



THE BRIDGE

Family-centered treatment for mental illness & substance use disorders

Summer 2011

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. ■

Communication styles affect recovery

Individuals and families who express their feelings in a healthy, constructive manner experience the benefits of open communication in a supportive and empowering family system. When people have mental illness and/or substance use disorders, the attitudes and communication style of those in their support system can make or break the recovery process. Particularly damaging, by direct comments or nonverbal cues, is hostility, being critical and emotional over-involvement. These attitudes can stem from a sense of helplessness, fear, anger at the symptoms or

Communication style... can make or break recovery.

not understanding these brain diseases. Members of a support system must understand how their

communication style affects their loved one's recovery or relapse.

At WestBridge, we have the best outcomes when the individual, family and team are working together with transparent communication. It's not the emotion that causes conflict but its delivery that creates stress, tension and missed opportunities for growth. The Family Education and Support (FES) component of the WestBridge experience aims to strengthen crucial communication skills. One of the six current evidence-based practices recognized by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, FES has been shown to result in a 20 to 50 percent reduction in relapse and rehospitalization. Engaging participants and families in FES can also dramatically reduce family stress.



Families at WestBridge meet weekly with FES practitioners for 10 to 12 weeks of education and information. Topics covered are dependent on the needs of each family, but effective communication is often one of the first modules covered. We all need to continue working toward better communicating our emotions, because recovery is a process, not an event. ■

WESTBRIDGE

COMMUNITY SERVICES

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inside

Participant perspective

The WestBridge Family Weekend was more than just another opportunity to see my parents. The event was a celebration of recovery and a chance for us as a family to examine the depth of our gratitude for all that WestBridge has done for us. There are many great things that WestBridge has done for me individually, and for us as a family. My family handed me to WestBridge with the greatest hopes that this would be the solution to years of struggles and hardships stemming from substance abuse and mental instability. Absolute transformation has been the result of my experience with WestBridge as a treatment team and clinical family.

It was wonderful to see the many families united under a common struggle with bright hope of a common solution, that WestBridge has proven to be a realistic expectation for successful recovery. With families representing the entire spectrum of the recovery process, there was a place for everyone to find strength in the knowledge that their loved ones are exactly where they need to be. I'm thrilled by WestBridge's continued expansion to extend its reach to those needing services. ■



This summer, WestBridge Community Services celebrates 10 years of providing evidence-based treatment to individuals with co-occurring mental illness and substance use disorders. From the very beginning, families have been an integral part of that mission.

A hopeful weekend for families

The Family Education and Support (FES) component of our program is at the heart of our family-centered philosophy. We know that building strong relationships between participants, their families and the clinical team fosters trust, respect, improved health and wellness, a sense of empowerment and the too often elusive...hope for the future.

The Weekend of Hope was the theme of WestBridge's inaugural Family Weekend, held June 3-5 at The Commons, our residential recovery facility in Manchester. Festivities included a presentation by Robert Drake, PhD, MD, of Dartmouth Medical School; group sessions designed for families to share experiences and build support systems; musical performances by participants; stand-up comedy by Tony V and Jack Lynch; and a classic New England clam bake.

Dr. Drake's presentation garnered such compliments as, "It was very comforting to learn that Dr. Drake has such an open view of recovery and treatment. He has such an extensive understanding of mental health," and "He is amazing!" Some families said it was their favorite part of the weekend activities.

The food at the event, prepared by our very own chef, Suzanne Wallack, also received rave reviews. "It was amazing to us that so

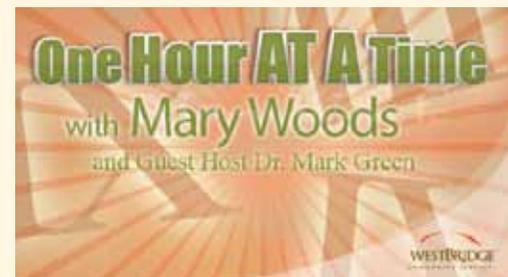
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did you know?

Mary Woods, WestBridge CEO and "One Hour at a Time" host, talked with Kim T. Mueser, Ph.D., about *Family Recovery from Mental Illness and Substance Use Disorders* during the March 31, 2008, show.

Log on to voiceamerica.com and search the Health and Wellness Channel's Monday listings to listen to past shows, or listen live on Mondays from 3-4 p.m. EST.

Dr. Mueser is a licensed clinical psychologist and a professor in the departments of Psychiatry and Community and Family Medicine at the Dartmouth Medical School in Hanover, N.H. He is the co-author of several other books, including *Behavioral Family Therapy for Psychiatric Disorders*. WestBridge utilizes Dartmouth's Evidence-Based Practice for the weekly Family Education and Support sessions during each participant's stay at WestBridge. ■



A hopeful weekend for families cont. from page 2

many people could be offered delicious meals. And teamwork was phenomenal!" said one family.

