

Journey

making recovery from addiction visible

June/July 2024 • Issue 33



Ashley Thomas
Beyond Shame

**Breaking the
Chains of
Self-Stigma**

recovery information & resources



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Ashley Thomas
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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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Embracing Education and Growth

by Niki Curtis, Community Engagement Director



As *Journey's* Community Engagement Director, I'm excited to introduce this education-themed issue! Personal recovery stories, along with articles on higher education — check out “*A New Generation: Recovery-Friendly College Campuses*”

and “*Regaining Control: Overcoming the Bank Account Challenge*,” an article on financial literacy.

We've also included insightful articles such as “*Breaking the Chains of Self-Stigma*,” which discusses the inner critic that can often prevent us from pursuing growth opportunities and limit our capacity to explore our potential.

My role this past year has expanded, and I've had the opportunity to step into different environments, continually challenging me to raise my definition of my own potential as we expand the “community” aspect of my job. Each new experience, connection, and challenge provides growth to my understanding of what it means to be part of a community. These ever-expanding circles of engagement and support are vital to our personal and professional growth, and enrich my recovery.

The hardest part of anything new is showing up the first time. From the very beginning of my recovery, I've learned that in order to get comfortable, I must first get uncomfortable.

This past year, I've expanded my understanding of service, moving from my recovery circles to the broader community by becoming a Rotarian with the Portland

Rotary Club. Walking into my first rotary meeting, my fear was met with a warm welcome. Now, I am the Co-Chair of the New Membership Committee, a member of the Recovery Task Force, and I recently returned from a Rotary District 7780-funded trip to Poland. There, I learned about the mental health needs of Ukrainian refugees and the impact of war in their country.

I'm excited to share more over the next few months about the work being done by the Rotary Club, as *Journey* and District 7780 have joined forces to spread the word about recovery and the Rotary.

Starting this year, I've continued to embrace firsts by joining Cyclebar, an empowering spin class in Portland. More recently, I took our connection with The Phoenix, a sober active community, to a new level. At 52 years old, I walked into my first CrossFit class, prepared for the challenge.

Setting aside my assumptions and disputing my self-limiting beliefs, I not only survived the session but also discovered I am more capable than I ever imagined. Now I attend regularly, growing stronger and feeling empowered to step into more new spaces.

This personal growth has sparked a curiosity about where I can grow next. I am excited because the Niki of 2024 is limitless!

Readers, I hope you find a spark of curiosity for your own potential in the pages of our magazine and in the words of Winnie the Pooh, “You're braver than you believe and stronger and smarter than you think you are.”

Take good care, *Niki*



Here I am with Ethan Paquet from Saco & Biddeford Savings Bank at their new Speaker Series opening.

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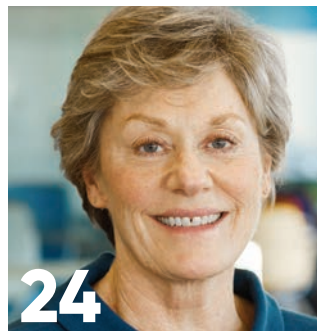
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ry saves lives

Beyond Shame

Ashley Thomas Finds Love, Joy, and Purpose

by Amy Paradysz

Ashley Thomas knows that recovery isn't always a straight shot, detours happen. She got sober from heroin at 21 years old. And then she got married, had kids, became an emergency room nurse... and got sober from fentanyl at 37.

"I started using in high school, smoking and drinking, some hallucinogens," Ashley says. "I had some Percocet for back pain, too, and started going through that fast... The first time I checked myself into detox, I told my parents I was going four-wheeling with some friends up north. And then my parents got the bill from the insurance company. When they asked me about it, I concocted a story that it was about the pain pills that my doctor had prescribed. And they were so proud of me."

Meanwhile, Ashley was still using.

"I blacked out and wrapped my car around a tree," she says. "I called my Dad to pick me up, and I didn't know where I was. Off to treatment, I went again, and eventually, I started listening and things started getting better."

But she didn't understand then — or for years — that addiction, rather than specific substances, was the problem. Case in point: She got out of detox on her 21st birthday and stopped at the liquor store, rationalizing that her problem wasn't with alcohol.

"In September 2005, I ended up at a 12-step program in New Hampshire that changed my life," she says. "It

allowed me an opportunity to look at myself and start taking ownership."

Along with a few other women from the same recovery program, Ashley moved to an Oxford House, a women's sober house in Portland. While living there, she went to a 12-step meeting every morning at Milestone Recovery. "It was gritty, with unhoused people, the old-timers who had been sober for 40 years, and the young kids who were in detox," Ashley says. "There was something powerful about that."

She met a guy who was living in a men's sober house, and they started a sober life together, got an apartment, then got married, and had a couple of kids.

"After almost 12 years of sobriety, he and I had this discussion that maybe we could casually drink now," she says. "We both started drinking occasionally. It wasn't excessive... until it was."

Meanwhile, Ashley went through nursing school and found a career she loved. "I had so much love and passion for my work, and it began to highlight the ongoing differences [with my husband] in years of a rollercoaster relationship." Ashley and her husband decided to divorce. But, she says, "We had an idealistic co-parenting relationship. Our friends would often comment on how beautifully we worked together and remained kind to one another."



It wasn't all ideal, though. Now living part of each week alone, Ashley started drinking when she got home from night shifts. Then she found a lump in her breast which led to have a partial mastectomy.

"I went to my pre-op appointment and they gave me a prescription for Oxycodone," she says. "I filled it that day and probably took it all in two days. Then, when I had the surgery, I knew what to say to get some more pain meds."

During this time, Ashley was struggling with the surgery not going as planned; she was dealing with complications and was out of work for longer than intended. She became depressed as she grappled with accepting there would be permanent disfigurement she didn't intend on having, which led to excessive drinking while she was home.

"On my first day back, I had a trauma patient, and my brain went

blank.” She couldn’t remember what to do because she was still detoxing from alcohol.

“We had medication machines in the ER that dispensed using our fingerprint,” Ashley says. “I started to divert significant amounts of medication from the hospital. I knew I was going to get caught. I was on camera. I remember hanging my head as I did it and thinking, ‘This is it, my nursing license is gone.’”

When Ashley was called to meet with the nursing director and human resources, she confessed.

“I knew that I wouldn’t have a job anymore,” she says. “But the most beautiful thing happened; they met me with kindness and ensured that I had a safe place to go to access help. I had already coordinated rehab. I knew this was going to happen, and it was time.”

Ashley surrendered her nursing license and entered a treatment facility.

“I used to believe that abstinence and the 12 steps were the only option and that if you didn’t do it that way, you weren’t doing it right,” Ashley says. “I didn’t believe in medication-assisted treatment, but that ended up saving my life. I realized it doesn’t matter how I got sober, just that I did.”

Four months into sobriety, Ashley faced a major hurdle: the sudden death of her ex-husband. She had to grieve while parenting her grieving children alone.

Ashley stayed well, though, and joined Milestone Recovery as a nurse. After three years of negative drug screenings and participation in the Medical Professionals Health Program, Ashley’s nursing license is no longer restricted. She now leads the nursing team in Portland.

Looking back on her story, Ashley says, “As a nurse, I was too ashamed to seek inpatient detox anywhere in

Maine for my opiate use disorder. I was once a well-respected and highly skilled emergency room nurse. Why is it that, because I have RN after my name, I thought I wasn’t like everyone else? More importantly, why did I feel that others believed that?”

She continues, “Most people I’ve worked with would only genuinely want me to get help. My shame had been keeping me sick. My shame kept me from getting the treatment I deserved.”

“On the other side of shame, life is beautiful,” she says. “However many times treatment is needed, that’s how many times it is needed. I want my story to help those who feel huge amounts of shame or concern about losing their career if they ask for help, to know that recovery is possible. Folks who are healthcare professionals or first responders, please reach out for help. I want everyone to be met with the same kindness that I was, and to know that you can get it all back, and then some.”

Today, Ashley is engaged to be married and is a loving and present mom to three boys (including her soon-to-be stepson), plus a dog and a kitten. She finds joy through traveling and gardening, digging in the dirt, and watching vegetation come to life. She also has a purpose in helping others through medically supervised detox.

“Watching the gray fade from clients’ eyes and watching the color come back to their faces is beautiful,” Ashley says. “Clients often say they are embarrassed to return to detox. I’m just grateful they made it back.”



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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A New Generation

Recovery-Friendly College Campuses

by **Jacqueline Brown**

College is a time of personal growth and newfound independence. For many students, this period of experimentation includes exploring one's relationship with substance use.

"The tight-knit relationship between college and alcohol and drug use dates back to the earliest years of the nation's history," says Kimberly Boulden, PhD, Senior Director of SAFE Campuses, a SAFE Project recovery initiative for college campuses.

"For example, Harvard built and operated its own brewery. The brewery failed to keep up with student demand, and after growing student complaints, Harvard's president was fired in 1969. Colleges continue to be associated with alcohol use, and now are increasingly associated with marijuana use as well."

She continues, "In the early 1970s, during the height of student anti-war and civil rights protests, an estimated one in nine people smoked marijuana daily."

Still, while substance use has been part of the college experience since colleges first existed in the U.S., what has come into clearer focus in recent years is the proliferation of substance use problems among today's college students.

As Kimberly confirms, "At least 12% of college students will meet the criteria for a significant substance use disorder during their college years, and approximately one in three incoming college students report struggling with mental illness."

And these days, it isn't just alcohol and marijuana being used on college campuses. According to the American Addiction Centers, college students are increasingly using opioids, stimulants, and sedatives as top substances of choice.

This is worrisome on many levels. "The emergence of substances such as fentanyl [a synthetic opioid] has added a layer of complexity and danger to the landscape of college substance use. Its unpredictable presence in the illicit drug supply has had fatal consequences, erasing the once relatively safe 'on-ramp' for experimentation," says Kimberly.

To address the challenges presented by increased substance use, campuses have a critical need to offer health promotion, harm reduction, and collegiate recovery programs.

"Collegiate recovery is a 40-year-old, yet still-emerging, practice that seeks to serve students in recovery from an addiction and the many unique needs these students experience while navigating colleges and universities," Kimberly relates.

