a companion on the journey to a healthier, more fulfilling life. Joanna's conversational style, combined with her insightful and sometimes unconventional advice, makes this book a must-read for anyone looking to make positive changes in their life.

Find out more about Joanna Free and her book *BUTTKICKERS*

LinkedIn

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/joanna-free/>

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/JoannaTheAmazon>



BUTTKICKERS



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.

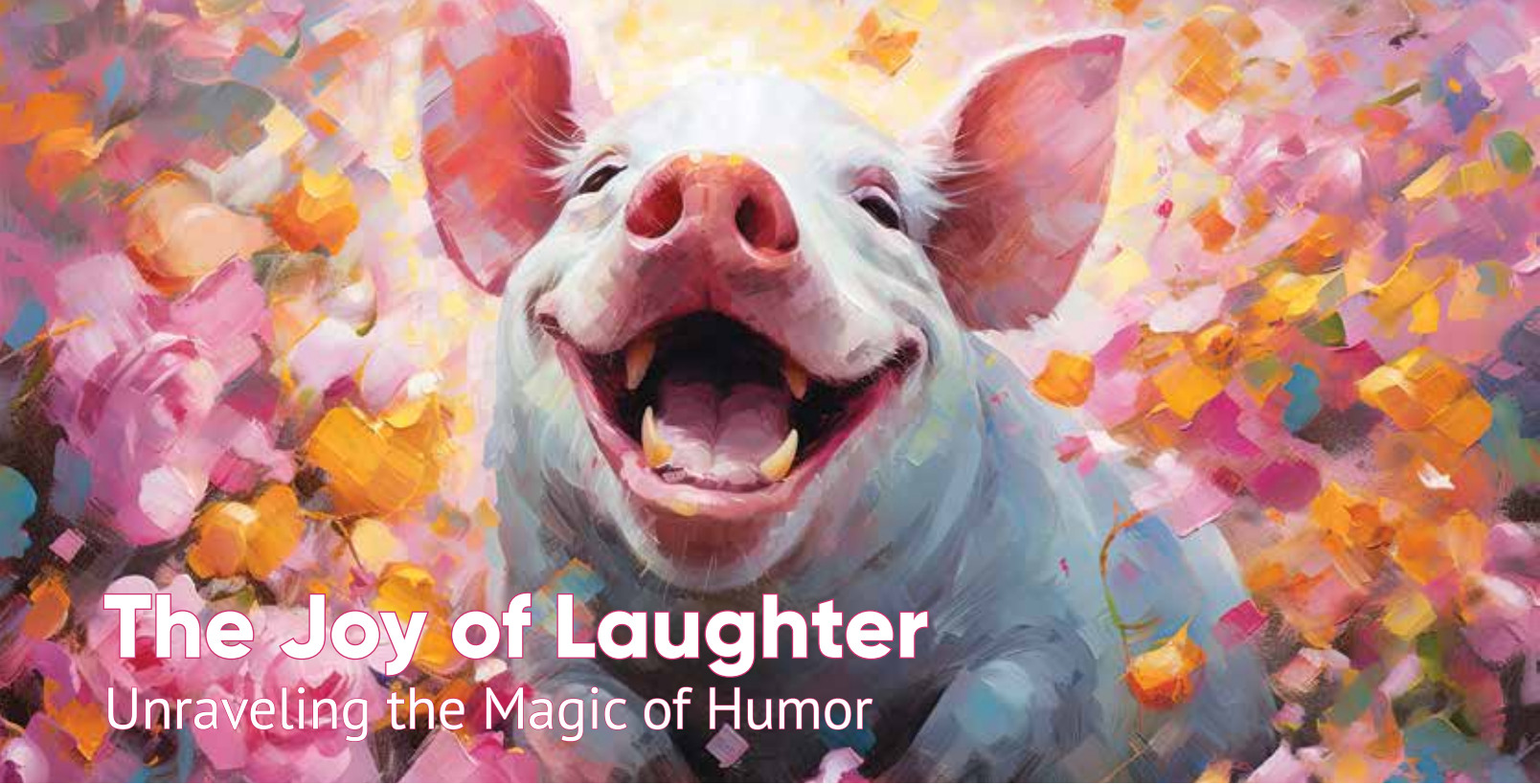
What if you don't want to self-exclude online? There are locations with trained staff available to process the self-exclusion form with you in-person.

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**





The Joy of Laughter

Unraveling the Magic of Humor

Ever wondered why a sudden twist in a story or a surprise ending in a joke makes you burst into laughter? It's all about the playful tricks our brain loves.

