



Message from Maria



Maria Coutant Skinner, LCSW, CEO

Dear friends;

The waning days of summer always bring about a bittersweet feeling for me. Perhaps it is because it represents an ending to the glorious New England summers that I equate with gatherings of family and friends when we swim, eat corn on the cob, and have joy-filled adventures. Yes, I'm grateful to have those special memories and mournful at the onset of fall, so I cling with loads of sentimentality to these final

At the *Heart* of Wellness

August 2022

Overdose Awareness Day

August 31, 2022

Over 100,000 Americans were lost to an overdose in 2021. According to experts, Connecticut residents are more likely to die of an overdose than a car crash. Even as car crash deaths reached a [16 year high](#) in 2021.

So far this year we have lost 660 people to an overdose in our state; of those deaths, 86% involved [fentanyl](#). The illegal drug supply is dangerous and is poisoning those that we love at an astounding rate. Fentanyl and other synthetic opioids are added to pressed pills to imitate prescription pills like Adderall and Xanax, along with drugs like Heroin and Cocaine. It is impossible to know by looking at illegal drug how much fentanyl has been added, but there are ways to stay safe with harm reduction methods that work.

We meet our clients where they are at...

If you have been around our organization and the behavioral health community long enough you have heard this phrase, maybe you say it often yourself. Harm reduction is part of offering comprehensive care, which allows us to meet our clients where they are at to keep them safe until they are ready for the next step in their recovery.

golden, katydid serenade moments. This type of feeling, gratitude mingled with longing and mourning, is a familiar place for me. In the new book, *Bittersweet*, author Susan Cain beautifully illustrates just how ubiquitous these experiences are and how embracing them can make us whole.

“I’ve concluded that bittersweetness is not, as we tend to think, just a momentary feeling or event. It’s also a quiet force, a way of being, a storied tradition—as dramatically overlooked as it is brimming with human potential. It’s an authentic and elevating response to the problem of being alive in a deeply flawed yet stubbornly beautiful world. Most of all, bittersweetness shows us how to respond to pain: by acknowledging it, and attempting to turn it into art, the way the musicians do, or healing, or innovation, or anything else that nourishes the soul. If we don’t transform our sorrows and longings, we can end up inflicting them on others via

We urge all people who are actively using to never use alone and obtain a free harm reduction kit that includes the following:

Naloxone (Narcan): Lifesaving overdose reversal medication, instrumental in saving lives. It is a simple nasal spray and critical to have as part of your first aid kit. Remember recovery isn’t a straight line, a loved one may need multiple reversals in their lifetime.

Fentanyl Test Strips: Small strips of paper that can identify the presence of fentanyl in injectable drugs, powders, and pills. While the strips do not provide the tester with the exact amount of fentanyl present, it will present them with additional information, which can lead to safer use practices.

[Click here](#) to find out where you can get a free harm reduction kit.

The McCall Mobile Wellness Van is also out in the community five days a week; visit us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) to see our weekly schedule. Call **860-496-2100** to find out how to get access to same-day treatment.

To learn more, listen to Lauren Pristo, MPH, Director of Community Engagement Litchfield County Opiate Task Force on [WZBG](#).

Overdose Awareness Vigil

Tonight (8/31), 6-8PM at Coe Park in Torrington

Our collective heart aches for all those we have lost to an overdose. We are with you today and every day as we grieve and remember together. We hope you will join us tonight from 6-8PM at the [Overdose Awareness Day Resource Fair and Vigil](#) to honor our loved ones who have passed.

**McCall Behavioral Health
Network**
New Name, New Look,

abuse, domination, neglect. But if we realize that all humans know—or will know—loss and suffering, we can turn toward each other.

We mark International Overdose Awareness Day on the final day of August. We honor the precious lives lost, we wrap their dearest in love and community and we grieve, together. We also look to the promise of recovery for those still struggling and pour our support and grace into them and their loved ones. As Susan Cain notes; “the bittersweet is about the desire for communion, the wish to go home.” We find our homes in ourselves, by nourishing and not neglecting our physical, emotional and spiritual needs and in each other in connection and communion. Thank you for being part of our family, our community... the sweet. We hope that in embracing the bittersweet, we all find healing and wholeness.

All my best to you,

Maria

Same Commitment to Our Clients’ Well-being

Drum roll please! We are excited to introduce to you our new name and logo!



Over the next few months, you will notice some changes around our facilities and online. From signage to letterhead to a new website, we are hard at work rolling out our new brand. Rest assured, our clients will be met with the same care and compassion as always. To celebrate the new name, we will be holding a ribbon cutting ceremony in late October. Stay tuned for more information.

Extra, Extra, Read All About It!

US Senator Richard Blumenthal stopped by Renato Outpatient Services in Waterbury on Tuesday, August 23rd to call for more funding to support those with substance use disorders. Our CEO, Maria Coutant Skinner, LCSW, Joy Pendola, LMFT LADC, Chief Clinical Officer and Lauren Prito, MPH, Director of Community Engagement Litchfield County Opiate Task Force spoke on behalf of our agency along with our various partners. Thank you to everyone who participated in the press conference and shared their knowledge and stories. Click the links to read more or [click here](#) to listen to the press conference in its entirety!

[CT Public: Addiction experts call for more funding, compassion to fight opioid epidemic](#)

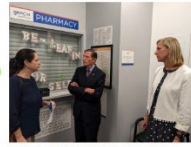
[CT Insider: 'Toxic' street drug supply in CT fueling fatal overdoses, experts say](#)

Please enjoy this poem by Robert Frost:

Nature's first green is gold,
Her hardest hue to hold.
Her early leaf's a flower;
But only so an hour.
Then leaf subsides to leaf.
So Eden sank to grief,
So dawn goes down to day.
Nothing gold can stay.



US Senator Richard Blumenthal and Todd Eling, McCall Alumni and Emergency Overdose Responder



Joy Penhela, LMFT, LADC, Chief Clinical Officer, US Senator Richard Blumenthal, and Maria Costant Skinner, LCCSW, CEO



Joy Penhela, LMFT, LADC, Chief Clinical Officer, US Senator Richard Blumenthal, and Maria Costant Skinner, LCCSW, CEO

Save the Date

We hope you will join us!

Click on the image for more information.

LGBTQIA+ Community Input Survey

We want to hear from you!

The Litchfield County Opiate Task Force is looking for input to improve access to services for LGBTQIA+ people in Litchfield County. The Community Input Survey covers issues such as medical care access, substance use, social supports, and mental health as these issues are all interconnected. It is intended for ALL members of the LGBTQIA+ community in Litchfield County, whether they use substances or not, as well as loved ones and providers

A SPECIAL CONCERT TO BENEFIT

the Music is You
THE MUSIC OF JOHN DENVER

LUCINDA ROWE
FEATURING NATIONAL RECORDING ARTIST

WARNER THEATRE SEPTEMBER 16, 2022 @ 8PM
with Mick Connolly, Gary Fiandra, Chris Morrison & Marc Russell

AUGUST 31, 2022

Overdose Awareness Day

Resource Fair & Vigil

COE MEMORIAL PARK, TORRINGTON
6:00 - 8:00 PM

Join us as we come together to commemorate the lives of those lost to overdose. The event will offer local resources and support, followed by speakers and a candlelight vigil to share messages of remembrance, healing, and hope.

for more information please visit
<https://www.lcof.org/overdose-awareness-day/>

who support them. [Click here](#) to take the survey and please share with your family and friends!



Our Contact Information

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