



THE BRIDGE

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

Winter 2009

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 goes 'extra mile' to aid homeless

Singer, songwriter and musician John McAndrew entertained a large crowd at WestBridge's second annual "Blues after Christmas" show to benefit New Horizons Soup Kitchen and Food Pantry/Angie's Shelter (newhorizonsfornh.org). Hundreds turned out to hear the renowned Nashville musician perform at Derryfield School Performing Arts Auditorium in Manchester on January 30. McAndrew played a selection of pop and blues material that had

"I want to make sense of the things I feel."

John McAndrew

guests dancing in their seats. The event raised a mile's worth of funds—\$5,280 – and collected 150 boxes of cereal for the soup kitchen and shelter. The audience also enjoyed the

comedy of Boston comedian Jack Lynch (jacklynchcomedy.com), who had the audience in stitches from start to finish. Enhancing the show further, Woody Giessmann, former drummer for The Del Fuegos and founder of Right Turn (right-turn.org) in Arlington, Mass., took to the stage solo and accompanied McAndrew. WestBridge mentor Bob Burgess received a standing ovation for his appearance on stage with harmonica.

During McAndrew's visit to Manchester, he played piano for guests at New Horizons Senior Dinner and spent time with WestBridge participants. "I want to make sense of the things I feel," he says. "I try to tell stories...say important things and make them easy to understand... lyrics are power." He adds that almost all of his songs are from truth and an experience he's had in his life. Learn more about McAndrew's one-man Broadway show at johnmcandrew.com.

Creative services and other resources for the WestBridge event were donated by Griffin York & Krause (griffinyorkkrause.com). ■



WestBridge CEO Mary Woods, at right, presents Kevin Kintner, New Horizons program director, with a check for \$5,280 after the "Blues After Christmas" concert, while WestBridge COO Jonathan Routhier looks on.

WESTBRIDGE

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Enhancing WestBridge's family program

For years, WestBridge has utilized an evidence-based practice known as Family Psychoeducation, which evolved into Family Education and Support (FES). The FES approach, based on principles of cognitive behavioral therapy, combines educational content about mental illness and substance abuse with skills-teaching in the areas of communication and problem-solving. While this approach has been very effective in helping families improve in these areas, as well as demystifying the diagnoses of mental illness and addiction, it doesn't address all issues that families experience.

To enhance the effectiveness of our approach and provide the best customer service, WestBridge has begun implementing Family Clinical Updates in addition to FES. The clinicians providing direct care to the individual meet with the participant and family together and review progress, refine goals and develop treatment strategies. In this process, families are kept "in the loop" and, in conjunction with weekly FES, the treatment is truly family-centered. ■

For people with dual disorders who are looking to make positive changes in their lives, integrated treatment is more effective than traditional approaches of sequential treatment or focusing on just one disorder or the other, notes Carlo DiClemente, PhD, co-creator of the Stages of Change model. During a visit in mid-January with WestBridge staff and participants, Dr. DiClemente

Stages of change and dual disorders

discussed the process of change and how people can be in different places with different issues.

Stages of Change

- **Pre-contemplation**—not yet seriously considering change: needing interest and concern
- **Contemplation**—considering change: resolving ambivalence and making a decision
- **Preparation**—preparing to change: creating a viable, acceptable plan
- **Action**—changing the behavior: implementing and revising the plan
- **Maintenance**—sustaining the behavior change: integrating the change into lifestyle
- **Relapse**—returning to problem behaviors: recycling and learning from the past attempt

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Dr. Carlos DiClemente

did you know?

Tune in today to "One Hour at a Time" with WestBridge CEO Mary Woods to hear Dr. Chris Martin of Menninger on "Ernest Hemingway: Psychiatric Perspectives on a Life and A Life's Work." Simply log on to voiceamerica.com, tune in to the Health and Wellness channel and search "Content Library" for Dr. Martin's December 8 show. "One Hour at a Time" airs each Monday, 3-4 p.m. EST.

These Internet podcasts increase awareness about recovery from substance use disorders and mental illness, as well as the discrimination and stigma experienced by people with these conditions. Our hope is that people will understand that recovery is a process, and treatment exists that is as effective as that being used for other chronic illnesses. ■



Dr. Chris Martin

Stages of change and dual disorders *cont. from page 2*

“Someone can be in maintenance with a substance abuse problem but still be in pre-contemplation in making changes relative to mental illness,” explains Dr. DiClemente. “Clearly these are interacting problems. If you disregard the mental illness, it creates problems with sustaining change with addiction.

