



THE BRIDGE

Family-centered recovery for co-occurring mental illness & substance use disorders

Fall 2006

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. ■

WESTBRIDGE COMMUNITY SERVICES

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Confidentiality: a mixed blessing in recovery

Through their work with people with co-occurring diagnoses, WestBridge staff understands that confidentiality can be a cornerstone of any treatment process and can sometimes enhance communication.

Confidentiality is so important, Federal laws 42 C. F.R. Part 2 and HIPAA prohibit any type of disclosure of identifying information without a client's written permission. Exceptions to the need for written permission include medical emergencies, internal staff communications, court orders, research, audits, child abuse and crimes committed against program and personnel.

"Honesty is the first chapter in the book of wisdom."

Thomas Jefferson

While confidentiality can be a cornerstone of recovery, it can also serve as an impediment to the full communication that assists recovery. At WestBridge, we strive for authentic relationships based on open communication.

To open the door to recovery, after a participant's admission to WestBridge, we encourage the participant to sign a variety of information releases. The most important release allows our staff to communicate with the participant's family members and significant others. Once a release is signed, the door is opened for recovery, communication and our Family Education and Support program.

On a few occasions, we have had participants revoke their release of information to their family and significant others. This creates many challenges and limitations for our staff and the treatment process. When this occurs, we work diligently with participants to reopen the lines of communication with their family and others.

Whether participants require complete confidentiality or allow communication with others, our staff works diligently to find solutions to help those with dual disorders. ■



Parent's perspective

WestBridge staff rescued my son "Tyler" and I will be forever indebted. They helped us find a safe, monitored place for him after he got involved in the court system. A former dean's list student, Tyler has been struggling with schizophrenia and substance abuse for 11 years.

He has been a resident of The Commons for five months, which has greatly improved our lives. The constant, individual and intensive care, and a correction in his medication, have made him willingly compliant. He is actively participating in the wellness program, eating better and is much healthier. He is drug-free and participating socially in groups again. He is making better decisions.

Tyler has also found solace in meditation and yoga classes offered at The Commons, and he enjoys the spirituality of AA, which is encouraged and supported by Westbridge staff. They have helped us talk about issues and they resolve problems in a trained, effective way.

Knowing that Tyler is safe and in an intensive program where he can receive help and support has taken away much worry. We are learning to better understand mental illness and how to support him in a meaningful way. We now have renewed hope for the future. ■



A solution-focused approach to living is not a new idea but one that takes practice. This is as simple as noticing that we have feelings about something, and also being able to ask, "now what?" This is part of thinking about a situation differently, with a goal in mind.

Focusing on solutions fosters positive responses

An example of this is when we are driving a car and

someone cuts us off. If we exhibit "road rage," people may read about our response in the news, as road rage can lead to negative consequences. People who practice a solution-focused approach feel upset and possibly afraid about a "close call" but continue on their way, keeping their goal in mind: arriving safely at their destination. It is a simple matter of thinking differently about the situation, which affects how we feel about it and, in turn, affects how we respond.

WestBridge staff is trained in cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). We help participants and families look at and validate feelings, practice refocusing on current issues, and respond in ways that support goals. In our Family Education and Support (FES) program, we utilize this CBT approach as part of communication skill building.

A simple, effective way to change the way we think, feel and act is by using this framework in response to a situation or person: "When you ____, I feel ____. In the future could you ____?" By doing this, we validate feelings and make a positive request that is solution-focused.

This process requires understanding how we think and regularly practicing being solution-focused to make positive changes in our lives. This helps us all steer clear of our old patterns of responding, which may not be as effective as we would like! ■

did you know?

FDA-approved medications for substance dependence

- **Antabuse®**- discourages drinking by making patient physically sick when alcohol is consumed (FDA 1954)
- **ReVia®/Depade®**- discourages drinking by decreasing the pleasurable effects from consuming alcohol (FDA 1994)
- **Suboxone®**- suppresses withdrawal symptoms from and cravings for opioids (FDA 2000)
- **Camprial®**- encourages sobriety by reducing post-acute withdrawal symptoms from alcohol dependence (FDA 2004)
- **Vivitrol®**- blocks opioid receptors and reduces alcohol cravings (FDA 2006) ■

Got service? We hope so!

Ten percent of people may notice something unusual that the other 90 percent do not. Customer service is no exception. When you get terrific service, you hopefully notice, but you may not. Frequently, it is the little things, often unexpected, that make up exceptional customer service. Just as noticeable can be customer service that quickly, and happily, remedies a mistake.

WestBridge's compassionate staff members are dedicated to providing quality customer service to each person with whom they come into contact. This doesn't mean that we run through a script of what to say or follow flowcharts on how to make people happy. This is a quality that comes from the heart, a genuine caring for people.