When we hear a joke, our brain starts guessing what comes next. But when the punchline throws us a curveball, something totally unexpected, it becomes a delightful surprise party for our brain. That sudden twist tickles our mind, and out comes laughter!

The magic of laughter happens thanks to a super-smart part of our brain called the prefrontal cortex. Think of it as the control center that helps us solve puzzles, make decisions, and get the joke. When a punchline flips the script, our brain's control center lights up with joy and signals us to laugh.

But laughter isn't just for fun. It's an ancient language that's way older than words. Long ago, our ancestors laughed to say, "All is good! Come hang out." Laughter was their way of making friends and keeping each other company. So, when we share a laugh, we're doing more than just enjoying a joke – we're building bonds, feeling safe and connected.

Did you know that laughter also has some health benefits? Laughter has been known to:

• **Relax your body:** A good laugh can ease tension and stress, leaving your muscles relaxed for up to 45 minutes afterward.

• **Boost your immune system:** Laughing decreases stress hormones and increases immune cells and antibodies, making you more resistant to disease.

• **Release feel-good chemicals:** Laughter triggers the release of endorphins, which makes you feel good and can even help ease pain.

• **Protect your heart:** It improves blood flow and the function of blood vessels, reducing the risk of heart problems such as heart attacks.

• **Burn calories:** While it's not a substitute for hitting the gym, laughing for 10 to 15 minutes a day can burn around 40 calories, which could add up to losing a few pounds over a year.

• **Might help you live longer:** Studies show that people with a strong sense of humor tend to live longer, especially those dealing with serious illnesses.

Next time a joke or a funny moment has you chuckling, remember: it's a little celebration in your brain, a moment of joy and connection.

Laughing with friends is a happiness boost, reminding us of the fun and friendship that make life so special.

Looking for a good, clean laugh?

- **Which vegetable is cool, but not that cool?** *Rad-ish*
- **Have you heard the rumor about butter?** *Nevermind, I shouldn't be spreading it.*
- **I can't take my dog to the pond because the ducks keep attacking him.**
That's what I get for buying a pure-bread dog.
- **Who built King Arthur's round table?** *Sir Cumference*
- **What did the duck say when they bought lipstick?** *Put it on my bill.*



Healthy Bonds

The Magic of Connection

In partnership with Stephen Andrew

Connection is the tie that binds us, makes us human, and helps us heal. Our connections with others — the friends we lean on, the loved ones we confide in, and the supportive communities we are part of — play a surprising role in our physical health.

A supportive, loving relationship can be a powerful force in healing. We are social beings, and meaningful connections with others can help us overcome fear — one of the most significant obstacles we face in our discovery. When we allow ourselves to be vulnerable, to share our fears and struggles with others, the bonds we create can help us overcome even the toughest challenges.

What does all of this have to do with physical health?

Research has shown that positive social connections can improve our immune system, lower stress levels, and even increase our lifespan. When we are surrounded by supportive, understanding people, our bodies respond positively. We can heal faster and more completely, not just emotionally, but physically too.

In our journey, it's important to remember: we are not alone. A shared load is a lightened load, and connection may be the only medication we really need.

Connecting with others, sharing your experiences and fears, and seeking support can help you in ways you may not have imagined.

These relationships are not one-sided.

When we are open about our struggles and fears, it can help others understand their own. It can also help them understand what you are going through and how they can better support your journey.

It's important to nurture your connections, like nurturing a magical garden. By tending to our relationships, talking about our experiences, and giving and receiving love, we sow the seeds of connection, which, in turn, bloom into beautiful, life-enhancing relationships.

So, let's not shy away from exploring the magical world of connection. Embrace it, for it might be the key to a healthier, happier, and more vibrant life. After all, we're not

just social animals. We're magical beings, capable of creating powerful connections that can heal ourselves and others.

You are more powerful than you think, and with the power of connection, you'll discover strength you didn't know you had.

The magic of connection is the sun to our individual worlds.

Let's let that sun shine brightly, cast away our fears, and breathe health and happiness into our lives. And remember, in this dance of life, fear may lead sometimes, but love always wins. So, let's dance, let's connect, and let's heal together.

To purchase a copy of Stephen's book, *The Magic of Connection*, or any others in his collection, go to Amazon or visit www.hetimaine.com.



Stephen Andrew is a storyteller, trainer, therapist, author, and the CEO (Chief Energizing Officer) of Health Education and Training Institute. HETI specializes in educational training and coaching for individuals and agencies in the criminal justice, health care, and social services fields.

Stories Restoring Hope

Danielle Ward Radiant in Recovery

by Jamie Lovley

This May, Danielle Ward will be receiving her Associate degree in Mental health and Human Services and celebrating 5 years of sobriety. Her achievement reflects profound personal growth and a deep commitment to helping others navigate recovery.

