



Giving Our Power to Hope, Peace, & Love February 2023



Dear friends;

Exactly ten years ago I had a colossal fall on black ice while out running, severely breaking my right leg. I had a compound trimalleolar fracture that required surgery involving 12 screws and a plate to repair. I remain very grateful to so many for the skillful rehabilitation from that injury and today I am able to walk and run nearly as well as I once did. However, I had not been able to downhill ski without terrible pain and therefore have ceased partaking in something that once brought me great joy. I no longer had access to the opportunities to be outdoors with my family, taking in the breathtaking vistas only visible on those dramatic summit peaks.

Pain is like that, isn't it? It causes us to contract our joy, give up our freedoms. It often happens over time in imperceptible ways. Our pain takes different forms and tells us some compelling stories. Anxiety tells us that the world is overwhelming and we should just stay in. Depression tells us that we aren't worth the effort and we stop showing up. Perfectionism tells us that unless we're constantly striving, we are a disappointment so we don't take a break. Insidious abuse causes us to question ourselves and shrink to fit others' expectations. Systematic oppression tells us that people who don't look like us or think like us are to be feared and not our responsibility. Grief tells us that the pain of loss is here to stay and we shouldn't risk our giving our hearts again. Each one has its roots in pain and each one robs us of our freedom and joy.

When we contract our world, we give power to the pain. What we give power to is amplified. We believe that the pain is stronger than our capacity to engage with the world around us; to connect, to rest, to play and to love. The good news is that the inverse is also true, when we give power to hope, peace, strength, and love, they are amplified. And when we show up for one another in those painful dark places, we enrich our lives as well as others.

As for my ankle? A simple solution gave that experience back to me last weekend - a new pair of ski boots. These fancy newfangled contraptions don't have the traditional buckles my pair had that compressed my ankle and caused the pain. With that one adjustment, I rediscovered the freedom and awe found on those snowy slopes. What a gift! Oh, if it could all be so simple as a proper fit, am I right?! I do know it's not, my friends. Please know you're not alone on this journey of healing - the promise of those vistas is accessible to us all.

My very best to you,

Maria Coutant Skinner, LCSW
President & CEO



Healing in the Black Community

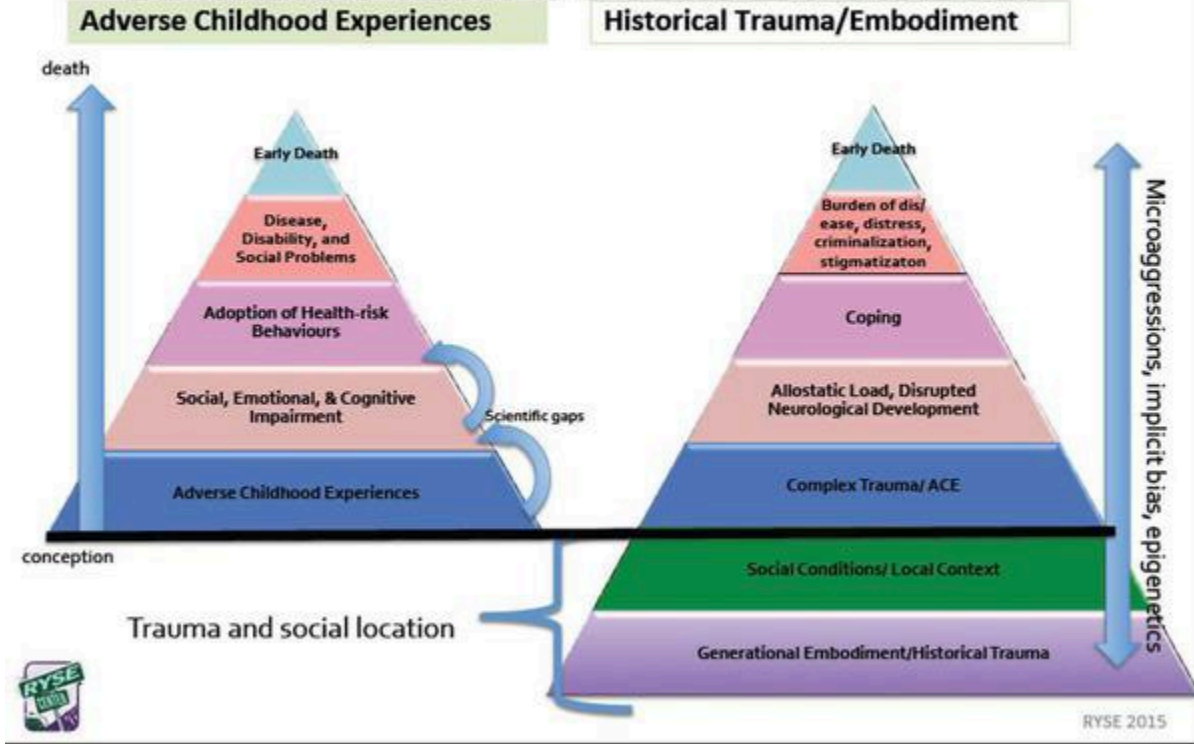
Communities of color face historical and cultural factors that lead to disparities in accessing quality healthcare, including substance use and mental health treatment, as compared to their white counterparts. Deep rooted stigma, trauma, micro aggressions and racism all increase the risk for poor health outcomes. Healing must start with telling the truth about these disparities as we work to dismantle the systems that perpetuate them. Representation in the healthcare workforce, trauma informed practices, building culturally responsive approaches, and making space for acknowledging where we still need to grow are all components of a care system that will lead to deeper more sustainable health outcomes for the global majority.

