



THE BRIDGE

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

Fall 2007

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. ■

A fresh style of intake interview

Did you know that WestBridge will travel anywhere in the country to complete an intake interview? In our ongoing effort to live our mission of flexibility, mobility and responsiveness, WestBridge will go to a home, hospital or otherwise convenient location to meet with potential participants and their family, introduce ourselves and determine if WestBridge is the right fit.

It is no secret that relationships are the foundations of our lives. They are also the cornerstone to long-term recovery from mental

“They not only came to complete the intake, but they came back and picked him up! The clinicians were very professional but also warm. What they said they were going to deliver, they did. It was a lifesaver for us.”

Mother of WestBridge participant

illness and substance use. In that spirit, WestBridge believes in beginning the relationship process by sending our staff (admissions counselors and/or clinical staff members) to meet with potential participants and their family. This enables the potential participant to meet some of our staff, hear about our program and get a feel for the work we do. This service aids our admission process by our being able to have face-to-face

conversations with potential participants and families. Our objective is to determine goals, strengths and if WestBridge offers what is needed. Often, this process helps build trust and clinical rapport that can ease the transition to treatment, and can be the catalyst of a strong recovery process.

If the participant and his or her family are interested in pursuing an admission and WestBridge decides that our programming fits the needs of the participant and family, there are many ways to facilitate the admission from this point. ■

WESTBRIDGE

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inside

Parent's perspective

Over the past five months, our son Jacob* has been learning that you can move on in life. With a diagnosis of depression, psychosis, PTSD and substance abuse, he arrived at The Commons in Manchester struggling to get back on his feet emotionally after multiple hospitalizations and much out-patient support over two years. He had showed improvement, but each time couldn't stop his substance use. We needed to get him away.

At The Commons, with support from wonderful staff and other participants, Jacob showed marked improvement. Through healthy activities, Family Education and Support sessions, cognitive behavior therapy and counseling he developed self-peace. We appreciated the extra attention given to him by his care manager and other staff when he needed support.

Recently, he moved on to WestBridge's supervised independent living program in Cambridge, Mass. Now in his own apartment, he is monitored by WestBridge mentors, who bring his medications each morning, encourage his efforts in two college classes and a recovery program at Boston University, and spend evenings with him for dinner, AA meetings, grocery shopping and other activities. Without substances, his focus and concentration are returning.

Jacob is doing well, even though he occasionally gets overwhelmed, which is not uncommon with depression and mental illness. We are happy with his progress, despite an occasional setback. His WestBridge mentors are always there to help him work through each situation. With their support, and that of Dr. Green and his staff, Jacob is learning that he can recover and enjoy a quality life. For this, we are grateful. ■

*not his real name

The Commons provides a residential program unlike others, specializing in the integrated treatment of people with both thought disorders and substance abuse during a flexible length of stay.

The Commons: a unique residential experience

Cognitive behavior therapy and other supports give participants tools to manage their symptoms. "We look at the whole person and come from a point of wellness, encouraging nutrition, stress reduction and positive activities," says Eileen Fiori, residential director.

Program goals include preparing participants to live independently and return to work, as well as being involved in social activities. Each morning participants set personal goals and identify how they will work toward them. Throughout the day, goals are revisited and participants are encouraged to reach out to staff for support if needed, so they know how to ask for help. Success toward reaching goals is reviewed each evening.



Integrated Family Education and Support sessions at The Commons help give participants a high level of success. "Having a person's family involved is a vital part of putting one's recovery together," adds Fiori. "Families learn to communicate and solve challenges together, supporting the individual's integration back into the community and restoring their roles as family members." ■

did you know?

- About one in five adults (ages 18 and older) has a diagnosable mental disorder. (National Institute of Mental Health)
- Mental illnesses are more common than cancer, diabetes or heart disease. (U.S. Surgeon General's Report)
- With proper care and treatment, between 70 and 90 percent of people with mental illnesses experience a significant reduction of symptoms and an improved quality of life. (National Alliance for the Mentally Ill)
- More than two-thirds of Americans who have a mental illness live in the community and lead productive lives. (National Mental Health Association) ■

Source: U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Center for Mental Health Services

Cognitive behavioral therapy can ease psychosis

WestBridge has been using cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) to deliver evidence-based services to individuals who have post traumatic stress disorders and is now offering CBT to participants experiencing psychosis. Research over the past decade has shown that adding CBT to pharmacological treatment has demonstrated positive outcomes for those experiencing symptoms of psychosis.

To provide CBT to individuals with psychosis, the therapist pays close attention to building the therapeutic relationship and developing trust. Next, the CBT model of care is explained to the participant. Cognitive behavioral therapy is talking therapy and a cognition is merely a thought. CBT focuses on how thoughts (or the way we think) affect how we feel and then how we behave.



Interventions target symptoms that are distressing to the participant. For example, a participant who is experiencing a high degree of paranoia would benefit from a session with a CBT therapist. Together, they would examine the paranoid thought, evidence “for and against” the thought, and then develop alternative explanations for the thought’s origin. Participants often realize that the paranoia is a symptom of their illness, not a belief with validity, and can reframe the thought. This is just one example of the many CBT techniques that can help individuals with psychosis experience improved quality of life through the examination of their thoughts. ■

Sibling's perspective

Now in her early 30s, my sister Carol* received a main diagnosis five years ago of severe, complex PTSD, which had evolved over time. Since then she has been in rehabilitation for substance use and has undergone extensive treatment in a psychiatric hospital, with some success.