Unfortunately, collegiate recovery is still not yet widely implemented. While nearly half a million college students identify as in recovery, fewer than 5% of universities offer collegiate recovery programs.

As for the reason why recovery programs in college are slow to catch on, a common response to collegiate recovery advocates who promote recovery programming to campus leaders is abrupt, "We don't have students in recovery here."

As Kimberly explains, "The invisibility of students in recovery is often deeply rooted in stigma. Students in recovery report navigating not just the stigma of addiction, but for students who follow an abstinence-based pathway, many report campuses being 'abstinence hostile,' particularly with rite of passage norms."

Compounding this, the absence of collegiate recovery programs could be interpreted by students in recovery as rejection and exclusion. The failure to discuss these issues also deters other students needing help from seeking support.

However, Kimberly points to research showing when collegiate recovery programs are established on campuses, students in recovery thrive and serve the campus in many ways, once their existence and sense of belonging are affirmed.



Here's where SAFE Campuses comes in.

SAFE Campuses, a cornerstone initiative of SAFE Project, was founded in November of 2017 by Admiral James and Mary Winnefeld, following the loss of their 19-year-old son Jonathan to an accidental overdose on his college campus.

“The Winnefelds immediately channeled their grief into action, hoping to save more families from the pain of loss,” Kimberly says. SAFE Project’s initiatives focus on a few key areas, including:

- Meeting the unique needs of college populations (SAFE Campuses)
- Workers and employers (SAFE Workplaces)
- Military-connected individuals and their families (SAFE Veterans)
- Local providers, front-line workers, and community members at large (SAFE Communities)

For colleges, SAFE Campuses combats stigma around recovery issues and connects colleges with recovery resources to support their recovery community.

“We understand that every college campus is unique in size, population, and culture, and so what works at one institution may not be as effective at another... [what we do] is share best practices and then work to co-author individualized solutions with each campus,” says Kimberly.

No campus recovery need is too big or too small. SAFE Campuses has worked with multi-campus systems to roll out naloxone training and distribution programs, and also worked with individual recovery coordinators to supplement and diversify current programming on their campus.

The SAFE Campuses initiative makes a difference by working alongside students and staff to foster change and growth in campus-wide recovery programs.

“SAFE Campuses has supported Colorado State University to design, roll out, and evaluate “harm-reduction vending machines,” where students could anonymously obtain supplies such as Narcan, condoms, and fentanyl testing strips. At the University of Nevada, Reno, we worked with a passionate student to implement an art installation raising awareness around recovery stories and journeys,” Kimberly describes.

SAFE Campuses has evolved over the years but stays true to the belief that collegiate recovery is critical for meeting the needs of today’s students.

“Since our founding, the team has worked with over 500 college campuses nationwide. There are over 4,000 colleges and universities across the United States, so while we’ve continued to grow our impact year

after year, there’s still a long way to go,” Kimberly confirms.

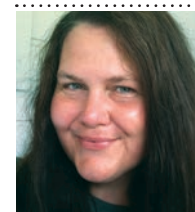
Locally, SAFE Campuses works with the University of Southern Maine and Washington County Community College in Calais.

More college communities are welcome to see how SAFE Campuses can help students, faculty, staff, and the wider campus community stay healthy.

One tip from Kimberly—“We strongly recommend you start conversations with your campus by identifying the key stakeholders you need to engage.”

She continues, “We find that when we work with one or two advocates, we can go fast, but when we build multi-pronged coalitions, we go far.”

If you are interested in connecting with SAFE Campuses or learning more about advocacy training for students, as well as professional development for staff, check out the website at www.safeproject.us/campuses/ or reach out to campuses@safeproject.us.



Jacqueline Brown is a freelance writer from Southern Maine who regularly contributes to national and regional publications. A former public school teacher in the Boston area, Jacqueline is the published author of several books for children and is a past recipient of the Maine Literary Award for Children's Literature.

Drumming Up Wellness

Music Therapy's Rhythmic Approach

by Kim Wilson

Music therapy was developed during World War II to help veterans deal with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and related emotional issues. But, according to Kate Beever, Music Therapist and Owner of Maine Music and Health, "They realized it was also helping with motor skills, such as walking and arm mobility for people who had been injured."

The research also supported "the use of music to impact all kinds of physical behaviors," Kate says, "as well as emotions, thinking skills, attention span, memory, and speech."

Kate, who has a master's degree in music psychotherapy, explains her field as "...a balance between talk therapy and music making, so you learn both of those techniques and how to put them together."

"I studied classical percussion," she explains, "but as a music therapist, I carry a guitar and a keyboard. I play a lot of instruments so I can add emotional quality to the music."

"I also have a ton of percussion instruments in my office," she adds, "because most of the people I work with are not musicians and wouldn't be comfortable if I brought out a flute or something. Drums and percussion are a great way to get people playing. Most people can carry a basic beat or rhythm, and it's really fun."

"Music therapists work in all different settings," she explains. "We're not teaching or performing music. Instead, we use music to help people improve their speaking, movement, feelings, and how they express themselves. All sorts of different skill sets can be helped through music."



Image Credit: Molly Haley

While Kate doesn't specialize in recovery (some music therapists do), she acknowledges that "addiction is very common, and many of my clients have been dealing with that. That's where the emotional and social impact of music therapy can help."

She continues: "One of the things I've found to be helpful is family or group therapy. Groups of people will come and work on controlling their emotions and communicating with each other. We work on some of those social skills that can make us feel more confident. It helps to reduce some of the shame and guilt attached to the things we're dealing with."

Kate goes on to explain, "You can address a lot of skills that people are working on through drums. It kind of creates this buffer," she says. "So instead of saying 'Okay, today we're going to talk about the stressors that cause us to relapse or cause us to start drinking again,' we can say,

'Let's go around and express your stressors on your drums today, and then we'll talk about it.'"

"Music therapy doesn't replace other therapies or medication," Kate stresses, "but it's a great addition for some things that unfortunately our healthcare system doesn't have time to help, such as social skills and building community," which are key elements of recovery.

"We're facilitating space for people to feel comfortable expressing themselves," she says of her work. "And I try to get people laughing a lot because music therapy is good for adding a little positivity to the routine."



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.



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ROCC Solid Success

Empowering Recovery and Wellness at USM

by Kim Wilson

Now in its seventh year, the Recovery Oriented Campus Center (ROCC) at the University of Southern Maine (USM) continues to grow and expand. It promotes wellness and success for all students, but in particular, those in recovery.

“The program is based around overall recovery and what that looks like. It embraces all the different pathways to success,” explains Chris Corson, Program Coordinator. He goes on to say, “Sometimes people get turned off [by the word ‘recovery’], but in reality, we know that everyone in this world is recovering from something, especially since the pandemic. The program is about overall wellness, and that encompasses everything.”

“I think we still struggle with the stigma around mental health,” he adds. “And the stigma around people who have a relationship with substances as being ‘less than.’”

Dakota Eddy, a student at USM, says, “The ROCC is super important to USM. It helps students with more than just substance use problems. It helps them stay healthy in many ways. They do a lot of good events promoting student wellness for everybody,” she says. “We have a lot of student turnout at these events. It adds to campus life.”

Dakota’s “big passion” in the ROCC has been Narcan training, which she hopes to do more of next year.

Dakota’s work with the center is inspired by her personal history.

“I lost my uncle to substance use disorder, he passed away when I was nine,” she shares. “And in the area I grew up in [Rutland, Vermont], I watched a lot of my peers in high school fall into stuff and lose the motivation for their goals.”

In the supportive climate of the ROCC, students share their recovery experience while connecting with an understanding and encouraging community. This leads to both personal and academic success.

“What we see is students graduating,” Chris says. “As of 2022, the average GPA was 3.2 for students involved in the ROCC. So we see a relationship between a college that supports students in recovery and academic success.”

The ROCC promotes this success through various channels. “Some students want to make friends in simple ways, not just at parties,” Chris says. “The ROCC helps them feel like they belong at USM. This is a key part of ROCC, to create a sense of belonging within the USM community. We organize fun activities such as weekly ROCC lunches, yoga, self-care nights, bowling, and pizza parties.”

Another branch of the ROCC includes well-attended peer-led support groups, including Mindful Men and Women of Color.

An additional emphasis of the program is financial literacy. Financial literacy is the ability to understand and effectively use various financial skills, including personal financial management, budgeting, and investing. It involves knowing how to make smart decisions in all aspects of managing money, including saving, spending, and planning for future financial needs.

“Financial stress for college students is real,” Chris emphasizes. “The issue of not having enough food or not having enough money is a big stressor that can sometimes contribute to relapse. We offer workshops to teach students about financial literacy and what that means,” he says. “How to budget, and to be OK to say, ‘I can’t go out tonight, I don’t have the money.’”

The University also celebrates Collegiate Recovery Day on April 15th each year but extends the observance to a full week of workshops and activities.

Chris notes that there is even a special graduation ceremony for students and their families who are part of the ROCC.

We have a ‘ROCC-tail’ party with food, and do reels of photos,” he says. “We celebrate ‘most improved peers’ — peers who have pushed themselves. We celebrate people who run groups, the graduates, and a staff person who’s been chosen as a ‘ROCC ally of the year.’”

The ROCC has two designated spaces: the second floor of the Sullivan Recreation and Fitness Complex on the Portland campus, and the Farmhouse on the Gorham campus, where any student interested is welcome to drop in.

“Most of our people are fine with the concept of ‘it’s OK to not be OK,’” says Chris. “You can just be your awkward self, or your regular self, or whatever self you bring.”

“It’s just a really safe setting to come and to be around others who don’t think they have to be perfect all the time.”

“People know that if they’re struggling, there’s always somebody here to talk to,” Dakota adds. “And it’s completely judgment-free.”



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.

A vertical graphic with a dark background. At the top, a white-bordered box contains the text: "RECOVERY IS POSSIBLE. YOU HAVE A PLACE TO START. START HERE." Below this, the text "SACOPEE VALLEY HEALTH CENTER" is written in white, followed by "MAT- MEDICATION ASSISTED TREATMENT PROGRAM" and "PROVIDING SUPPORT AND SERVICES FOR OPIOID USE DISORDER." in smaller white text. At the bottom, there is a circular logo for the health center featuring a tree and the text "SACOPEE VALLEY HEALTH CENTER". Below the logo, the address "70 Main Street, Porter" and website "www.svhc.org" are listed, along with the phone number "207-625-8126".