A Fighting Chance

Adverse childhood experiences (ACES) are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood. They can include abuse, food insecurity, growing up around violence at home or in a community, or having a family member in jail. The list goes on. The more ACES a child experiences the greater the risk for poor physical and mental health, incarceration, and socio-economic challenges. One study found that females and several minority groups were at greater risk for experiencing four or more ACES; leaving them more vulnerable to lifelong health impacts and challenges.

In 2015, the RYSE Center adapted the original ACES pyramid to include more than just personal trauma. (See the updated pyramid below; click here for more information on the studies) Children don't just experience trauma, they are born into established structures and conditions that can include racial bias, limited opportunities, economic and social inequalities. They all play a role in determining lifelong outcomes.

Trauma and Social Location



You are Welcome Here

Black individuals tend to be less likely to reach out for mental health and substance use disorder treatment than their white counterparts. There are many barriers to treatment, including stigma around the disorders and treatment, lack of health insurance, access to care, the lack of cultural sensitivity and prejudice by healthcare providers, and a general mistrust of the medical system.

We acknowledge the mistrust, the harmful effects of racism, the challenges Black communities face, and at the same time, recognize that each client is unique with individual experiences. We strive to provide our clients with culturally competent, trauma-informed, and gender-responsive care that is tailored to their needs.

We are grateful to our clients for trusting us with their care, especially when they are the most vulnerable. It is a courageous act to reach out for help, and we strive to support everyone's journey with open arms, an open mind, and an open heart.



RECOVERY FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY

PUT YOUR OXYGEN MASK ON FIRST

McCall's Family Recovery Coach Offers Support for the Entire Family

We've all heard the advice, "put your oxygen mask on first before helping others," but putting yourself first can be easier said than done, especially when caring for someone with a substance use or mental health disorder.

It almost doesn't make sense to help yourself first when someone you care about needs you so desperately. However, family members are going through just as much. The constant worry, stress, time spent trying to help, and even financial strain can take a toll on our physical and mental wellbeing.

At a certain point you cannot meet everyone's needs without caring for yours first. Caregivers and family members deserve the same love and support that is given to others. Take a moment to breathe. There are resources for you too. McCall's Family Recovery Coach is ready to turn towards you and lean in, supporting you through life's most challenging moments.

You don't have to walk this journey alone; there is help available. Your coach will teach you about the science behind addiction, how to set boundaries, build healthy communication, and skills that support self-care.

Family Recovery Coaches can also connect family members and their loved one to outside services such as mental health and substance use disorder treatment, harm reduction services, and much more!

For more information, contact:
Julia Merchant, LMSW, CPS, Family Recovery Coach
Mobile: 959.229.4814
julia.merchant@mccallbhn.org

Interview with McCall's Family Recovery Coach

Did you miss the WZBG interview? Don't worry we have you covered. Family Recovery Coach Julia Merchant, LMSW, CPS shares her personal experience with self-care and the importance of seeking help when you're feeling drained. Head to our [pressroom](#) to listen to the full interview.

Tune in on the 3rd Wednesday of every month at 8:20 on [FM 97.3 WZBG](#) to hear us in real-time.





Prevention at Work

Our Prevention experts spent a week in Washington, D.C. at the CADCA National Leadership Forum learning the latest strategies to prevent substance misuse in communities.

Pictured left to right:
Darian Graells, BA, Prevention Facilitator, Tobacco Treatment Specialist
Chelsea Kapitancek, BA Prevention Facilitator, Tobacco Treatment Specialist
Joshua Licursi, MPH, Prevention Facilitator & Digital Marketing Specialist

Inspiring Acts of Kindness

Giving back while in recovery not only helps others but creates positive and joyful experiences that strengthen a person's own recovery journey. Michele Smedick, Recovery Support Professional II, has learned the value of giving back through personal experience and encourages our clients to give back as well!