Danielle grew up in Warren, Maine, in a family impacted by addiction. Looking back, Danielle can see how early traumas influenced her: “I’ve learned a lot from Dr. Gabor Maté, who talks about trauma being the root of all addiction.” At 21, Danielle started a 17-year opiate addiction.

During this time she got married, had three kids, and found herself continuing to use to avoid the withdrawal that would interrupt being a mom and wife, despite desperately needing help. “I felt I couldn’t go away to treatment because my kids needed me.” As she reflects on those years, she recalls feeling emotionally lost and trapped in a cycle that seemed impossible to break.

When this cycle left her facing a prison sentence, Danielle chose to use newfound clarity and sobriety to change her life and help others do the same. In prison, she enrolled in college courses, became a recovery coach, and joined the Opportunity Scholars program. “On the outside, I was a mother, a wife, someone in active addiction, but I had completely lost myself.”

By throwing herself fully into recovery and learning, she found her passion again. Another way she accomplished this mental and physical change was through practicing and becoming a certified yoga instructor through a yoga training scholarship from Sea Change Yoga in Portland.

Today, Danielle lives in Alyssa’s House in Camden, a sober house for women in recovery. By putting her recovery first, she can be there for her family and her community. “It’s incredible hearing my kids say they are proud of me. I can teach them that mistakes don’t define a person — it’s what you do with those mistakes.” For Danielle, showing up for others has included recovery coaching in jails, recovery centers, and the treatment and recovery court system.

In the Opportunity Scholars program, Danielle advocates for legislative issues, gender justice, pretrial system change, and the same educational opportunities that changed her life. Danielle’s goal after graduating is to become a Certified Drug and Alcohol Counselor and to provide trauma-informed yoga therapy.

While she pours herself into connection and change, she keeps up the self-work, gratitude, and reflection that keeps her sober. “One thing I have learned throughout my recovery process is that you have to feel the pain to heal the pain.”



When a Restorative Justice Project event brought Danielle back to the county she was charged in, she was recognized by the chief of police. Her experience is a beautiful example of restoration. “I told him who I was today and that I’m proud of myself. He had heard about the work I was doing and told me that the county welcomes me with open arms.”

Danielle’s advice to others is simple yet powerful: “Don’t be afraid to ask for help.”



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.

Couples In Recovery



Transforming Conflict into Connection

by Elaine Shamos
and Glenn Simpson

Research has long confirmed that the mind and body are reciprocally intertwined. Specifically, our physical health is compromised by stressful feelings, especially conflicts that remain pent up or poorly expressed.

For couples in recovery, having conflict can be especially stressful due to past trauma, fear of anger, and lack of certain skills. Many of our clients say their arguing often escalates leading to one person shutting down or feeling the issues just never get resolved.

We have found couples need to let go of beliefs they have about conflict in order to start learning new strategies. Here are some common misbeliefs about arguing and new ways to look at conflict.

Just because you have conflict, does not mean you should not be together. All couples argue and it is totally normal. You are two individuals with separate ideas, goals, and personal histories.

Contrary to the belief that all conflict must be resolved, couples need to focus on managing it, because most issues do not

have a single solution. Making fundamental changes in how the couple understands each other is a more realistic approach.

There is not a right and wrong in conflict. Both people in the relationship have their own valid points of view and feelings about how they experience life. This is where listening is crucial. Be willing to understand the other and hear them without interruption. It may take time to truly know where your partner is coming from and try “walking in their shoes.”

The myth that men are more logical, and women are more emotional is outdated. Everyone has emotions and everyone has a need to be understood. The best way to engage with each other may need to be worked out with “rules” for arguing. For example, if one needs a break, they ask for a time-out to gather their composure.

Anger is not wrong. How one expresses it can be problematic. Using “I” statements rather than blaming or shaming, taking breaks from each other if it gets “too hot”, never using physical force, understanding that anger may come from trauma – all these strategies help with successfully expressing anger.

We may have been brought up with the idea that unless you love yourself, you are not capable of loving another. We are all recovering from something, and some wounds may never heal. But we can recognize their influence and still have loving, compassionate relationships.

Managing conflict may require help from a therapist who specializes in couples’ therapy. Here, there is a mediator to not only listen, but help people with boundaries and practicing new skills.

This may seem awkward initially, but soon these techniques become new habits and rituals that can lead to deeper connection.

Happily, there are techniques any couple can learn to argue better, and they only require a commitment to the relationship. Remember, conflict is good for your health and the health of your relationship.