Welcome to The ROCC

The Recovery Oriented Campus Center (ROCC) at the University of Southern Maine is a Collegiate Recovery Program focused on establishing peer support to build a community for students in recovery from substance use and other mental health conditions.

Recovery Defined

At the ROCC, we use the definition of recovery put forth by SAMHSA: “Recovery is a *process* of change through which people improve their health and wellness, live self-directed lives, and strive to reach their full potential.”

While we know that there are many different paths to recovery and supporting those in recovery, there are four dimensions to consider:

Health: Overcoming or managing one’s disease(s) or symptoms and making informed, healthy choices that support physical and emotional well-being.

Home: Having a stable and safe place to live.

Purpose: Conducting meaningful daily activities and having the independence, income, and resources to participate in society.

Community: Having relationships and social networks that provide support, friendship, love, and hope.

At the ROCC, we aim to promote the continual improvement of a campus environment that makes it possible for members of our community to be able to improve their health, have a stable and safe living environment, find meaning, and establish community.

Find out more by visiting usm.maine.edu/recovery-oriented-campus-center

Building Strong Futures

Resilience and Positive Childhood Experiences

In partnership with the Maine Resilience Building Network

by Delvina Miremadi-Baldino

In our continuous journey to understand and support recovery, the significance of resilience and Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs) emerges as a cornerstone for nurturing well-rounded, healthy individuals.

It's crucial to recognize the diverse roles that all caregivers and community members play in nurturing well-rounded, healthy youth. This includes not just educators in schools, but also mentors in programs like the Girl and Boy Scouts, community group leaders, and other individuals who interact with children and teens.

Resilience, as defined by Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child, is the ability to recover from significant adversity. This resilience is bolstered by protective factors that help individuals adapt and thrive despite challenges.

Understanding resilience as a skill that can be nurtured, rather than a fixed trait, is empowering for everyone in the recovery ecosystem. It teaches that resilience can grow with effort and support, making this concept especially relevant to those helping youths navigate recovery or the risks of substance use.

In practice, resilience training might involve teaching young people how to handle setbacks, manage stress, and face challenges with optimism. For those in recovery, these skills are crucial, equipping them with the tools needed to deal with both their educational pursuits and personal recovery challenges.

Research published in the Journal of the American Medical Association



Pediatrics reveals that individuals with a higher number of PCEs are less likely to experience depression, poor mental health in adulthood, or engage in substance use.

PCEs — like receiving warm, supportive interactions from adults, feeling accepted within a community, and participating constructively in group activities - greatly enhance a child's emotional and psychological resilience.

These positive experiences lay a strong foundation for self-esteem and personal worth, which are vital for resisting negative influences and the temptation of substance use.

We can promote PCEs and resilience across various settings through:

Supportive Relationships

Whether as teachers, Scout leaders, or sports coaches, adults can forge strong, supportive relationships with young individuals, creating environments where they feel safe, valued, and understood.

Inclusive and Engaging Activities

Programs and curricula should aim for inclusivity and active engagement, helping youths feel integrated into their groups. Activities that incorporate real-life skills and

emotional learning are particularly effective in building resilience.

Community Involvement

Strengthening ties between educational institutions, local businesses, community centers, and other community-based organizations can enhance resilience by involving families and local communities in supportive roles.

By promoting resilience and PCEs, we not only support recovery and prevent substance use but also contribute to building fulfilling, resilient lives for all young people. This collective effort can transform individual lives and entire communities, turning each story into one of hope and possibility.

For more information on the study discussed, visit: developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/inbrief-what-is-resilience/

For more information on PCEs, visit maineresilience.org



Delvina Miremadi-Baldino is the Executive Director of Maine Resilience Building Network. She is a Certified Positive Psychology Practitioner, a Certified Coach, and a passionate advocate for mental health. Delvina is dedicated to integrating resilience and health equity into the very fabric of Maine's communities.

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Bridging New Opportunities

McAuley's Innovative Model

From the John T. Gorman Foundation Newsletter

A bridge and a couple of miles are all that separate McAuley Residence in Portland from Southern Maine Community College (SMCC) in South Portland. But for the women of McAuley Residence, a two-generation residential program for women in substance use disorder recovery, getting to college, and receiving the benefits that education would offer them and their children, can seem impossible.

A partnership between McAuley Residence and SMCC, with support from the John T. Gorman Foundation, creates new education opportunities to help moms and their children close the distance.

Part of Northern Light Mercy Hospital, the nationally recognized McAuley Residence has two locations, with 15 family apartments in Portland and 14 in Bangor. A third location in Portland with 10 apartments opens later this year and will accommodate mothers and their teenage children.

Participants progress through three program phases over a period between 18 months to two years. In the first phase, women connect with a network of healthcare providers and community partners to stabilize and access treatment while building a durable network of support.

The second phase is aspirational, with women exploring career and education options.

In the third phase, they secure outside housing and receive continued support for a successful transition into their new lives.

What makes McAuley Residence even more successful is the



two-generation model it uses to simultaneously support mothers and their children. If mothers have lost custody of their children, there is a closely monitored process with the state to reunify them, with many families eventually living together in the residence.

A parent coach from The Opportunity Alliance provides critical support and skill-building to help make reunifications successful. After being assessed for their trauma and needs, children in the program receive a range of coordinated support - including healthcare, counseling, and access to quality early education.

McAuley Residence has persistent, positive results for family reunification and sustained recovery. But Melissa Skahan, who heads the program as the hospital's Vice President of Mission Integration and Support Services, said one trend began to concern her in recent years: a decline in the number of women enrolled in college. Eager to provide for their families, more women were

choosing to enter the workforce in entry-level or low-wage jobs.

“When I saw the decline in enrollment, I realized we had to do something different,” Melissa said. “The last thing you want is to reunify a family and have them exit McAuley and live below the poverty level. You have to do that aspirational piece.”

In response, McAuley Residence partnered with SMCC to provide an education success coach at its Portland location - someone who not only works with women around their broad career and education goals but also acts as a bridge to help women enroll and take classes at the college.

Funding from the John T. Gorman Foundation supports the education coach position, as well as access to education support and the development of a family learning curriculum.

“What is impressive about McAuley Residence is the work it does to continually refine and strengthen its model, using research and

evidence-based practices to respond to the emerging needs of the families it serves,” says Jennifer Beck, the Foundation’s Vice President of Programs. “It’s been very exciting to see this new partnership develop and to know that the moms are being supported on their education and career pathways, which we’re confident will bring many long-term benefits to them and their children.”

Women’s goals vary widely — some have little education or work experience while others have advanced degrees.

For most, though, the first step is helping women shift their perspective to define themselves by their strengths rather than by past mistakes and traumatic histories. The journey of their recovery is an asset rather than a liability.

The success coach works with women individually and leads a weekly group covering everything from resume writing and job applications to addressing recovery in a job interview. At the same time, the coach is reaching out to employers in the community to find supportive workplaces where women can apply their talents.

Melissa said the education program has touched every woman in some way, and it has been powerful to see several take the first steps down the college path.

“There is nothing more beautiful than women finding their voice, reunifying with their children, and embracing transformation,” Melissa said. “The education coach opens a world of opportunities and sets a path toward a life that most felt was out of reach.”

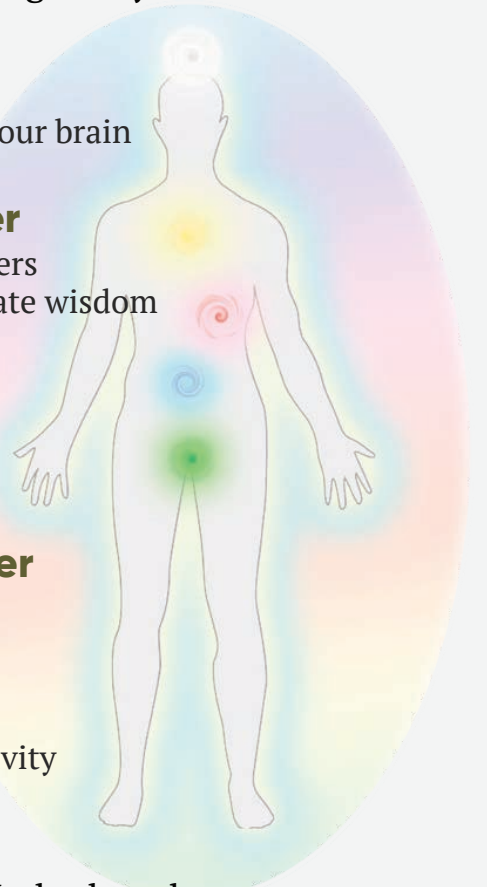
For more information on the John T. Gorman Foundation visit www.jtgfoundation.org and on the McAuley Residence and Northern Light go to www.northernlighthealth.org/McAuley-Residence.

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From Recovery to the Finish Line

Chris Madden's Story

by **Gabrielle Gilbert**

Chris Madden comes from a family of record-breakers. His father and grandfather were marathon runners with many successes under their belts. Chris was athletic throughout his life, from team sports to martial arts to CrossFit and yoga.

As a young boy, Chris admired his father and always wanted to do his best. However, he faced challenges with substance use that got in the way of his dreams and can-do attitude. What started as young fun slowly became a problem that stopped him from living the life he wanted.

On June 12, 2017, Chris decided to make a big change. He became sober, leaving behind drugs and alcohol. He remembers a special moment with his father during this time; his father told him he was proud of how Chris was able to pick himself up, “dusting off his pants and getting back after it.”

“When he said that to me, it was the first time in my life I didn't trust myself to be able to figure this out [on my own],” Chris says. These words were very important to Chris, especially at a time when he was struggling to believe in himself.

It was time for a new start. Chris had to change it all. He went through detox, rehab, and sober living until he found himself on the other side of his recovery goal. What he found most rewarding on his path was the time he spent outdoors and in nature. He didn't pick up hiking until he pursued recovery, but once he did, he threw himself into it.

