



THE BRIDGE

Summer 2005

Family-centered recovery for mental illness & substance use disorders.

WestBridge values

WestBridge strives to be collaborative, person-centered and recovery-oriented. We have developed the following set of values that we want to be reflective of our relationships with our participants, families, co-workers and colleagues.

- Hope, respect, teamwork and direct communication are the core elements of our culture.
- We want everyone we interact with to experience our compassion, thoughtfulness, integrity and responsiveness.
- Everything we do is driven by a desire to develop authentic relationships. We encourage you to let us know when we are living up to these values and when we are falling short. By working together, we can make treatment a positive, hopeful experience. ■

The Commons opens

The Commons, WestBridge's new residential program for men ages 18 and older with co-occurring mental illness and substance use disorders, is now open in Manchester. While many programs screen out people who are not stable on their medications or who are still using substances, this program is designed for individuals who have

Reflective thinking turns experience into insight.

John Maxwell

a life goal but whose symptoms or substance use is getting in the way. The goal may be living independently, going to school or just getting people "off their back."

What families and clinicians see as problems (delusions, voices, mania, being high), individuals often see as a solution to loneliness, fear, isolation or boredom. They often see these symptoms as having more positive benefits than negative consequences and do not understand how these symptoms negatively affect their lives.

The Commons is designed to help people begin making a decision to lead a healthier life by focusing on nutrition, exercise, interpersonal relationships, assertiveness, social skills and accessing self-help. Strategies include evidenced-based practices such as Family Education and Support, Integrated Dual Disorders Interventions, and Illness Management and Recovery. Others include Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Motivational Interviewing, Community Self-Help Meetings, Contingency Management Plans, Peer Support and Enhanced Therapeutic Community.

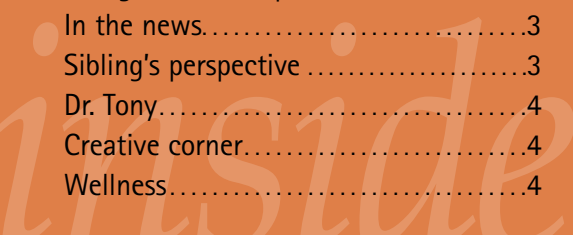
Employing a variety of strategies enables individuals to develop discrepancies between their behaviors and goals, creating an environment that fosters change and growth. Family involvement is crucial to recovery and families are encouraged to participate in our Family Education and Support Program.

For more information on The Commons, contact Program Manager Kevin Keefe, MSW, LICSW, at 603.634.4446 or visit www.westbridge.org. ■



WESTBRIDGE COMMUNITY SERVICES

WestBridge values	1
The Commons opens.....	1
Parent's perspective.....	2
Cognitive behavioral therapy treats dual disorders.....	2
Did you know?	2
Living with schizophrenia	3
In the news.....	3
Sibling's perspective	3
Dr. Tony.....	4
Creative corner.....	4
Wellness.....	4



Parent's perspective

My son and our family have taken part in individual and family counseling at WestBridge over the past year for assistance with his substance use and mental health issues. It's really important to get help and learn skills that are productive and positive.

When we are in the middle of a crisis related to addictions or mental health issues, rather than getting into a yelling match, it's better to step back and try to get a positive perspective, to find something productive to help everybody involved. Talking to the people at WestBridge, who are trained and compassionate, helps us do this and get the rudder back on our boat and learn to trust our better instincts.



They have helped me to trust my own gut on certain issues that we've encountered. I have found it helpful to talk with them, do some brainstorming, get some advice and have things pointed out that I already knew but wasn't confident enough in myself to act on.

The problem-solving techniques that we've learned have been very helpful. We choose a problem, work on it and learn to communicate. Working with the people at WestBridge helps us to help ourselves. ■

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a promising new treatment that has been adapted for persons

Cognitive behavioral therapy treats dual disorders

with a substance use disorder. The therapy helps individuals identify situations, thoughts or feelings that contribute to their distress and learn new ways to cope without using substances and experiencing the troubling symptoms of PTSD.

"Offering these people treatment while they are getting sober increases their chances of benefiting, not only by

staying sober but also by having an opportunity to deal with the things that are associated with their post traumatic stress disorder," says Dr. Mark McGovern, associate professor of psychiatry at Dartmouth Medical School.

WestBridge clinicians are learning CBT intervention as part of a grant funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse to the medical school, which is testing the intervention at three clinics in New Hampshire and Vermont.

The 12-session program includes a manual to guide the therapist during treatment and a client workbook and handouts, so learning can be applied between sessions. Unlike traditional therapy, the CBT therapist actively teaches patients coping strategies. The program also includes journaling, monitoring, homework and charting of progress.

"It's meant to give people something practical that they can use and find immediately helpful," adds Dr. McGovern. "By working on skills between sessions, people learn how to do these things without the therapist, which happens sooner, rather than later." ■

did you know?

Basic elements of cognitive behavior therapy

Cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) is a process that helps people understand the relationship between their thoughts, behaviors and emotions. Therapy is geared toward helping people identify and challenge thoughts that cause them to feel distressed and replace them with more positive and constructive thoughts. Clinicians and participants work together to list situations that provoke negative thoughts, identify alternative interpretations and responses to those situations, and select ones that are most likely to reduce distress.