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



Inhale Goodness, Exhale Wellness

by Carole Fontaine

Have you ever noticed how a big sigh can make you feel a bit better when you're stressed? Or how taking slow breaths can calm you down? Breathing is a secret tool we all have to help us ease our minds and relax our bodies.

Sometimes, when something bothers or upsets me, I notice my breathing changes. It's my body's way of telling me to pay attention. When I'm worried, scared, or nervous, my breath gets short and choppy. But by breathing on purpose — slowly and deeply — I can calm myself down.

This helps me control my feelings, calm my nerves, handle stress better, and regulate my nervous system.

When my diaphragm relaxes and moves harmoniously with all muscles

related to breathing, I feel a deep sense of release. It helps center me and control my inner peace.

Using different breathwork, or *pranayama*, to create changes in the body has been a building block of most yoga traditions. I have taken these practices off the mat and used them to calm myself while sailing through dangerous storms when I needed a clear mind to navigate, and I have used them to energize myself on late nights working on deadlines.

You can take these practices anywhere in your day-to-day life and empower yourself by knowing that your body is an ally that offers ways to live harmoniously.

Below are some examples. Start each one by closing your eyes and allowing three natural breath cycles to settle yourself as you become present in your inhales and exhales.

Grateful Breath

A beautiful practice is to bless each breath as you observe the ins and outs of normal breathing. Being actively present in the gift of life and breathing brings gratitude and develops mindfulness.

For the next 10 days, take 5 minutes to sit with your eyes closed and breathe naturally. With each inhale, invite love, health, and abundance; with each exhale, release something you are ready to let go of.

Whistle Breath (Calm and Soothing)

My diaphragm is often stuck in the upward position — fight or flight, holding on, pattern. Whistle Breath helps me exhale completely, releasing stagnant energy and making room for nourishing air to reach the far corners of my lungs. I feel lighter, more relaxed, and trusting.

I often practice this before bed after an unusually hectic day.

It was also very helpful when I had Covid-19 and bronchitis to relieve my shortness of breath.

1. Sit cross-legged with your back straight. (I also do it laying down in bed.)
2. Close your eyes and pucker your lips like you are drinking through a straw or blowing a kiss, and inhale and exhale through your mouth in a slow and natural rhythm. When you exhale, gently pull your navel in toward your spine to fully release the stagnant air and restart the cycle.
3. Do this for at least 3 minutes. Try it as you whistle — it can instantly lift your mood! (You can whistle on the inhale, the exhale, on both, or make no sound. Try the variations and see which one you prefer.) If you become dizzy or lightheaded, stop and resume normal breathing.

Energizing Breath

Some days when I need to be alert and focused, I rely on breathwork that energizes my body and heightens my senses. I turn to traditional yogic breaths such as Breath of Fire in Kundalini Yoga or similar *Bhastrika Pranayama*.

1. Sitting with your back straight, inhale and exhale forcibly through the nostrils in a rapid and rhythmic cycle while pumping the navel and solar plexus back toward the spine.
2. Do not pause. Let the inhalation come naturally as you concentrate on continuously pumping the belly and expelling the air. Your body should be relaxed with only your belly in action.
3. Aim for one breath cycle per second, but more importantly, keep a steady rhythm. Start with 1 to 3 minutes. End with one deep breath and release. (Tingling and light-headedness are normal, but if you become dizzy, resume normal breathing. Do not practice while pregnant or menstruating.)

Not sure where your solar plexus is? We've got you covered: The solar plexus, nestled between your stomach and rib cage, is your center of personal power. It's where you get those "gut feelings" that guide you toward inner strength and intuition on your journey to recovery.

Remember that whatever challenge you are facing today, take a deep breath, make space for newness, and let go with grace and gratitude. You've got this!

Excerpted in part from the "S.A.I.L. Above the Clouds" series.



Carole Fontaine is the author of the bestselling "S.A.I.L. Above the Clouds" series, which shares adventures from her 20 years of living aboard a sailboat. She uses the lessons she learned to teach empowerment, stress relief, and mental wellness. She is a Certified Mindfulness Life Coach and a Meditative Writing, Shakti Dance® Yoga, and Reiki Master Teacher. She speaks and gives workshops on mindset and stress management.



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Healing Inside Out

Elevating Physical Health with Recovery Coaching

by Denise Black

Recovery is a journey of healing and transformation that can lead to a fulfilling and healthy life despite past challenges of substance use or addiction.

While emotional and psychological states of recovery receive great attention, the role of physical health cannot be overlooked.