On his fourth anniversary of sobriety, Chris completed the New

Hampshire 48, a challenge for hikers to climb 48 mountains in the state that meet or exceed 4,000 feet in elevation. His father joined him on the last hike, but Chris didn't share the significance of the date with him until he asked.

In his youth, Chris would have made the journey about him and his accomplishments, he explained, but instead, he wanted to dedicate this trip to quality time spent with his old man - the man who has been there for “every single thing” in Chris's life.

Through recovery, Chris found patience and self-belief he could rely on and use to push past his limitations. Through his recovery programs, he was drawn to any organization with an outdoor aspect.

Currently, Chris works for Foundation House as the admissions coordinator and is working toward becoming a clinician there, hoping to offer the kind of community that pulled him back into himself.

He praises Foundation House for its commitment to recovery work and the outdoor programs it offers. These principles guide Chris's own life on what he calls the “braided interest” of community development, mindfulness, communing with nature, and being physically active.

“I started small and I built over time,” he says, “incremental change, just inching a little bit forward with each effort. I've found that challenges always present themselves...What I learned from getting through those challenges [is that] adversity [can be] internally strengthening.”

By building up this strength, Chris has pursued taller climbs, longer



runs, and a heart-centered life. He engages in his personal goals with joy and determination, feeling held by his family and in good company within his community. He says, “The things that I value most in my life now are things that you can't create on your own.”

“If I allow myself to reflect on the previous day through the lens of gratitude, I'm blown away.” Chris says, “I'm astonished at where my life is. Throughout the day, if I review morning, lunch, or late afternoon, I'm just like, ‘How did this become my life?’”

“Substances and alcohol do nothing but pull you away from the life that you ultimately want. Pursuing recovery can help set the building blocks to the life you couldn't have dreamed that you could otherwise create for yourself.”



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

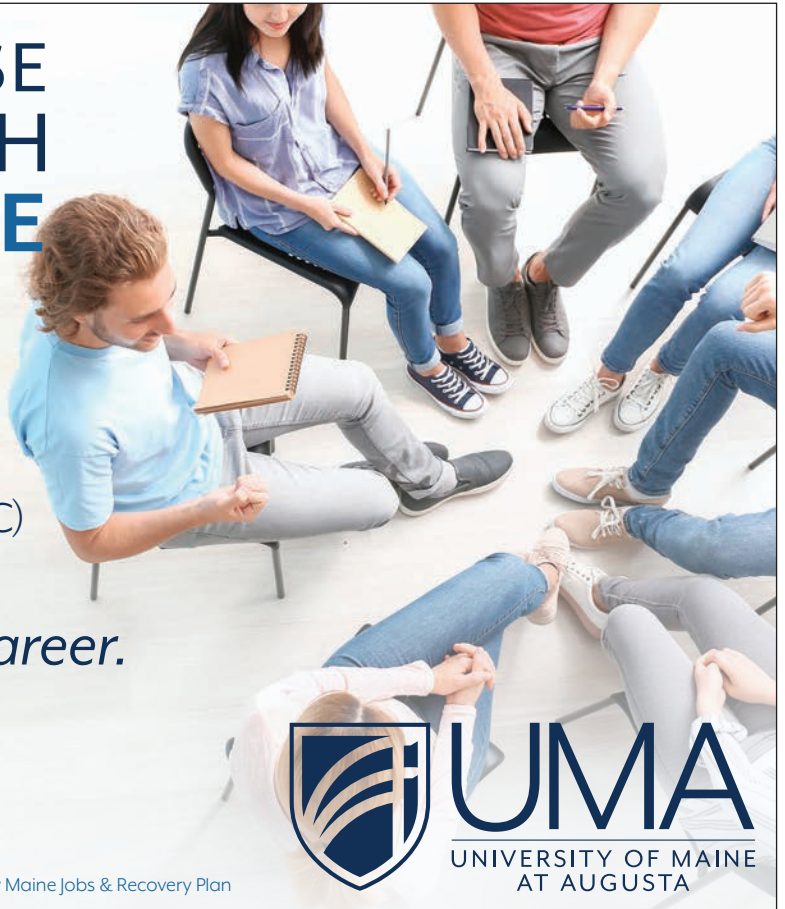
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Nutrition 101

Simple Steps to Better Health

by Allison Stowell

Meeting your health and nutrition goals doesn't have to be a struggle. We're here to simplify it for you. With small shifts in our eating habits, we can all be on our way to taking simple steps toward better health.

Stay Hydrated

Hydration is important for good digestion, controlling hunger, and maintaining overall wellness. It's not necessary to be strict about the exact amount of fluid you have daily. A simple indicator that you're well-hydrated is if your urine is pale yellow.

If you find plain water unappealing, consider adding fruit. Or try alternatives such as flavored sparkling water, herbal teas, or other calorie-free drinks. Remember, the water content in fruits and vegetables also counts toward your hydration goals!

Manage Blood Sugar

If you've been warned by your doctor about a potential risk for diabetes, don't be overwhelmed. Becoming stressed about it can make it harder to control your blood sugar levels. You are empowered to lower your risk, no matter your age or family history.

One useful approach is to eat smaller meals more frequently throughout the day. Try combining carbohydrates (whole-grain crackers, carrots, or bananas) with dietary fats (such as almonds) or proteins (such as a cheese stick). This will slow your digestion, reduce blood sugar spiking, and help you maintain even blood sugar. Try it out— your taste buds will also thank you.

Improve Digestion

Many of us experience digestive issues that can cause discomfort. If this sounds familiar, try not to be upset. There are several steps you can take to reduce these symptoms. Start by ensuring you're drinking enough fluids.

Next, check your daily fiber intake — it should be between 25 to 30 grams daily. Adding probiotics to your diet can also make a big difference. Probiotics are beneficial bacteria that support a healthier gut, improve digestion, and can reduce stomach discomfort.

You can find probiotics in fermented foods such as kefir (a fermented milk drink), unpasteurized sauerkraut (look for labels that say "raw"), kimchi, and yogurt with live cultures.

Lower Your Cholesterol

Interestingly, the steps you take to improve your digestion can also help manage your cholesterol levels. Cholesterol is broken down into two parts: low-density lipoprotein (LDL) and high-density lipoprotein (HDL). To make it easier, LDL is referred to as "bad cholesterol" and HDL is known as "healthy cholesterol."

To specifically target cholesterol, focus on reducing your intake of saturated fats, which are often found in full-fat dairy, higher-fat meats, and certain oils such as coconut oil. What are higher-fat meats? Pork belly, sausage, dark chicken meat, and ground beef that isn't at least 85%/15% (which indicates 15% fat).

At the same time, aim to increase your HDL (healthy) cholesterol through physical activity. Be sure to include more healthy fats in your diet from sources that include vegetable oils, nuts, seeds, avocados, and fish. For more information and recipes, check out our Good Food, Good Choices section at: www.hannaford.com/health-wellness.

Become a More Mindful Eater

Meeting many of our health and wellness goals begins with becoming a more mindful eater. Be present during meals. A good way to do this is to remove distractions



**In partnership with
Hannaford Supermarkets**

such as your phone or TV, which can make it hard to focus on your eating experience.

Try eating slower, focusing on how hungry you are before you begin eating, and stopping when you are satisfied, not just when your plate is empty. The adage “my eyes were bigger than my stomach” comes to mind, and it is easy to fill your plate with more food than your stomach needs. Set your leftovers aside as a snack for later or pack it up as a lunch for the next day.

Control Emotional Eating

Once you’ve become a more mindful eater, you are on your way to managing emotional eating. Identifying emotional hunger is the first step. Emotional hunger is a type of hunger that comes quickly (one moment you weren’t thinking about food and now you are). It feels urgent and is usually a craving for something specific (food that’s crunchy, sweet, or salty, for example).

The other important thing to know about emotional hunger is that it isn’t related to a sensation of hunger in your stomach, therefore you won’t ever feel full when you emotionally eat. However, after emotional eating, you may feel guilty or uncomfortable. If you’re experiencing emotional

hunger, try to identify what else you’re feeling and seek other ways of settling that emotion.

Plan and Prep Your Meals

Meal planning and preparing is the foundation of a nourishing, supportive eating plan. It’s also the key to reducing waste and saving money at the supermarket.

Begin by looking at your calendar and considering what the upcoming week looks like. Do you have late nights or busier days that make it difficult to prepare meals? Are there days when you have time to prepare more than one meal?

Then examine what you have on hand and what needs to be used before expiring. This will help you decide what to cook. The result will be a shopping list that matches your needs, supports your lifestyle, and ensures you can make nutritious meals.

Boost Your Energy

Feeling sluggish? Eating small, balanced meals every 2 to 3 hours can stabilize your energy. Include a mix of carbohydrates, proteins, and fats to keep your energy levels consistent. It may mean that your meals are smaller to accommodate balanced, intentional snacks without overconsuming your daily calories.

Next, try to avoid added sugars in your diet. They are digested quickly and don’t sustain energy.

Snack Intelligently

I love snacks. Snacks sustain our energy between meals, control hunger, and help us meet our daily needs. Snacking though, isn’t about grazing or just grabbing something nearby.

Ideally, snacks are intentional, planned, and deliberate (just like our meals). By eating this way, we can fuel our bodies throughout the day.

Focus on Overall Wellness

Let’s become more mindful eaters, slow down to consider what drives our eating habits, and make sure to plan and prepare nourishing meals. When this is the focus, we’ll feel better and likely reach an ideal body weight, too.

Every change, no matter how small, moves you closer to your wellness goals. Keep going — you are doing great!



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.

Taking Flight

EFT Tapping Could Change Your Life

by Karen St. Clair

Find out from this review just how easily EFT Tapping can change your life, even if you're skeptical.

"I remember my first EFT Tapping session, I suffered from a debilitating fear of flying for over 20 years. Just the thought of getting on an airplane would send waves of anxiety and panic through my body. My heart would race, my palms would get sweaty, and I would start breathing rapidly.

On several occasions, I had to be helped off flights before they even took off because I was having such severe panic attacks. This phobia limited my life in many ways. I avoided air travel at all costs, which meant I missed out on family vacations and work opportunities that required travel, and I couldn't visit friends who lived far away. I felt trapped and my world had become very small.

