



McCall Center
for Behavioral Health
prevention • recovery • community



HELP, Inc.

At the **Heart** of Wellness ***With McCall & Help***

Message from Maria



Maria Coutant Skinner, LCSW, CEO

Dear friends;

In the next few weeks, my husband Greg will have open heart surgery to repair and replace his ascending aorta. This will be his second open heart surgery; the first took place twenty-five years ago when we were expecting our first child, Emma. Greg's Dad died when he was 28 years old of what we now presume is the same genetic condition detected in Greg at the same age - connective tissue disorder. In these twenty-five years, Greg has had more surgeries and procedures than I can count to address the ongoing challenges related to his condition.

We've been focusing on men's mental health this month and all of the related barriers our culture places on men

Breaking the Stigma for Men in Recovery

"Be a man." "Man up." "Boys don't cry."

Men are often socialized as children in a way that leads them to restrict emotional expression as adults. It also creates a tendency for them to not ask for help or report abuse. Take the expressions listed above as an example. They teach boys that expressing emotion is unacceptable and reinforce the belief that the only acceptable emotions for men are anger and/or physical violence.

We saw an example last weekend at the Oscars when an actor responded with physical violence to what he deemed an inappropriate and highly insensitive joke about his wife. The initial flash of "anger in the moment" later turned to expressions of regret, with the actor stating "violence in all forms is poisonous and destructive." But even with that statement some of the discussions that followed showed support for actor's actions. There was and is a prevalent sentiment that men should protect their wives, even if that means using violence.

Trying to Fix It Yourself Can Be Deadly

As boys grow into men, they often become problem solvers; trying to fix everything on their

asking for and accepting help. Our society tends to organize attributes into binary categories; strong or weak, brave or cowardly, vulnerable or stoic. We celebrate men who soldier-on through fear and pain and too often, we reject the true manifestations of their emotions both implicitly and explicitly. The result of that is devastating, please see the details in the article to the right. The fact is that, try as we might, we cannot stuff, numb, rage through or pretend that painful feelings don't exist, it is part of the human experience and one way or another it will show up in our bodies and our relationships.

Greg lost his dad when he was just four years old and has had to confront his own mortality for all of his adult life. There is grief, fear and pain to be processed...and that can get a bit messy my friends. I have learned that when he gets quiet and distant, he is frightened, and an invitation to talk when he is ready is appreciated. It's taken a lifetime of practice to unlearn what our culture has taught him - and me - about how men get through difficult times. Shedding tears, giving himself permission to admit that he is afraid, and being open to experiencing all the associated emotions with these events have allowed for our family to demonstrate our love and support, and Greg to receive those gifts. His ability to allow the full spectrum his emotions enables him to process the trauma and move forward. I deeply appreciate that he trusts me with his heart - every bit of it.

own. However, trying to manage substance use and mental health disorders alone can be deadly.

For example, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Data & Statistics [Fatal Injury Report for 2020](#), reported that **men are 3.88 times more likely to die by suicide than women**. Last year in the US, we lost 45,979 people to suicide; white males accounted for 69.68% of these deaths.

Globally the findings are similar. The [World Health Organization](#) found that men, despite higher rates of suicide, have lower reported rates of depression than women, a significant risk factor for suicide.

Vulnerability is NOT Weakness

Researcher and storyteller Dr. Brené Brown has spent two decades studying courage, vulnerability, shame, and empathy. In a [TED Talk](#) she explores what happens when people are vulnerable, she said:

“Vulnerability is not weakness. It is emotional risk, exposure, uncertainty and fuels our daily lives. It is our most accurate measurement of courage. It is the birthplace of change.”

What Dr. Brown discovered about vulnerability and its conduit to change is what makes recovery possible for so many people – especially for men.

Being Vulnerable Can Save Your Life

Often when men first arrive for treatment, they are nervous, angry, and defensive. Once they begin to understand that there is hope they reach a turning point, and a symbolic light goes on. Asking for help and being vulnerable can yield big rewards.

*Greg gave me permission to share his journey with you, another example of his strength and vulnerability.

All my best,

Maria

Did you miss our WZBG Interview?

Click on this [link](#) to hear this month's interview on WZBG 97.3 with Dale Jones and John Fecteau, LCSW Director of Mental Health. This month they spoke about breaking the stigma for men in recovery. Visit McCall's press room to listen!

Tune in on the 3rd Wednesday of every month at 8:20 to hear us in real-time.



Managing emotions starts with learning to identify them and then talking about how they feel. It leads to becoming more effective at managing stressful situations that prompt substance use in the first place. Relationships begin to improve at home and at work. A sense of control is regained, and a point is reached where the consequences outweigh the rewards. There is actually relief when someone realizes they are not alone, and something can be done about the challenges they have been facing.

Stage of Change Approach

At McCall and Help, Inc. we realize that everyone enters treatment at a different stage. That is why we take a "stage of change" approach and meet people where they are on their journey. We make access to treatment easy and believe that there are many pathways to recovery. Whether a client needs medication management for a mental health disorder, Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT), telehealth visits, or residential or outpatient treatment options, we are here to guide them and find treatment that fits their needs.

If you or someone you love could use some support, give us a call. Recovery is possible and you are not alone. Life can be so much better.

[McCall Center for Behavioral Health](#)

(860)496-2100

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Give Local April 26th & 27th

Save the date ~ Give Local is coming soon! For 36 hours on April 26-27, 2022, Connecticut Community Foundation will host Give Local Greater Waterbury and Litchfield Hills for the tenth consecutive year.

This year we are raising money for adventure-based counseling activities for our residential clients. Keep a look out in your inbox for more information mid-April to learn more about the program and how you can get involved.



Problem Gambling Awareness Month

New Service Offering!

Our outpatient programs located in Torrington, Danbury, and Waterbury, now provide education about problem gambling and the impacts it has on individuals and their families. Through this education, we are working with those we serve to better identify if problem gambling is affecting their lives and how they can be supported in making a change.

This past October, Connecticut legalized online betting on sporting events, fantasy sports, and casino games for those who are 21 and over. From October to January 2021, the Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection reported that our state has received \$14 million from online gaming and sports betting. Connecticut participants wagered just over \$3 billion during this time frame.

The [Connecticut Council on Problem Gambling](#) (CCPG) reported that calls to the [Problem Gambling Hotline](#) were up 87% in November 2021 compared to November 2020. It is a trend that is likely to continue.

If you or someone you love might benefit from these services, contact the Watkins Network at 860-482-7242 or watkins@cnyhelp.org.



McCall & Help, Inc. in the News

Purdue Pharma Settlement

On March 3rd our CEO, Maria Coutant Skinner, LCSW, joined CT Attorney General William Tong to announce the \$6 Billion dollar settlement with Purdue Pharma. Over time, Connecticut will receive \$95 million to fund opioid treatment and prevention. [Click here to watch!](#)

Maria was also interviewed on NBC Connecticut's Face the Facts program on Sunday, March 6th regarding her thoughts, and on how Connecticut should allocate funds: \$95 million from the Purdue Pharma settlement and \$300 million from the Cardinal, McKesson, and AmerisourceBergen and manufacturer Johnson & Johnson settlement. [Click here to watch her in action!](#)

“The behavioral health care system has been woefully under-resourced for a very long time,” Maria Coutant Skinner, CEO of McCall and Help, Inc., said at Thursday’s press conference. “For us to be able to do that healing work ... it involves entire systems, whole families, and communities. That requires resources. What I am hopeful about today is that this is the beginning of that important work and repair.”

Our Contact Information

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