But the overall consensus among families was that the most poignant takeaway from the Weekend of Hope was meeting and sharing their experiences with other families. The relationships we saw forming between families at the event were inspiring. Our hope is that families will stay in touch throughout the year, continue to share their experiences and support of one another.

The weekend's overarching success has ensured that it will be repeated. "Although mental illness and substance use disorders are chronic brain diseases, we've seen firsthand that people can learn to manage them and go on to live healthy, productive lives," said WestBridge CEO Mary Woods. "The weekend was a wonderful collaboration between families, individuals and staff. Everyone came together to celebrate our participants meeting their goals and moving forward with their lives. We can hardly wait for next year's event." ■



in the news

- WestBridge is sad to announce that Dr. Mark Green has moved on. "I've learned a lot while here: evidence-based practices, participant-driven care, working tightly with families and more," says Dr. Green. To the WestBridge community, he wrote, "I hope and believe that through our collective efforts you have experienced greater joy, respect, connection and accomplishment." We wish him the very best in his new journey in a new state!
- WestBridge is proud to welcome Dr. Zev Schuman-Olivier as medical director of the Boston area team!
- WestBridge received Lamplighter Awards of Excellence for 2011 for *The Bridge* newsletter and Family Education and Support program materials. Thank you to Griffin, York & Krause and The Write Connection for your continued creative inspiration and hard work! ■

Family perspective

Like many WestBridge parents, the long journey with our dually diagnosed son has been one of heartaches, worries and frustration. For nearly a year he has been at WestBridge. While we didn't know what to expect during Family Weekend, June 3-5, we instinctively knew we would leave the event on a positive note.

To our delight, we were pampered and entertained throughout the weekend, reflecting the WestBridge self-care philosophy. Participants provided art and musical entertainment, and we were treated to comedians.

The overarching theme and feel of the weekend was hope. Dr. Drake's presentation on dual diagnosis recovery was informative and hopeful, yet not sugar coated. The Parent-to-Parent NAMI meeting gave us a chance to listen to the stories of others and feel supported and not alone. Getting to know other parents, to laugh and cry together, is important for our healing.

A true testament to the participants' recovery and ease with themselves was the participant-led AA meeting on Sunday. Several well-spoken young men shared their stories during a powerful hour.

Without exception, each staff member is hard working, professional and upbeat, and they know details about my son's life at WestBridge! The weekend provided many opportunities to talk with and get to know staff.

Meeting Al and Lorelee West was a special honor. I thank them for their vision, insights and generosity of spirit. They have created a healing community for participants and their families during 10 amazing years. ■



meet the doc

Zev Schuman-Olivier, MD

Zev Schuman-Olivier, MD, is the new medical director of WestBridge's Boston area team. He is ABPN board certified in adult psychiatry. A graduate of Tufts University School of Medicine with AOA honors, he received psychiatry training at Harvard Medical School. He completed specialty fellowship training in addiction psychiatry at Harvard/Partners Health Care, where he developed clinical specialty areas, including young adults with dual diagnosis and outpatient treatment of opioid dependence. He is trained to provide evidence-based therapies for addiction, including motivational interviewing, cognitive-behavioral therapy and dialectical behavior therapy. He was nationally recognized for his research on buprenorphine treatment for opioid dependence as the winner of the American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry Young Investigator Award. He currently has a prestigious Dupont-Warren research fellowship from the Harvard Medical School Department of Psychiatry and conducts trainings on integrating mindfulness into addiction treatment and recovery programs. ■

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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wellness

Avoiding Lyme disease

Be on the lookout for deer ticks, carriers of Lyme disease, when walking through grassy or wooded areas. Evidence of Lyme disease may include flu-like symptoms and a red bump that develops into a bull's-eye type rash, followed later by joint pain. Contact your doctor immediately if you think you have Lyme disease. Follow these precautions to avoid the disease:

- **Wear shoes, long pants and sleeves:** Tuck your pants into your socks and avoid tall grass and low bushes.
- **Use insect repellents:** Apply insect repellent with DEET to your clothes and skin. Oil of lemon eucalyptus may also provide protection.
- **Tick-proof your yard:** Clear brush and leaves; place woodpiles in sunny areas.
- **Check your family and pets for ticks:** Remove ticks carefully with tweezers and apply antiseptic. Use a washcloth when showering to remove unattached ticks. ■

Source: MayoClinic.com

creative corner

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

*African Drums
by Trevor A.*

