



THE BRIDGE

Family founded & family centered recovery

Winter 2005

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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Family Education and Support Program encourages wellness

When one member of a family experiences co-occurring disorders, it affects the entire family. WestBridge invites families to take part in the Family Education and Support Program to help family members cope with and move beyond the illness. The collaborative process

Resisting change leads to illness. Accepting change brings about peace.

involves both family members and participants as valuable members of the wellness process. "It provides support to individuals and families, who often feel stressed or overwhelmed," says Mary Woods, WestBridge CEO. "The process establishes clear communication among family mem-

bers and puts a family's expectations into perspective while utilizing a family's strengths."

Family members learn about mental illness and substance use and the difficulties caused by co-occurring disorders. They also learn coping skills and problem-solving strategies.

With family education and support, research has shown that participants feel less depression and anxiety, have fewer symptoms and relapses, have better control over their lives and spend less time in the hospital, while families feel more comfortable having the participant more involved with life.



"It's a way for families and participants to work as equal partners in the process of getting well," adds Woods. "It allows us to create the best environment for recovery, for both the family and the individual with co-occurring disorders."

WestBridge is currently providing individual Family Education and Support Program sessions and looks forward to offering multi-family groups to broaden the range of social support for families.

Families are encouraged to contact WestBridge about the Family Education and Support Program. For more information, contact Lois Hollow in New Hampshire and Deirdre Calvert in Massachusetts at 800.889.7871. ■

Parent's perspective

Dear WestBridge,

This is a very long overdue note to thank you, Dr. Ken, Deirdre, Anne, Sarah, et al. for being such an essential part of saving our daughter's life. She turned 20 years old a couple of weeks ago and it was a miracle that she made it through her teens...a miracle of very hard work on all our parts (especially hers).

The journey ahead is hard and uncertain. Struggles still remain, but there is also joy and so much gratitude. I think of all of you daily.

Thank you,
Marla Z. ■

Calling all volunteers!

NAMI NH is looking for volunteers for the 2005 Walk for the Mind of America. Whether you can spend a few hours stuffing envelopes or can serve on the walk committee to share your knowledge and passion in helping those affected by mental illness, your help is greatly appreciated. Committee meetings are typically once per month with various one-time volunteer opportunities in between.

Come be a part of a very important cause and have a lot of fun with a great group of people!

For more information, please contact NAMI NH's Concord office at 800.242.6264 or call Melissa Edney or Kevin Keefe at WestBridge at 800.889.7871. ■

Five members of the WestBridge team attended the annual convention for the National Alliance for Mentally Ill (NAMI) September 8-11. Our

WestBridge attends NAMI convention

own Ken Duckworth is the medical director for national NAMI and was busy facilitating workshops, as well as emceeding the closing dinner festivities.

Over 3,000 consumers, family members, professionals and friends attended the convention. The WestBridge team provided information about

WestBridge and participated in various educational sessions. This year's convention featured many presentations by consumers, as well as a focus on deaf services.

WestBridge has a strong connection to the NAMI organization and mission. We share a passion for improving the lives of individuals and families who are recovering from the effects of mental illness. WestBridge is also an active supporter of local NAMI affiliates, dedicating staff time and financial resources to the annual NAMI Walks fundraiser.

WestBridge encourages family members to join NAMI, both for the support offered by members and to become advocates for persons experience mental illness.

For more information on NAMI, visit www.nami.org. Ken Duckworth, MD, NAMI medical director, and Deirdre Calvert, WestBridge program manager, enjoy the NAMI convention with Sandy and Gary Mihelish, presidents of NAMI Montana.



did you know?

- Alcohol is involved in 50% of all driving fatalities.
- Every 30 minutes, someone is killed in an alcohol-related traffic accident.
- Over 15 million Americans are dependent on alcohol. About 500,000 are ages 9-12.
- Americans spend over \$90 billion on alcohol each year.
- 43% of Americans have been exposed to alcoholism in their families.
- Among spouse violence victims, 3 out of 4 incidents were reported to have involved alcohol use by the offender.
- Each year, students spend \$5.5 billion on alcohol.
- Each year, the liquor industry spends almost \$2 billion on advertising, encouraging the consumption of alcoholic beverages.
- Alcohol and alcohol-related problems cost the American economy at least \$100 million in health care and loss of productivity each year. ■

(Source: NARCONON)

Recovery and hope – tackling shame

by Lisa Halpern, peer mentor,
WestBridge Community
Services, Cambridge, MA



Shame is not often spoken about candidly because it hurts to accept that brain illnesses can make us vulnerable to poor choices uncharacteristic of our “healthy” selves. Sadder still, despite a genuine commitment to the recovery process, we revert to shameful thinking, e.g., it is my fault for not having graduated yet, or I blame myself for not being married and having a family.