In addition to its effectiveness in treating PTSD, cognitive behavior therapy has been shown to be helpful for persons with depression, anxiety and schizophrenia. ■



WestBridge staff trained in CBT includes Lois Hollow, ARNP, team leader; Jim Gamache, MSW, care manager; and Melissa Edney, BA, care manager.

Living with schizophrenia

by a 35-year-old WestBridge participant and college student with schizophrenia

Schizophrenia is a mystical journey. The disease itself is a brain disorder that feeds the imagination with delusions, and many schizophrenics believe, like I did, that they are being watched and followed. In the early stages of my diagnosis, I believed I could hear voices, like advice or God's voice upon myself.

I am on medication that aids in the art of delusions. The fact that I hear voices does not hinder my chances at school, but they are relevant to the disorder and the phenomenon that needs to be corrected. The period of enlightenment is very painful for the schizophrenic. It is like the mind gets scared in the position it is in, being watched, and it fights back with mental agony. I remained in this state for two years.

Today, I believe that I am healed and often forget the mental torture I went through, which I could plainly blame on the powerful medications. But it was a necessary experience for me to mentally mature. Now that I am on the medications and my brain feels and works properly, I can see the light just like before they started their mental experience on me. This acceptance helps me to be cared for, checking in with the doctors and taking medications daily.

The disease is a mental journey for me, about faith, imagination and trust. Being a schizophrenic used to be a hard concept for me to accept. Today I would like to trust my higher power for guiding me into acceptance. I am proud of the strength I have witnessed on my own path to a better world of mental strength. ■

Sibling's perspective

In some ways, my brother's co-occurring disorder has brought us closer together because I have been through a similar situation and can relate to him.

We've had our arguments, but we get through them, so it's not permanently damaging to our relationship.

I've been clean for a year, but because of what I've gone through, I try to talk to him. He won't ask a direct question, but sometimes he'll tell a story about something that has happened and that gives us a chance to talk.

It's hard though if he keeps the same routine, habits and lifestyle, because he's not going to get anywhere. I wish he had seen what I went through and just stayed away from everything. I have a lot of respect for people who can do this, but some people have to do it the hard way.

It's good to talk to other people and get things off your chest. WestBridge has been helpful with this. We get a lot of good ideas from them and they help my family get more organized. They're also always there when we need them and sometimes just call us to see how we're doing.

My brother and I are working together to get us through this, him helping me and me helping him. ■

in the news

Massachusetts NAMI Walk is a great success

More than 5,000 walkers participated in the Massachusetts second annual National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) Walk on May 14 at Artisan Park in Brighton, MA. WestBridge Community Services, a Silver Sponsor of the event, fielded an enthusiastic walking team comprised of employees, participants and family members. NAMI is a grassroots, self-help, support education and advocacy organization dedicated to improving

the lives of those affected by serious mental illness. The purpose of the walk was to raise funds to increase public awareness about mental illness, fight stigma and negative stereotypes associated with mental illness, and outreach to new populations affected by mental illness. ■





Dr. Tony

Anton Heins, MD
WestBridge Addiction Specialist

Can medications help people who are alcohol dependent to stop drinking?

Campral has been found to be effective in helping people who are alcohol dependent to not consume alcohol once they have stopped drinking. Excessive longtime use of alcohol can alter the balance of the brain's chemistry. Campral is believed to reestablish brain chemistry balance. During treatment, participating in counseling and support groups and maintaining contact with healthcare providers is highly recommended for success.

In several placebo-controlled clinical trials, three times the number of people taking Campral abstained from alcohol than those who were taking a placebo. The medication does not alleviate alcohol withdrawal symptoms but should be taken soon after alcohol withdrawal begins. It may take a week for the medication to reach effective levels in the body.

Campral may be taken with other prescription medications, including those for anxiety, depression and sleep disorders. Side effects may include diarrhea, indigestion, nausea, headache and rash. ■

Creative corner

We invite our readers to share their artwork, essays, photos and poems.



wellness

New food pyramid promotes healthy living

Making healthier food choices and physical activity are part of the new food pyramid recently unveiled by the U.S. Agriculture Department. The new guidelines recommend specific amounts of foods depending on a person's age, gender and activity level. By visiting www.mypyramid.gov, people can input their information and receive one of 12 individualized diets for various caloric levels, and tips on foods and exercise.

People should eat more whole grain cereals, breads, rice or pasta and a variety of vegetables. Protein should include lean meats, poultry, fish, beans and nuts. Foods with saturated fat, trans fats and added sugar should be avoided. Low-fat or no-fat dairy products are healthiest.

Exercise is now a key part of the pyramid. At least 30 minutes of daily physical activity, such as brisk walking, is recommended. Activity may be done in 10-minute increments. ■

comments

We welcome your comments about this issue of *The Bridge* and invite you to submit ideas for future stories.

To contact us and for more information on our services, visit

WESTBRIDGE.ORG

or call us at

800.889.7871

Editors: Stacey LeBel and Kevin Keefe


WESTBRIDGE
COMMUNITY SERVICES
1361 ELM STREET SUITE 207
MANCHESTER, NH 03101

NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 174
MANCHESTER, NH