Some may come into recovery and find themselves with a host of physical ailments that have been unattended for years. Others may find they have no primary care doctor, insurance, or knowledge of where to turn for the help they need. Combined with not feeling well and being in early recovery, this can quickly become overwhelming.

Having a physically healthy lifestyle in recovery can be beneficial in many ways. Research shows that simple changes in diet, exercise, and stress management can lead to a reduction in withdrawal symptoms and cravings, increase mood, decrease depression, and improve sleep, focus, and concentration.

Many would agree that life in recovery is about much more than maintaining sobriety. It's also about taking action in areas of life that may have been ignored during substance use.

Learning and practicing the art of self care is a process that requires dedication, time, and effort.

Building healthy habits in small ways is important as they eventually become integrated into daily routines.

Over time, these healthy habits have a major impact on a person's overall well-being and health.

Remember, you don't need to recover alone! Recovery coaching is a free resource for those seeking recovery and their affected family members. Coaches are experts in their communities, knowing available resources, and providing support as an individual navigates their recovery journey.

Coaches honor all pathways to recovery and have lived experiences with substance use disorder, either personally or as an affected other.

Recovery coaches act as a bridge to resources, serve as mentors, and offer support, hope, and optimism for daily living.

Every person is unique, and so is their wellness pathway!

A recovery coach can be an integral part of your wellness journey. Focusing on the future rather than the past, coaches encourage and promote positivity in the people they work with, and meet people where they are at physically, mentally, and spiritually. Coaches also lead by example in sharing how they have built their own healthy lifestyles.

Having support during your recovery can make the difference between struggling and thriving, and a recovery coach may be helpful in linking you to the resources you need. Please consider this free resource as an option.

Request a free recovery coach here: <https://healthyacadia.org/need-help>

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

A Strategic Approach to Well-being

by Josh Warren

Recovery is a journey filled with many milestones and challenges. It's about more than just stopping harmful habits — it's about building a strong foundation for a healthier life. This foundation includes items often overlooked, such as access to transportation for meetings, having a primary care physician, a stable source of income, connection to a loved one, and knowing where the next meal comes from.

These fundamental aspects of life and recovery are collectively known as an individual's recovery capital.

Understanding Recovery Capital
Recovery isn't just about willpower or what's inside of you, it's about having the right tools and support to help you along the way. Imagine recovery capital as your personal toolkit for staying on track and feeling supported during your journey.

It includes feeling connected to your community, staying healthy, having a safe place to live, and finding a job or going to school. These are all parts of what helps you stay on track. Your coach will help you identify and access these resources.

Meet Your Recovery Coach
Your recovery coach is like your guide on this journey. They're there to help you figure out what tools you have in your toolkit and how to use them. Using motivation, understanding, trust, and teamwork, your coach will help you make a plan that fits your life. Your coach will also help you identify any barriers or challenges you may face and work with you to overcome them.

Exploring these assets and limitations honestly and collaboratively establishes a substantial and strengths-based recovery plan.

Assessing Your Progress
Checking in regularly helps you and your coach see what's working and what might need more attention. It's like taking a snapshot of your progress. This way, you can see how far you've come and what steps you need to take next. Your coach will help you set goals and track your progress over time.

Overcoming Barriers
Sometimes there are barriers to getting the help you need. This could include not having enough support from friends and family or not knowing about all the resources

available to you. Your recovery coach can help you figure out how to overcome these barriers and make the most of what you have. They'll also help you develop strategies for coping with stress and managing cravings.

The Power of Recovery Capital
Sustained recovery, in part, is born out of taking honest stock of what resources are available in the community, and recognizing and utilizing the adaptive skills within. Those who are meeting with recovery coaches can better expand their views and perceptions of their environment.

Developing your recovery capital creates a roadmap — one that is rooted in strength, resilience, and the unwavering belief in the power of the human spirit to overcome adversity. By focusing on these key aspects of recovery and working with your coach, you can build a solid foundation for a healthier and happier life. Remember, you're not alone on this journey — your recovery coach and support network are here to help you every step of the way.

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



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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.**

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www.lrrcbridgton.org

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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.

Spiritual Care Services of Maine

207-261-5200
Stress, anxiety, and crisis management support for all people of any faith or tradition, or no faith or tradition.
www.scsmaine.org

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
207-389-4937 and 207-389-4936

Beacon House Peer and Recovery Center

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

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
207-565-6374 • commonspacemaine.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

Save a Life Recovery Resource Center

19 VFW Street, Lincoln
207-403-9100

Together Place Peer Run Recovery Center

2 Second Street, Bangor
207-941-2897

Valley Peer Run Recovery Center

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

Wabanaki Health & Wellness Center

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





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