I tried everything to get over this fear — traditional talk therapy, anti-anxiety medication, breathing exercises, you name it. Nothing worked for very long. The fear always came creeping back with a vengeance. I was starting to resign myself to living with this phobia forever.

Then a friend told me about EFT or "tapping" as it's sometimes called. She had used it successfully for her own anxiety issues and suggested I give it a try. At first, I was skeptical - it seemed almost too simple and a bit strange. But I was desperate, so I figured it was worth a shot.

I found Karen St.Clair online and made an appointment for a session.

On the day of my appointment, my anxiety levels were through the roof just from thinking about dealing with my flying phobia. But Karen made me



feel at ease right away. She explained that EFT works by tapping on specific energy meridian points on the body [like an energy superhighway helping your body's energy flow from one spot to another] while repeating phrases of acceptance, letting any thoughts and feelings come up and be released.

It sounds weird, but there is solid science behind why and how it works to rewire the brain.

As we started the tapping process, I began to feel a significant reduction in my anxiety and panic. We kept tapping through several rounds, dealing with not just the fear of flying itself, but also uncovering and releasing the core issue that caused my fear of flying. It was incredibly powerful and transformative. By the end of that single session, a life-long phobia that had ruled and limited me for over 20 years...was just gone.

The fear had melted away and been permanently released.

A few weeks later, I booked a flight to visit family and the experience was

nothing like it used to be. I felt calm and peaceful, and I wasn't gripped by terror at all. EFT Tapping had finally freed me and given me my life back.

I'm so grateful I discovered this amazing tool. EFT Tapping changed everything for me in such a profound way. If you suffer from any kind of phobia, anxiety, or emotional trauma, I can't recommend EFT Tapping enough. It could truly change or even save your life like it did for 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 RenewalSM and a highly skilled professional with a true gift for facilitating her clients' life-changing outcomes. karenstclairEFT.com
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Regaining Control

Overcoming the Bank Account Challenge



by Linda Halleran

Regaining financial control over one's life is an important part of the recovery journey. However, people in recovery can have a difficult time getting a new checking or savings account with a financial institution due to poor money management habits from the past.

One of the first steps to financial recovery is opening a new checking or savings account. But this can be easier said than done. Before someone can open a new account, many financial institutions will assess a person's risk by running their name and social security number through a credit reporting agency database, like ChexSystems or Early Warning Services.

Eighty percent of banks or credit unions use these systems to screen applicants for checking and savings accounts. These systems track activities related to closed checking, savings, and other deposit accounts. If a person owes money to a financial institution, they may be denied a new account. This makes it hard for someone to get a fresh start toward rebuilding their financial lives.

If you've been denied a bank account because of your ChexSystems report, it's a good idea to get a copy and address potential concerns. Go to

www.bankrate.com/banking/how-to-clear-up-chexsystems-report/ In the meantime, look for a bank or credit union that offers "second chance" accounts or doesn't use ChexSystems or Early Warning Services to decide if you are a "risk" for a new account.

Opening a bank account is a better option than using costly payday lenders, check-cashing services, or prepaid debit cards where you may be charged usage fees or high interest.

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Linda Halleran is the Community Engagement Manager for Town & Country Federal Credit Union and coordinates the credit union's community involvement efforts across Southern Maine.

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RECOVERY SUPPORT SERVICES & INFORMATION

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

Recovery Community Centers	Recovery Residences	Recovery Coaching
<p>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



Maine's Recovery Community Centers

Offering Hope and Free Services

by Leslie Clark

Recovery Community Centers (RCCs) play a unique and important role in helping people find and sustain long-term recovery from substance use disorders.

Often a bridge between treatment and living a new substance-free life, RCCs ensure that people have a place to connect with others in recovery, find support and resources, and have opportunities to volunteer and help others.

RCCs provide a space for a variety of mutual-aid groups to meet, offer free support to people in recovery, and provide free individualized recovery coaching.

But it's not all hard work... recovery community centers also host social

activities and events that are FUN and creative. Karaoke, dances for young people, art nights, yoga, and open mics are just some of the offerings that help bring back joy and happiness that's often lost in active addiction.

Giving up substances can feel as though life will never be fun again. At recovery community centers, people can discover a variety of social and wellness opportunities that enhance their recovery.

Friends and families matter, too. RCCs offer support groups for families and help with finding treatment and resources for their loved ones. Just as addiction affects the whole family, so does recovery. The centers celebrate and welcome families and friends.

RCCs are run by people in recovery. Our volunteers and staff know what it's like and know how to help.

To find a center near you, visit www.portandrecovery.org or call Portland Recovery Community Center at 207-553-2575.

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Nationally accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Peer Recovery Support Services (CAPRSS), Portland Recovery Community Center serves as Maine's recovery hub, coordinating a network of 20 recovery community centers throughout the state.

RALLY 4 RECOVERY

It is almost time for Maine's Annual **RALLY 4 RECOVERY**, the largest statewide recovery event, and we need your help!

September is Recovery Month, a national observance held every year to educate Americans about substance use disorder and show that it is possible to recover and live a healthy and rewarding life.

Recovery Month celebrates the gains made by those in recovery and spreads the message of hope to

others. The annual message remains: **Recovery is for Everyone: Every Person, Every Family, Every Community.**

This year's **RALLY 4 RECOVERY** is on September 21 at beautiful Payson Park in Portland. We will enjoy:

- Entertainment from Motor Booty
- Speakers
- Children's Activities
- Multiple Food Trucks
- Resource tables
- ...and so much more!



To become an event sponsor, have a resource table, or get involved, call the Portland Recovery Community Center at 207-553-2575.

To find another recovery month event in your town, visit portlandrecovery.org

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Family Matters

Navigating the Challenges of a Loved One's Addiction

In partnership with the
Recovery Research Institute

Addiction doesn't just impact the individual suffering from it; it affects the entire family.

Family members must seek support and education to help both themselves and their loved ones. Here's a guide to understanding and managing these challenges.

Prevalence and Impact

Addiction is a widespread issue.

According to the Federal Reserve Board's Economic Well-being of U.S. Households annual report, 1 in 5 Americans now personally know someone who has suffered from opioid use disorder.

Additionally, at least 25% of the population belongs to a family affected by an addiction disorder in a first-degree relative. The data also suggests that up to 90% of individuals with substance use disorder live at home with a family or significant other.

Stigma and Emotional Challenges

Substance use disorder is one of the most stigmatized health conditions in the world.

It can have a significant emotional toll on not only the individual suffering but the entire family unit as well. Families may face various issues, including financial difficulties, joblessness, marital problems, and more.

Family members often feel guilt, embarrassment, and shame. It's important to address these feelings and seek support. Without external



support, it can be common to employ defense mechanisms such as isolation, making excuses for behavior, or even denying that there is a problem.

Supportive Measures

Peer Support

Connecting with peer support groups can reduce stress and improve coping skills.

Groups such as Al-Anon, Alateen, Nar-Anon, SMART Recovery Family & Friends, and Learn to Cope provide valuable support and resources for families.

These groups offer a community of individuals who share similar experiences, creating a network of understanding and empathy. They also provide practical advice and have been associated with increasing well-being and quality of life.

Individual Therapy

Therapy can help parents and family members cope with their own emotions and challenges. Professional guidance is beneficial for personal well-being and better support for the affected other.

Therapists can offer strategies for dealing with stress, improving communication, and setting healthy boundaries. They can also help family members process their feelings and develop a plan for supporting their loved one's recovery.

Training and Education

Education and training can empower family members in their own lives, and help them support loved ones who are in treatment and engaging in recovery. Educating yourself about substance use disorder, its risk factors, treatment options, and how to set boundaries is crucial.

Resources such as the Recovery Research Institute's Recovery Bulletin and The Addictionary offer valuable information and non-stigmatizing language to improve communication and provide better support.

In addition, training in administering Narcan (Naloxone), an opioid overdose reversal medication, can save lives. Understanding how to use it is vital for families affected by opioid addiction. Narcan can temporarily reverse the effects of an opioid overdose, providing critical time to seek emergency medical assistance.

Training in its use is often available through local health departments, community organizations, or online resources.

Self-Care

Self-care is essential for maintaining mental and emotional health. It helps replenish emotional reserves and provides the strength needed to face challenges. Without adequate self-care, family members can experience burnout, which makes it harder to support their loved ones.

Self-care activities can be broken down into five main categories:

1. Sensory: Activities that draw one into the present moment through any of the five senses. This can be as simple as smelling a scented candle or holding an animal.

2. Emotional: Activities that allow one to work through both negative and positive emotions constructively. Many individuals journal or attend music or art therapy.

3. Physical: Activities that engage and exert the physical body to release energy and stress. This includes walking in the woods or attending a yoga or CrossFit class.

4. Spiritual: Activities that get one in touch with core values and a deeper sense of what really matters. Meditation and eco-spirituality are two potential activities to try.

5. Social: Activities that allow one to connect with others and maintain a sense of shared human experience. Spend some time with a friend or attend an event outside of the home.

Measures to Support a Loved One

Boundary Setting

Establishing clear boundaries helps protect family members and supports the recovery process. Examples include prohibiting substances in the house and not lending money.

Boundaries create a safer environment and reduce opportunities for substance use. They also help family members maintain their well-being by preventing situations that could lead to stress or conflict.

Limiting Triggers

Managing re-exposure, environmental and stress triggers can help prevent relapse.

Family harmony and positive conflict resolution are key. For instance, avoiding places associated with past substance use or addressing sources of family tension can support recovery. Encouraging healthy activities and creating a stable, supportive home environment are also important.

Family Integration and Therapy

Involving family in therapy improves outcomes for both the patient and the family. Family therapy addresses the interdependent nature of relationships and helps develop constructive strategies. It can involve sessions where the whole family works together to improve communication, resolve conflicts, and support each other.

Programs that include family education and counseling have been shown to increase treatment

success and help maintain recovery over time.

Intervention Approaches

Interventions can be traditional or motivational. The Community Reinforcement and Family Training (CRAFT) approach is particularly effective, using encouragement and motivation to inspire the loved one to seek treatment.