Shame is a very personal and difficult topic for me (as it is for many people, I think) because even after a long time of feeling that I have truly tried to forgive myself for a plethora of odd behaviors and actions linked to my onset

of depression and schizophrenia, I often still feel fear, guilt and regret around my illness. Shame hovers and hides, and one must continue to work to defeat it

in order to attain a recovery with hope.

Schizophrenia shattered my self-esteem. I never could have predicted its long-lasting impact on my confidence and personal acceptance.

Hope, the fuel that runs the recovery process, seems to be generated by one’s desire to forgive oneself for an undeserved illness. So long as one continues working to tackle shame and genuinely believes that he or she will recover, there is hope to counter shame. ■

Sibling's perspective

My sister and I grew up very close, spending much time together, getting along well and having similar mannerisms and looks. So, it was difficult and confusing for me when we began to grow apart. It coincided with her beginning college, and I figured she was just becoming more independent. As she graduated from college and became more distant and combative, I wondered what had happened to my sister? What could I do to get her back?

I had no idea that this period was much sadder, more confusing and frightening for her. She was continuing her descent into sickness and was becoming estranged from me. Eventually, she was properly diagnosed, and we realized that healing would require loving support.

Understanding the cause of my sister’s behavior and wanting to help her brought our family closer again. We cried and laughed together and we continue to do everything we can to provide the support my sister needs as she battles her illness. We all agree that there is no better feeling than watching her improve and feeling that we all play a part. ■

in the news

WestBridge hosts Co-Occurring Disorders Workshop

WestBridge presented a Co-Occurring Disorders: Integrated Treatment Model Workshop to 120 people on October 14 at the Crown Plaza Hotel in Nashua, NH. Workshop participants received an overview of co-occurring disorders and successful treatment interventions from research on evidence-based best practices.

WestBridge and the New Hampshire Training Institute on Addictive Disorders, the workshop’s sponsor, were honored to have Kenneth Minkoff, MD, as the presenter. Dr. Minkoff is a clinical assistant professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. He is one of the nation’s leading experts on the integrated treatment of individuals with co-occurring psychiatric and substance disorders. Since 1985, he has lectured widely on the topic and has provided training and consultation all over the world. ■

WestBridge staff and presenters take a break during the recent Co-occurring Disorders Workshop.





Dr. Know

Anthony Heins, MD
WestBridge Addiction Specialist

Benefits of sleep: What sleep disorders are common in people with co-occurring disorders?

Falling asleep between 0 to 20 minutes is considered normal and over 20 minutes could be a sign of a sleep disorder. Taking alcohol and sedative drugs to fall asleep faster can cause problems with mood, memory, thoughts and function, tending to make anxiety worse.

Waking in the night is frequently associated with depression and often can be helped with antidepressants and behavioral changes. It is also seen in people who take short-acting sedatives like alcohol, Xanax® and nicotine, because withdrawal symptoms awaken them.

"Yen" sleep is characterized by very light sleep with frequent catnaps and awakenings. This type of fractured sleep is common in users of caffeine and analgesic drugs like opiates, as well as other medications.

Expert treatment of sleep disorders is extremely important to feelings of well-being.

See Dr. Know's complete response at www.westbridge.org. Send questions to theins@westbridge.org. ■

Creative corner

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

*Could there be light
just for me?*

Could there be light?

Should I pray?

I need the light

To shine through the trees

And have it be just for me.



wellness

Sleep is an important restorative activity. To enjoy healthy sleep, follow these "sleep hygiene" tips:

- Follow a regular sleep schedule with the same bedtime and wake time
- Avoid naps during the day
- Avoid heavy meals prior to sleep; eat light snacks only
- Get regular exercise three to four times per week, but not after dinner
- Control the bedroom temperature and surroundings
- Follow a ritual "wind down" one hour prior to bedtime
- Avoid stimulating or emotionally charged issues prior to retiring
- Avoid caffeine-containing substances after the noon meal
- Avoid alcohol
- Use your bed only for sleeping or sexual activity
- Avoid watching TV in bed
- If you're not asleep in 30 minutes, get up and do a relaxing activity until drowsy ■

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

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 174
MANCHESTER, NH