In the spirit of Valentine's Day, our Carnes Weeks clients made cards and wrote 160 thoughtful messages for their families and residents at the Litchfield Woods Health Care Center.

Clients enjoyed writing valentines for the residents and engaged in conversation about the importance of giving back in recovery; how it can be simple and doesn't have to be on a grand level. Clients went around the room and shared random acts of love that they've committed and how it makes them feel to do such things. Clients were also able to write cards to their loved ones as well.





Resource Fair at the Winsted Health Center

McCall staff helped to connect guests of the overflow shelter to important community resources at an event on February 6th.

Pictured left to right:

Jose Colon de la Rosa, Case Manager
Alicia Peterson, Emergency Overdose Responder
Sharon Eisenberger, BS, RSS, Family REACH Navigator

The shelter is located at the Winsted Health Center, 155 Spencer St. and open daily from 7pm - 7am.

Advocating for Homeless Response Programs

On February 2nd, Glenn Ryan, Director of Special Services, testified in front of Senator Moore, Representative Luxenberg, Vice Chair Lesser and Vice Chair Khan, Senator Sampson, Representative Scott, and members of the Committee on Appropriations in support of Raised Bill 6445: An Act Appropriating Funds for Certain Homelessness Response Programs. He asked the committee to invest \$50,000,000 to Rescue the Homeless Response System to ensure that homelessness is infrequent and short-term, saving lives and public dollars.

Glenn has been part of the Homeless Outreach Team in Litchfield County for the past two decades. Here is what he had to say:

“Currently we are facing a perfect storm of inflation, raising home prices, low housing inventory, the opiate epidemic, increases in mental health issues and consequences of the COVID pandemic have impacted our homeless. Restoring and increasing funding for our vulnerable homeless population has never been more important. It is with your support that we can rescue the homeless response system and help make sure Connecticut’s residents are healthy and stably housed.”





LCOTF Business After Hours

On February 15th, the Litchfield County Opiate Task Force (LCOTF), sponsored the NW CT Chamber of Commerce's Business After Hours event at the Torrington Area Health District. Attendees spent the evening learning about the work LCOTF does to address the root causes of addiction in the county and how individuals can become involved.

Our CEO, Maria Coutant Skinner, LCSW, and Tom Narducci, Administrative Director of Outpatient Behavioral Health at Charlotte Hungerford Hospital, discussed the history of the Task Force, Lauren Pisto, MPH, McCall's Director of Community Engagement, presented on collaborative strategies of the Task Force, including coordinated outreach efforts, harm reduction, and reducing stigma through education on the root causes of addiction.

Mocktails and charcuterie were served, showing attendees that you can connect and have fun in sober spaces. All guests were trained in naloxone and received their own naloxone kit.







Family Recovery Coaching

with the CLEAR initiative.

Recovery for the entire family.

- ✓ Family Recovery Plans
- ✓ Addiction Education
- ✓ Individual Support & Guidance
- ✓ Practicing Skills
(self-care, boundaries, communication)

Contact Julia Merchant, LMSW, with any questions or referrals.

📞 959.229.4814 ✉️ julia.merchant@mccallbhn.org



Teens, We Can Make Quitting Easier

Join us for a free, youth Tobacco Cessation Group

- 📅 Every Tuesday Starting Feb. 7
- 🕒 3:30pm-4:30pm
- 📍 Email Darian Graells to sign up!
darian.graells@mccallbhn.org





Check out trainings, and events happening across CT for Problem Gambling Awareness Month (PGAM)!

MARCH 2023

3	PGAM Kick Off Event Gaylord Hospital, Wallingford In-Person 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM
6	LGBTQ+ & Gambling Disorder: A Cultural-Competency Primer Presenter Michelle L. Malkin, JD, PhD Virtual 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM 3 CECs
10	Problem Gambling Among Our Service Members Presenter Jonathan Crandall Glastonbury Academy Building 2143 Main Street, Glastonbury, 06033 In-Person 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
14	The Impact of the Wide World of Entertainment on Today's Young Adults Presenter Dan Trolaro Virtual 12:30 PM - 2:00 PM
16	Gambling A Lead Risk Factor for Suicide Presenters Jeremy Wampler & Haley Brown Virtual 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM
22	Youth Media Project Showcase Event Virtual 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM
27	Recovery Conference Flyer Coming Soon! Virtual 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM
29	Persons affected and where to seek help for problem gambling Virtual Flyer Coming Soon!
30	Dr. Lynn Fiellin from Yale University Flyer Coming Soon! Virtual 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

Visit www.ccpq.org & www.gamblingawarenessct.org



Our Contact Information

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