Unlike confrontational interventions, CRAFT focuses on positive reinforcement and collaborative problem-solving. It teaches family members how to communicate effectively, encourages treatment, and supports recovery efforts without creating resistance or conflict.

Just keep in mind that addiction affects the whole family, and it's important for family members to seek support, educate themselves, and practice self-care, too.

By understanding the challenges and utilizing available resources, families can better support their loved ones and themselves through the recovery journey.

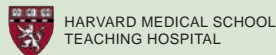
For more helpful tips and information, visit recoveryanswers.org.



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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.

Reilly Harvey: Worthy

Navigating Recovery and Healing

by **Jamie Lovley**

Reilly Harvey grew up in a lobstering family in Owls Head, Maine. She recalls her youth fondly, spending it with her parents and brother on the mainland and nearby islands. While her household was supportive and nurturing, it was also impacted by a family history of substance use.

At 14, Reilly had her first drink and attended her first recovery meeting, starting a 19-year struggle with mental health and alcohol addiction. She did well in her studies and built a life that prioritized travel and rich experiences.

Despite strong support, the disease of addiction shaped her perception and pushed her to make ego and alcohol-driven decisions. “I put on such a good mask to hide what was going on internally. I felt so alone and cried every day for years.”

Reilly measured the passage of time with unstable and hurtful romantic relationships. Being with others who were deeper in the progression of their substance use allowed her to hide behind their suffering. Through healing, she now recognizes, “What I really wanted was someone to choose me over women and alcohol, like I felt my father had not.”

It was through trying to save a relationship that Reilly went back to 12-step meetings and an attempt at sobriety. She had tried many holistic and natural methods to feel better, but the only thing that worked was removing alcohol.

In sobriety, Reilly met her current partner, fell in love, and had a child. She built a new life focused on motherhood and being a good partner. She became a business owner and today, she runs a Maine-based painting business called We Paint.

Even though Reilly stopped drinking and went to meetings, her mental and spiritual health continued to deteriorate. Ten years later, Reilly hit an emotional rock bottom. “I felt worse inside than I did at the end of my drinking.”

Quitting drinking wasn’t enough. Reilly knew the only option was to fully dedicate herself to her 12-step meetings and recovery community, as well as focusing on the emotions and patterns that pushed her to drink in the first place.

The power of vulnerability with others through commitment to connection and fellowship, grew her gratitude and the self-worth she struggled with for decades. In a women’s recovery meeting, Reilly realized, “If this circle of women are this talented and wonderful, God hasn’t made a mistake in putting me here. I must be worthy, too.”

Today, Reilly enjoys spending time with her family outdoors and making prayer and meditation a part of her daily life. She thrives with fellowship, building a strong spiritual life, and performing service for others.



“This is a disease; our brains work differently than other people’s. If you put down a substance and don’t fill that space with something positive, you pick up something else,” she says.

When it comes to the community’s understanding and acceptance of those in long-term recovery, Reilly describes people navigating recovery as authentic, humble, and willing. “People who freely share their experience, strength, and hope help others heal.”



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.

Loving Fully

The Transformative Power of Love and Connection



In the compassionate and insightful book *Loving Fully*, authors Stephen R. Andrew and Wendy Noyes explore the profound importance of love and connection as essential tools for healing and personal growth.

With their guidance, readers are encouraged to embrace their own journeys of discovery with a focus on forming meaningful connections and practicing radical acceptance and awareness.

At the core of *Loving Fully* is the concept that human beings thrive on connection. The authors suggest that many of society's struggles, particularly those related to substance use, stem from feelings of isolation and disconnection.

Through genuine connection — feeling seen, heard, and understood by others — people can begin to heal the wounds of their past. This process involves not just family and friends, but also community support groups and therapeutic relationships that offer acceptance and understanding.

They advocate for a model they term RAIN: Recognition, Acceptance, Investigation, and Nurturing, which helps individuals navigate feelings and experiences in a way that fosters healing and growth. This model is both a method and a philosophy that enhances one's understanding of self and others, leading to deeper, more empathetic connections.

Empathy is the ability to deeply connect with others' experiences and emotions without judgment.

This connection does not just benefit those who receive it; it also enriches and transforms those who give it. It creates a reciprocal relationship of healing and support that strengthens the entire community.

Having empathy with ourselves can lead to radical acceptance, which teaches that accepting your life as it is now — without resistance — can lead to a more peaceful and fulfilling existence.

This acceptance does not mean passive resignation but rather an acknowledgment of reality in a way that empowers individuals to move forward in their lives with grace and resilience. It enables healthy exploration of the possibilities for change and healing.

Accepting and being aware of thoughts and feelings in the present moment allows individuals to respond to life's challenges with clarity and purpose, rather than being driven by past traumas or future anxieties. It encourages a life lived fully and consciously, enriched by meaningful interactions and relationships.

Loving Fully is a call to action for everyone to engage more deeply with the world around them through love and empathy. It asserts that everyone can affect positive change in their communities by practicing these principles. The authors envision a world where people actively choose to connect with kindness and compassion, thereby transforming not only their own lives but also those around them.

In the context of addiction, the principles laid out in *Loving Fully* offer a pathway to recovery that is rooted in community, understanding, and self-compassion. By fostering environments where individuals feel seen and supported, the likelihood of successful recovery increases significantly.

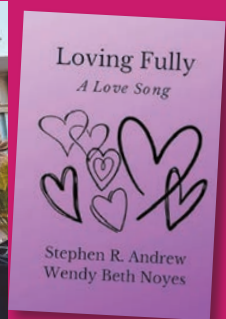
In essence, *Loving Fully* is not just a guide for personal healing but a transformative framework for community and societal renewal.

By embracing the principles of love, empathy, and connection, we can all contribute to a more compassionate and connected world.

Find out more about Stephen Andrew and Wendy Noyes through their book *Loving Fully* by visiting:

Website
www.hetimaine.org

To Purchase
Visit [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)



Breaking the Chains of Self-Stigma

Silencing the Inner Critic

In partnership with **WebShrink**

Have you ever felt judged by your own thoughts? This is what we call self-stigma, and it's a big challenge for many people in recovery from addiction.

What is self-stigma?

When you hear the term “stigma,” most people imagine a select group of people who are judged and cast aside by the masses. It may be because of what they look like, who they love, or how they worship.

Regardless of the reason, the process of exclusion and shunning is basically the same. This is just one type of stigma called “public stigma.” However, with “self-stigma,” the shame comes from within.

People internalize the judgment they get from others and impose it on themselves.

Self-stigma happens when someone feels ashamed of their situation, so they take harsh words or actions from others and make them their own beliefs. It's like having a little voice inside that says you're not good enough because of your struggles. This can make recovery from addiction really tough.

Too Ashamed for Treatment

Stigma also hinders people from initially entering treatment. For as long as the recovery community has existed, the first step has always been admitting there is a problem at all. When people believe negative thoughts about themselves, they may find it harder to seek help. They might think they don't deserve to get better, or that their situation is hopeless.

Stigma is a major barrier that prevents people from admitting there is a problem and seeking treatment.



This can lead people to seek help from less reliable sources. Instead of going to a recovery meeting or counselor's office, they look to virtual help sources that are often profit-driven companies that take advantage of people without insurance. They charge monthly fees promising unlimited access to therapy. However, they pack their counselors' schedules with hundreds of clients, and no one gets enough attention.

People with a lot of self-stigma go to these sources for help because they feel too ashamed to sit down with a real therapist or other people in recovery. As a result, they get inadequate care.

How Can We Fight Self-Stigma?

One great way is through something called Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, sometimes referred to as ACT.

ACT is a type of mindfulness-based therapy that shows promise in combating self-stigma. ACT encourages people to experience

their thoughts and feelings completely rather than trying to avoid them. People practice mindfulness by staying present and keeping in mind that their thoughts and feelings do not determine who they are. ACT techniques help people prevent the negative thoughts of self-stigma from affecting their lives.

Together, We Can Make a Difference

Self-stigma is a heavy burden, but together, we can lighten that load. By understanding more about it and how to tackle it, we can help everyone feel more hopeful and supported on their journey to recovery.

Let's keep this conversation going and make sure everyone knows they're not alone and they are valued, no matter their struggles. Let's all strive to be kind, both to others and to ourselves.

For more information visit webshrink.com



Overcoming Stigma

Community Roles in Recovery

Chances are pretty good that, in one way or another, we've all used stigmatizing language associated with addiction and, by extension, with recovery.

When we recognize the burden that social stigma imposes on people in active addiction and recovery, and when we change our words and actions to ease that social stigma, we start to be part of the solution.

In her book *Recovery Allies*, Alison Jones Webb asked people in recovery about the barriers they faced to recovery.

Andrew, one respondent, talked about barriers in his hometown in Massachusetts, and he answered, "Stigma, stigma, stigma."

The external stigma associated with addiction can severely hinder individuals' recovery efforts. This form of stigma comes from societal judgment that categorizes people with substance use disorders as different or less deserving of empathy and support.

It can create a divide in the community and impose significant challenges for those in recovery, affecting their self-esteem and reducing their chances of successful rehabilitation.

Here are effective strategies to combat external stigma and foster a supportive environment for recovery:

- Examine your ideas and beliefs about people who use alcohol and other drugs. Think about how you see people who struggle with substance use. Sometimes, negative ideas come from our lives or what we see on TV. Talk with family and friends about these ideas, and try to use kind words.
- Learn more by going to recovery events and talking to people who are in recovery. This helps us understand and support each other better.

- Partner with the recovery community to organize public meetings. These events help educate people and reduce stigma. Letting people share their stories can help them feel included.
- Review and update the language on your websites, social media, and printed materials to match current research.
- Work with local media to encourage the use of respectful, person-first language, and avoid labels such as "alcoholic" and "addict" whenever possible.

For social workers, healthcare providers, and public health professionals

- Ask your clients and patients what they need for a smooth recovery, and be prepared to help them reach it.
- Frequently remind people that recovery is highly likely for those with substance-use issues.
- Continue to learn about addiction. Host meetings or talks with individuals in recovery to educate your peers on effective support and treatment resources.