“Using integrated treatment, as WestBridge does, is helpful because you have to keep an eye on both disorders or you get much worse outcomes,” he adds. “It can be a struggle to keep both in view, but you have to be patient while working on one area and trying to manage the other. It’s hard to make two changes at once, but understanding the motivational stages and where people are in the process of change is helpful.”

Instead of seeing people who fail to make a change as unmotivated, he recommends assessing what went wrong in an attempt to change and finding ways to improve on the next attempt. He likens the process to being a ballplayer, which requires ongoing practice and determining what is successful, what is not and making adjustments.

“One of the encouraging pieces of the Stages of Change model is that when people are trying and failing to make change, they are hopefully learning about the process and how to get it right,” says Dr. DiClemente.

Being in a supportive environment that allows individuals to learn as they move through the process of change is important, he adds. “At WestBridge, all the pieces work in a synchronized fashion with the participant as the focus. Staff, participants and families communicate with one another and that is at the heart of what is needed to help sustain change for these individuals over the long haul.” ■

Family perspective

From the moment I called WestBridge, I felt it was the right place for my son Jim*, who was in jail on a suicide watch. WestBridge staff visited him and us to determine if he was right for their program and if it was right for him.

Diagnosed with a major depressive disorder and cannabis abuse, Jim entered The Commons angry and skeptical. After a few weeks, we saw changes. He became a disciple of the program. He focused on wellness, joined a gym, ran and boxed, and ate healthy foods. His conduct before had created family divisions, but WestBridge’s Family Education and Support program helped us see that he wasn’t trying to hurt us with his behavior but had a mental illness.

During his three-month stay, we saw a 180-degree change in Jim’s lifestyle and interactions with family. He has returned home a different person, mentally and physically. He is respectful and accommodating. He eats well, works out, has lost extra weight, and is interested in returning to school and getting a job. He is looking forward.

I feel like my son is back after we almost lost him. WestBridge has put him on the right track and, with ongoing Family Education and Support, we are hopeful this will continue. But we also have a contingency plan in case he has a relapse.

We did what we needed to do to save our son, and he decided to save himself. We have told him that this experience has benefited him, but it need not define him. I will be eternally grateful to all at WestBridge. As each day goes by, the sadness and anxiety dissipate. ■

**not his real name*

in the news

WestBridge Greater Boston has moved from Cambridge to a new building and office space in Medford. WestBridge Greater Boston provides an Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) team to individuals living anywhere in greater Boston. Watch for our Open House in Medford soon!





health talk

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Immune system care

The immune system is an important network of organs, cells and substances in the body, with the primary function of helping fight off disease and infections. It is also responsible for eliminating any dead or diseased cells in the body.

Many factors, including poor nutrition, toxins and stress, can have a negative impact on immune function. The production of immune cells is heightened during times of stress, helping our body repair itself if injured. Chronic stress, however, can lead to immune system depletion.

There are a number of ways to boost your immune system to minimize sickness and increase energy levels. First, eat a healthy diet rich in fruits, vegetables, lean proteins and whole grains. Substances such as alcohol, nicotine and caffeine should be reduced or avoided if possible. Other healthy daily habits include exercising, drinking plenty of water, getting a full night of sleep and finding ways to reduce stress. ■

wellness

Healthy food tips

- **Get dark green:** Salad greens with the darkest colors have high levels of antioxidant vitamins A, C and E, folic acid, calcium and other nutrients.
- **Consider frozen produce:** Some frozen fruits and vegetables are more nutritious than fresh produce that sits in a store or the refrigerator for days.
- **Go juicy:** Fruit juices are healthier choices than fruit drinks.
- **Get tea-ed up:** Drinking non-herbal green, black or white tea can lower the incidence of heart disease, some cancers and other disorders.
- **Find fiber:** In addition to raw fruits and vegetables, whole-grain breads, cereals, brown rice and dried beans are good fiber sources.
- **Buy skinless:** Skinless chicken and turkey is healthier than either served with skin.
- **Card your serving size:** A standard serving of meat, chicken or fish is the size of a deck of cards. ■



creative corner

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

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

Editor: Melissa Westerman

I Remain

*The world is such a mystery
Set me free oh set me free
Oh what is life but death and pain
A giant game
A burning flame
And yet I remain
Our life is but a second on a
never ending clock*

*Tick tock, tick tock
Our days are few upon the earth
Men are longing for rebirth
Oh what is life but death and pain
A giant game
A burning flame
And yet I remain*

Written by Daniel R.