At WestBridge, we hire only individuals who have this compassion and a genuine interest in others as part of their nature. We can't train

someone to care. People just DO. You may see this in our staff taking extra time to engage with people, even during a busy day, or providing a caller with a list of referral resources.

Are we perfect in our customer service? Have we been able to satisfactorily answer all questions or return all calls within an hour? Probably not. But, we do try to quickly repair any mistakes that are made and are troubled when people feel dissatisfied.

We hope that you find our service satisfying. If you do not, please let us know, as this is an opportune way for us to work on improving our service to participants and their families. ■



in the news

Lisa Halpern Honored with National Award

Lisa Halpern, director of Consumer Affairs at WestBridge, received the first place Eli Lilly & Company Reintegration Award for inspiration, at a ceremony in Indianapolis in October. Lilly Reintegration Awards celebrate the contributions of those dedicated to improving the lives of individuals with severe mental illnesses, and the achievements of those living with schizophrenia and/or bipolar disorder who battle tremendous odds to improve their own lives and give hope to others facing similar challenges.

Lisa was nominated by National Alliance on Mental Illness-Massachusetts, where she is coordinator of the In Our Own Voice program. NAMI-MA will receive a \$5,000 grant.

We are extremely proud of Lisa, who shows the true spirit of peer mentorship, and are pleased to see her accomplishments recognized at a high level. ■



Sleep apnea interferes with restful sleep

Sleep apnea, periods of breathing cessation, wakes an individual and disrupts the sleep cycle. Obstructive sleep apnea (OSA), a partial or complete collapse of the upper airway, is the most common form of apnea. Most individuals with OSA snore, and many experience daytime drowsiness.

Left untreated, severe sleep apnea may be associated with high blood pressure and risk for stroke and heart attack. Drinking alcohol, especially before bedtime, can increase sleep apnea.

An OSA diagnosis is best made at a sleep disorder center, where staff administers a polysomnography in the sleep lab. Once a person is diagnosed with OSA, the treatment involves delivering pressurized air (typically 3 to 18 cm) to sites of upper airway collapse to force the airway open. With apneas and snoring eliminated, patients can sleep without waking to breathe. A nasal CPAP is introduced to the patient in the sleep lab, where staff can appropriately adjust the pressure and assist with the fit of a breathing mask.

Patients with severe OSA often report marked improvement in their mood and energy within days. This improvement positively reinforces using the nasal CPAP machine. ■





Dr. Mark

Mental illness and cognitive functioning

People with psychotic illnesses have problems with memory, concentration and planning. These problems translate into difficulties maintaining a home, shopping or having complex conversations. Problems with expressing or reading emotions can affect relationships and encourage isolation.

These symptoms are partly genetic, can be detected in non-psychotic relatives and are often apparent years before first psychotic symptoms. They often persist, despite amelioration of hallucinations and delusions, and can worsen over time. They can make it harder to resist drugs, but most illegal drugs worsen cognition in the long term. Some medications, especially clozapine, seem to improve cognitive deficits, while new drugs, principally effecting glutamate, are being developed.

Non pharmacological approaches, such as vocational rehabilitation, supportive housing, learning social skills and independent living skills, show profound effects. With these approaches, patients and families can optimistically engage in recovery. ■

Creative corner

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

The sky is blue. God has painted a myriad of clouds above my head.

The air is crisp and clean. Birds are singing from the tree tops.

Somewhere there is a waterfall running and will always run forever.

People are out and about doing their own things and children are outdoors playing.

I have poured myself a cup of lemonade; it's refreshing and sweet.

I sit in my room and listen to music, occasionally nodding off.

But to say the least, life is good.

I'm not on drugs and I can think rationally.

I'm happy!

Written by Jay Powers

wellness

Foods to cure your cold

Eating a healthy diet can help boost your immune system and ward off winter colds. The American Dietetic Association recommends a diet of whole grains, fruits, vegetables and low-fat meats during cold season. Drinking plenty of water and decaffeinated drinks can also help you stay healthy. Also consider eating:

- **Yogurt** – A cup a day may keep your gastrointestinal tract healthier, which can stave off colds.
- **Muesli** – This whole grain cereal with dried fruit, nuts and seeds contains lots of nutrients.
- **Oranges** – An orange a day provides the recommended daily allowance of vitamin C, a great cold-fighter.
- **Garlic** – This flavorful vegetable contains an antibiotic that may prevent complications from colds.
- **Lean Ground Beef** – With protein, zinc and selenium, ground beef helps keep cells healthy.
- **Green Bell Peppers** – A great source of vitamin C and flavonoids, peppers help fight colds. ■

Source: www.healthykids.com

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

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