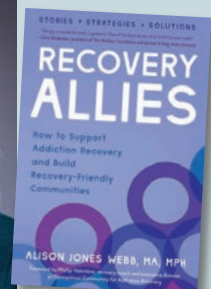
By using these strategies, we can significantly reduce the stigma surrounding addiction and create an environment where recovery is supported and encouraged. Educating ourselves, using kind words, and working together are all important. Taking this action breaks down barriers and makes it easier for people to get better and feel supported.

To learn more ways to help, read *Recovery Allies* by Alison Jones Webb.

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

LinkedIn
www.linkedin.com/in/alisonjoneswebb/

Website
www.alisonjoneswebb.com/recovery-allies/





The Power of Positive Experiences

A Community of Hope

by Dr. Larry McCullough

Many people have heard about the impact on health in adulthood from Adverse Childhood Experiences, sometimes referred to as ACEs. More than 25 years ago, researchers looked at how abuse, neglect, divorce, substance use disorders, and more caused adversity in childhood.

They found that early experiences of adversity had a profound impact on adult health issues, including alcohol and other substance use disorders, mental health issues, suicide, and even heart disease and diabetes. We now know that other factors, such as environmental and community conditions, racism, sexism, discrimination for sexual identity and orientation, bullying, and other challenging experiences also have a profound impact on health.

The Power of Positive Experiences

But there's also good news. More recently, researchers have started to look at how Positive Childhood Experiences, sometimes referred to as PCEs, can buffer the impact of adverse experiences. Researchers have noted several positive experiences as impactful, such as talking to family about feelings, feeling supported by family, having at least two non-parent adults who took genuine interest, and participating in community activities.

When individuals reported having two or more of these experiences, researchers found that even those who had experienced a great deal of adversity also reported fewer instances of serious mental health challenges. They were able to ask for help when they needed it, which is one of the biggest factors in staying healthy as an adult.

Community Makes a Difference

Another example of how to build positive experiences comes from community development programs in Washington state. These communities found that certain actions had a big impact on physical and mental health, which included being able to rely on multiple people for physical and emotional support.

It considered things such as:

Reciprocity: "I'll help you with that if you'll help me with this."

Social Bridging: Reaching out to people beyond your social circle to ask for help and support.

People who reported one or more of these experiences had much lower levels of mental health challenges, even if they had experienced high levels of childhood adversity.

Take Action Today

Knowing that we are not bound by adversity in childhood and that there are positive experiences that can help build health as adults is a

huge source of hope. And we know that hope is one of the biggest determinants of happiness. So, go out today and create positive experiences for yourself and others.

You can:

- Ask for help
- Offer to help your neighbors and friends
- Provide support for others
- Talk to people you might not ordinarily talk to
- Take part in community activities

Above all, know that each time you have a positive experience, your capacity for hope and happiness grows.

Pinetree Institute offers several programs to support a culture of positive experience. These include the Maine Recovery Friendly Workplace in partnership with Portland Recovery Community Center, Recovery Ready Community Coalitions, Trauma-Responsive Training Programs, and Prevention Programs for Youth. For more information, contact info@pinetreeinstitute.org



Dr. Larry McCullough launched Pine Tree Institute in 2012 and is currently the Executive Director. His focus has been on the development of trauma-informed approaches to community services. He has specialized in those related to addressing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) as a way of building individual, family, and community resilience.



We will actively promote the hope for recovery, and the belief that together we can heal, grow, recover, and have the resiliency to achieve the highest goal possible.



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RECOVERY BASICS

Foundational Information for Everyone

by Journey in collaboration with Harold Alfond Center

Participants will gain an understanding of the prevalence of addiction and recovery, barriers to recovery and societal stigmas that often complicate these challenges.

You'll also learn about essential recovery information, services, resources, and support systems.

Learn it, to share it and help us amplify hope to save lives!



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Living Well with Brain Injury

Strategies for Daily Life

by Sarah Gaffney

Living with a brain injury can be challenging but, there's good news. There are simple accommodations that can be used by the survivor, provider, or the person's support system to help reduce the impact of brain injury symptoms.

Memory/Organization

- Try scheduling regular appointments on the same day and time whenever possible.
- Consistently use an organization system such as a calendar, binder, or digital format, and have designated locations for important information or items.
- Have important information in as many formats as possible: verbal, written, digital, and posted in a high-visibility area.
- Keep to predictable routines whenever possible.

Delayed Processing

- If someone is speaking too quickly, ask them to slow down.
- Advocate for important conversations to take place in low-distraction areas such as in a private room or at less busy times.

Attention Problems

- Do the most important or most difficult tasks earlier in the day, or when you are most rested.
- Use visual aids whenever possible or take notes to record any important information, even if you feel you will remember it later.
- Break tasks up into smaller parts.

Impulsive Behavior

- Minimize disruptions during activities.
- Silently repeat questions or directions to yourself while waiting your turn or opportunity to act.
- Write down your questions or thoughts if stating them immediately would be unhelpful to the situation.
- Have someone with you at important times to remind you to practice these skills.

Physical Challenges

- Communicate your needs fully and often.
- Think about the environment you will be in ahead of time, and bring any needed accommodations such as a hat or sunglasses to protect from bright lights, ear plugs if you are sensitive to noise, and mobility devices.

Language

- Repeat important information back to the speaker. Use a voice recorder if needed.
- Ask for visual content when available such as flyers, images, and business or appointment cards.
- Write out or record your questions or comments beforehand.
- Ask for clarification if you are unsure what is being communicated. Many people use sarcasm or abstract concepts in everyday conversation.

Mental Inflexibility

- Ask to be notified of changes as far in advance as possible with reminders.
- Role-play with others for tough situations you may encounter. This

way you can practice skills such as self-talk, breathing, or grounding exercises in a realistic setting.

Emotional Shifts

- Work on learning your emotions and being aware of them.
- Practice mindfulness to keep focus on the here and now.
- Keep things predictable and structured when you feel your emotions may be difficult to control.

Issues with Sleep

Fatigue is one of the most frequent and longest-lasting symptoms of brain injury, so adequate sleep and rest are very important.

Practice good sleep hygiene: get exercise during the day, avoid caffeine and eating heavy meals less than three hours before bed, avoid screens one hour before bed, practice a relaxing pre-bedtime routine, keep the room dark and cool, and if you can't sleep, get up and do a relaxing activity, then try to sleep again.

For more Maine brain injury information, resources, and support, please contact BIAA-ME at 1-800-444-6443.



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.



Meeting Guide 12+ A.A. World Services

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Many Paths to Freedom

5 FREE Recovery Programs to Explore

Recovery from addiction is a journey unique to each individual, marked by their challenges and triumphs.

Here, we explore five vital resources that offer free recovery programs, each catering to different needs and recovery philosophies.

1. Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)

Alcoholics Anonymous is perhaps the most well-known recovery program worldwide, founded on the principles of the 12-step process, which emphasizes spiritual growth and community support. Members attend meetings where they share experiences and support each other in their recovery journey. The strength of AA lies in its widespread availability and the peer-led, anonymous support it offers. For more information, visit AA.org

2. Narcotics Anonymous (NA)

Similar to AA, Narcotics Anonymous focuses on recovery from drug addiction through a 12-step program. NA provides a supportive community environment where individuals can share their struggles and successes with others facing similar challenges. NA's approach is inclusive, addressing all types of drug addictions without focusing on any particular substance. For more information, visit NA.org

3. LifeRing Secular Recovery

LifeRing Secular Recovery offers a secular approach to recovery, which is an attractive option for those looking for a non-religious alternative. The program emphasizes three key principles: sobriety, secularity, and self-help. Participants encourage one another to build personal recovery programs based on their strengths and lifestyles. The organization provides support to those in recovery, as well as their family members and friends. For more information, visit LifeRing.org

4. Wellbriety

Wellbriety offers culturally based healing for Native Americans, integrating traditional Indigenous practices with modern recovery techniques. This program is unique because it goes beyond substance recovery, aiming to heal emotional, mental, and spiritual wounds within a culturally relevant framework. Wellbriety's approach is holistic, promoting not just sobriety, but a well-balanced, healthy lifestyle, too. For more information, visit WellbrietyMovement.com

5. SMART Recovery

SMART Recovery (Self-Management and Recovery Training) provides a global community of mutual

support groups. The program uses a science-based approach to help people manage their recovery from addiction. SMART Recovery focuses on self-empowerment and self-reliance, using tools and techniques derived from cognitive behavioral therapy and motivational interviewing. For more information, visit SMARTRecovery.org

Additional Resources and Information

While the programs mentioned above are some of the most well-known, numerous other resources are available for you to choose from.

Each person's journey is different, and finding a program that resonates personally is crucial.

For more information on these programs and to discover other free resources, visit Journey-Magazine.com and click on the Mutual Aid Programs tab.

Recovery is a deeply personal experience, but you don't have to face it alone.

The key is taking that first step toward recovery and finding the path that best suits your individual needs.



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www.maine-general.org/addiction



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Falmouth Congregational Church

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

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

Virtual - Tuesdays and Wednesdays & Thursdays, 6:00-7:30pm

email: virtual@thefamilyrestored.org
for meeting links

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

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
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<https://marybethmurphy.teachable.com/p/unstoppable-dream-recovery-circle>



Celebrating Your Partner Ally in Recovery

by Elaine Shamos
and Glenn Simpson

Search “celebrating recovery” online and you will find thousands of articles on how to celebrate recovery from substance use. From annual AA celebrations to monthly chip clubs, community gatherings, “birthday” cakes, and constant support from partners and families, these are well-deserved measures to honor their hard work.

Typically, these celebrations not only mark an anniversary date of sobriety, but also the more intensive process of self-reflection, making amends, and navigating behavior changes.

Yet, what about the partner in the relationship who has learned healthy strategies to support their partner? As a partner in active recovery, they have battled their own demons to change their codependent behaviors. Whether through individual therapy, Al-Anon, or other mutual aid support groups, they learn self-care by setting boundaries and curbing tendencies to control, enable, interrupt, and obsess. Sometimes these partners can feel left out and not appreciated for their own recovery work.

This partner has no “one date” to celebrate their journey of self-discovery. In many support groups, they celebrate the date they entered the group. Yet their “relapses” and

“recoveries” can occur multiple times a day and require constant vigilance.