For the past few months she has been living independently in Cambridge, Mass., as part of WestBridge’s independent living and treatment program. This community treatment approach is very valuable and could really move her a long way toward recovery.

Through this mentoring program, Carol seems to have a better understanding of what she needs to do to practice healthy eating habits and get past her eating disorder. She had an extensive work history and is talking once again about careers. She is making an effort, as much as she can, to recognize the value of her relationships with family and friends and to nurture these relationships. She is also attempting to use regulation skills, keeping her anger and emotions in check, when interacting with family and friends.

While she is still in the beginning stages of treatment, I am hopeful for her recovery, as is she. ■

**not her real name*

in the news

- Kevin Keefe, LICSW, and Lois Hollow, ARNP, presented “Family Education and Support – Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Families” on Sept. 9 at the 20th Annual Cape Cod Symposium on Addictive Disorders.
- Lois Hollow presented “Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Psychosis” on Oct. 3 in Louisville, KY, for the National Association of Case Managers.
- WestBridge will host the Integrated Dual Disorders Treatment Training Academy with the Dartmouth Center for Evidenced-Based Practices, Nov. 12-13.
- WestBridge CEO Mary Woods, LADC, RN, will co-present “Pharmacotherapy: Integrating New Tools into Practice” as part of NAADAC’s Life Long Learning Series in Albany, NY, Nov. 16.
- Mary Woods hosts “One Hour at a Time,” a live Internet talk show on Mondays at 3 p.m. EST at www.voiceamerica.com. Call in at 1-866-472-5792.

Visit our updated website at www.westbridge.org. ■





Dr. Bob

Dr. Robert Drake, MD, PhD

How do people recover?

People pursue recovery by actively changing their dual diagnosis behaviors to those reflecting health and wellness. They must develop hope and believe they can change, to find a more satisfying and meaningful life.

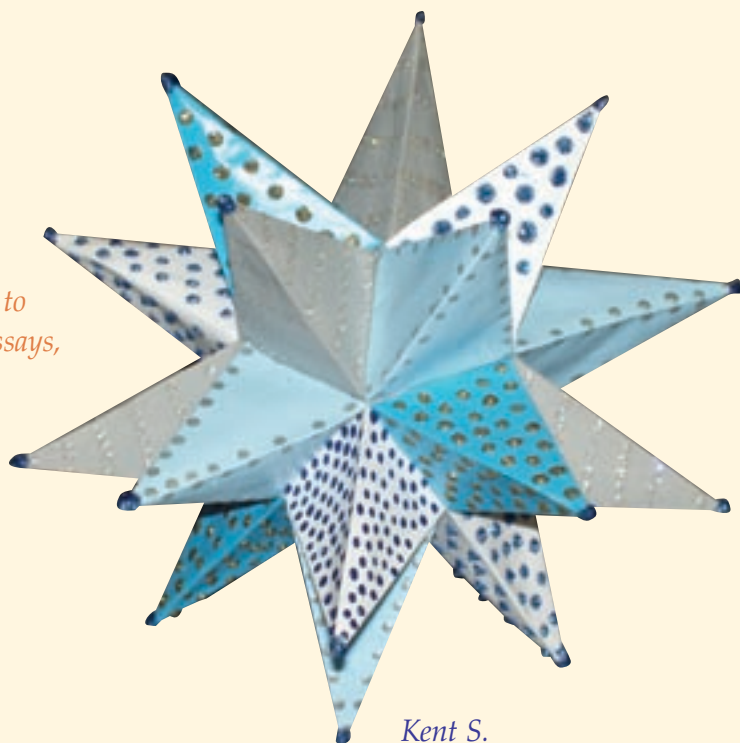
Hope comes from education, supports, skills, courage and success, which Westbridge fosters. Education helps people understand what has been happening to their brains, bodies, social lives, behaviors, health and development. Supports from professionals, families and peers help them develop confidence that their lives can be better. People develop new skills with time, practice and support. Most important is attaining success, overcoming inevitable failures with supports.

Self-esteem comes from trying different jobs and settling on something that feels right and produces real income. As much as we want to protect, take care of, and rescue our family members and patients, real growth involves independent work and relationships.

For Dr. Drake's full article, visit www.westbridge.org. ■

Creative corner

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



Kent S.

wellness

Recovering and staying connected

We do not thrive in isolation, which is why WestBridge supports participants, their families and staff in wellness activities. We assist people in being connected to activities and life passions by going fishing, being a tourist in local towns, taking daily walks, hiking, going to the gym and participating in 12-step recovery groups. This allows us to share in life and to work on and build relationships.

As we build a supportive network of people who get to know us, they can support us when we are not doing well. A person once wrote that a friend is someone who remembers the music of your soul and sings it back to you when you forget. Getting out and making connections with people and places will allow for us to continually work on recovery over a lifetime.

When our wellness and "song" are known by others, we have support all around for a life of recovery. ■

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

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