In our couples’ work, we suggest partners regularly acknowledge the healthy work their partner has done, and to mark times to celebrate their partner’s achievements.

Suggestions for acknowledging and celebrating:

- In your daily “catchup” time, take turns talking about insights, behavior changes, challenges, and needs.
- Decide how you may each like to set and celebrate an “annual date of recovery.”
- Be spontaneous with your compliments when you see self-care changes your partner has been working on.
- Learn ways of communicating that emphasize listening, connecting, and resolving conflict.
- Consider couples therapy to dive deeper into codependent behaviors that affect your relationship.
- Attend each other’s recovery groups to gain insight.
- Create frequent outings that serve as mini celebrations of appreciation.

Following the often-quoted “three A’s of Alanon”— awareness, acceptance, and action — is a good way to remember how to work on change.

Awareness of one’s current state and environment can be heightened

by using mindfulness techniques or daily meditation.

Acceptance is recognizing the implications of one’s attitude and behavior. Journaling can help with this step to question one’s beliefs that trigger negative thoughts and behaviors.

Action may be asking for help, talking with a sponsor or therapist, sharing with your support group, or simply sitting with awareness and acceptance until action presents itself.

These are all ways to help change habitual fears and behaviors. The goal is to become more of your authentic self and to increase self-compassion, which always results in more compassion for others.

Creating rituals of celebration is important as they honor a new way of life. Recognizing the work it takes to change behavior not only supports your partner but also reinforces interdependence and commitment toward living a deeply connected life together. And that is worth celebrating.



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

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*According to the National Safety Council

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

Empowering Recovery

Maine's Recovery Coach Training Programs

by Denise Black

As recovery coaching continues to become professionalized in Maine, this peer-to-peer support service is gaining momentum with compassionate individuals who have a vested interest in promoting recovery and supporting others. Whether they are in established recovery, friends or family members of someone in recovery, or passionate allies, recovery coaches are here to stay — and to make a difference in Maine.

Recovery coaching is an innovative peer-mentoring program designed to empower individuals at every stage of their journey toward recovery. Trained recovery coaches serve as personal guides and mentors, helping people navigate through the obstacles and barriers that may arise during recovery.

Recovery coaches play a vital role in removing barriers, building recovery capital, connecting individuals with recovery support services, and fostering hope, optimism, and healthy living at every stage of recovery.

The landscape of coaching continues to grow across Maine, and so does the need for training individuals who want to be coaches, and the organizations that will support them. As funding continues to emerge for recovery coach services, more and more organizations have coaches on their teams.

To meet the growing need for recovery coach training, the Maine Office of Behavioral Health has funded two organizations, Healthy Acadia and Portland Recovery Community Center, to provide free recovery coach training to Maine residents. Both organizations offer a variety of the Connecticut Community of Addiction Recovery (CCAR) courses.

The following CCAR courses are required and/or recommended for those who want to become a recovery coach, or for someone who is supervising or has a coach on their team.

Recovery Coaching Basics

A six-hour course based on CCAR's flagship training, the Recovery Coach Academy. This curriculum provides a basic introduction to recovery coaching, which helps those who want a general understanding of the recovery process to support their loved ones, friends, and colleagues.

Recovery Coach Academy

An intensive 30-hour training focused on equipping individuals with the skills needed to guide, mentor, and support anyone who would like to enter into or sustain long-term recovery from an addiction to alcohol or other drugs.

Recovery Coaching and Professionalism

A 12-hour training for recovery coaches

who are currently working or wish to work within a professional setting.

Ethics

A 16-hour training based on the widely used "Ethical Guidelines for the Delivery of Peer-Based Recovery Support Services" by William White. Recovery coaches need an understanding of ethics that differs from those of clinicians due to their unique role in guiding someone through the recovery process.

CoacherVision

A 16-hour training that offers supervisors of recovery coaches and other team members a true understanding of the role of a recovery coach. Based on the concept of "coaching coaches," this workshop provides an understanding of how to best develop and support coaches day to day for long-term success.

Other available courses are Recovery Coaching within a Justice Setting, Recovery Coaching in an Emergency Department, Recovery Coaching and Spirituality, and Recovery Coaching for Young People.

To find out more about free CCAR training for Maine residents, please contact: denise@healthyacadia.org, terri@healthyacadia.org, or josh@portlandrecovery.org

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



Incarcerated Peers

Changing Lives Inside and Out

by Joshua Warren

Since its inception in 2019, recovery coaching within Maine’s Department of Corrections has emerged as a transformative force, reshaping the landscape of addiction treatment and rehabilitation behind bars.

Amidst a growing array of programs targeting substance use disorder within correctional facilities, the peer-led recovery coaching movement stands out for its profound impact on incarcerated individuals’ journeys toward recovery.

Data has shown that incarcerated individuals in the United States are at a significantly higher risk of overdose and death within the first two weeks of being released to the community than the general population.

Addressing the prevalent issue of substance use disorder among those serving sentences in the criminal justice system, the recovery coaching program represents a pivotal shift in approach for folks inside and out.

At the core of recovery coaching lies the voluntary engagement of residents giving and receiving support from their peers or undergoing training to become a coach themselves.

Emphasizing personal responsibility and accountability, the program promotes positive reinforcement for participation and program compliance, steering away from punitive measures. The motivation for change and growth among aspiring recovery coaches reflects a desire to break free from the cycle of incarceration and addiction.

Through a shared journey of personal development, recovery coaches empower their peers to articulate their aspirations and advocate for their needs — an invaluable process in an environment where personal agency is often diminished.

The training for Recovery Coach Academy and Ethical Considerations for Recovery Coaching equips participants with tools to navigate ethical dilemmas inherent or unique in the correctional setting. This commitment to ethical conduct not only elevates the standard of care but also fosters a living culture of integrity and responsibility within correctional facilities.

A tangible shift in culture is evident in the adoption of recovery-centric language and the acknowledgment of residents, rather than inmates, as individuals worthy of respect and dignity.

This shift extends beyond semantics, fostering a sense of

community and mutual respect that transcends traditional divides between staff and residents.

The program serves to prepare residents for reintegration into the community. From accessing essential resources to outlining post-release plans, recovery coaches play a pivotal role in empowering residents to navigate the challenges of reentry with confidence and resilience.

Looking ahead, the collaboration between recovery coaches and local recovery community centers holds promise for seamless transitions and sustained support post-release.

By leveraging the power of peer support, the program not only facilitates individual recovery but also fosters community connection and resilience. In some communities, individuals already have a recovery coach paired with them before they are released.

As individuals within the criminal justice system reclaim agency over their lives, break down barriers to recovery, and build bridges in their communities, the program stands as a beacon of hope and empowerment — a testament to the enduring power of peer support in shaping lives and communities.

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



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FREE RECOVERY PROGRAMS

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

MUTUAL AID PROGRAMS

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

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

Alcoholics Anonymous is a 12-step program and fellowship of people who come together to solve their drinking problem. It doesn't cost anything to attend A.A. meetings. There are no age or education requirements to participate. 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

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

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

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

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 FREE RESOURCES

CRISIS HOTLINES

Maine Coalition for Domestic Violence Support

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Statewide information, crisis counseling, emotional support and advocacy.

Maine Crisis Hotline

Maine Behavioral Health
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National Human Trafficking Resource Center/Polaris Project

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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

800-559-2927

Provides individualized advocacy for all survivors of domestic abuse, violence, sex trafficking, and sexual exploitation in Androscoggin, Franklin, and Oxford Counties.

Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault

800-871-7741

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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

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M-Th 10a-8p, F 10a-5p, S 10a-2p

If you call after hours, please leave a message. Staff will call you back.

Peer Support Line

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MISCELLANEOUS

211-Maine

Dial 211

With hundreds of hotlines and helplines and thousands of programs offering all types of services in Maine, you may need help figuring out where to go. 211 offers confidential information and referral services connecting people to various services in Maine. Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



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

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 State in the communities they serve. All of the services are FREE and everyone is welcome. The centers provide non-clinical support. The services provided vary by recovery center. Examples of services include peer recovery coaching, telephone recovery support, skill-building workshops, and wellness and other social activities. Stop in and visit your local center.

Arroostook 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 Network

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

Coastal Recovery Community Center

11 White Street, Rockland

207-691-3697

DownEast Recovery Support Center

311 Main Street, Calais

207-259-6238

Down East Recovery Support Center

11 Free Street, Machias

207-259-6238

Harvest Inn Peer Center

43 Hatch Drive, Caribou

207-492-1386

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

commons spacemaine.org

Pir2Peer Recovery Center

2323 Medway Road, Millinocket

207-447-9500

Portland Community Center

103 India Street, Portland

207-773-1956, keith@amistadmaine.org

Portland Recovery Community Center

102 Bishop Street, Portland

207-553-2575

Roads to Recovery Community Center

1 Water Street, Caribou

207-493-1278

Rockland Peer Support Center

12 Union Street, Rockland

207-274-3671 or 207-701-4417

Save a Life Recovery Resource Center

19 VFW Street, Lincoln

207-403-9100

Together Place Peer Run Recovery Center

2 Second Street, Bangor

207-355-1894 or 207-941-2935

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

Peer / Case Management: 207-951-7536

Recovery Center: 207-631-1536

Are you looking for work?



**Whatever your employment goals are, the
Maine Department of Labor can help.**



Access one-on-one career counseling and job search assistance, help with training/education opportunities, and potential financial assistance related to education or supportive services



Browse thousands of job postings by employers through Maine JobLink

MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF
LABOR

**Visit: www.mainecareercenter.gov
or call 207-623-7981 | TTY users call Maine Relay 711**

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

NEED HELP OVERCOMING OPIOIDS?

Get flexible treatment led by a caring staff and powered by community.



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Assistance with health care, housing, job resources, and more



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If you don't have insurance, we'll work with you to make sure you can get care.

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United Healthcare

Point32Health

ANTHEM

evernorth

MaineCare
Health Care for Maine People

Medicare

Humana

aetna

COMMUNITY Health Options

(888) 391-5978

Call us 24/7, 365 days a year, to start your journey toward recovery.

groups
recover together

WWW.JOINGROUPS.COM