



NEWSLETTER- August 2022

Infinity Peer Support

Mind, Body and Spirit

The staff often review programming throughout the year and have tried in the past to make our offerings be eclectic, but we recognized that we were only addressing the mind and spirit. We have a new budget year that began on July 1, and the Board of Directors at Infinity Peer Support need to review and approve the budget which will take place on July 27.

With our new contract with the Bureau of Mental Health Services for peer to peer services, we are working on developing relationships with area yoga studios to come in once or twice a week and develop members' mind, body and spirit. We received a 40% increase in funding for the next two years, so we are ecstatic at the possibilities that come with implementing programming that is well thought out and helps members attain a sense of tranquility and balance.

For those that may not have an interest in yoga, we are also trying to find a reputable teacher that will host a series of painting opportunities. Art therapy, if done correctly can tap into mind, body and spirit and uses creative outlets to offer trauma informed programming.

Lastly, if members have any other ideas on how we can help as peers to broaden our program offering, please let any staff member know and we will review the suggestions at our bi-monthly staff meetings.

In wellness,
Melissa Silvey, Executive Director



AUGUST 2022

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<p>1</p> <p>Question of the day 9:45 Meditation 10:15 Why you feel what you feel 11:15 Calming Coloring 1:00 Trauma Survivors</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Question of the day 9:45 Meditation 10:15 Journaling 10:30 Creative Arts 12:30 TED Talks 7:00 NA Meeting</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Question of the day 9:45 Meditation 10:15 The Gifts of Imperfection 11:15 Men's Group 1:00 Adverse Childhood Experiences</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Question of the day 9:45 Meditation 10:15 Women's Group 11:00 Fun and Games 1:00 Healthy meals on a Budget 6:30 NA Meeting</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Question of the day 9:45 Meditation 10:30 Adult children of Alcoholics/Dysfunctional families 12:30 Crafts</p>
<p>8</p> <p>Question of the day 9:45 Meditation 10:15 The power of not reacting 11:15 Calming Coloring 1:00 Trauma Survivors</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Question of the day 9:45 Meditation 10:15 Journaling 10:30 Creative Arts 12:30 TED Talks 7:00 NA Meeting</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Question of the day 9:45 Meditation 10:15 The Gifts of Imperfection 11:15 Men's Group 12:00 Breaking Bread 12:30 Community Meeting/Bonfire</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Question of the day 9:45 Meditation 10:15 Women's Group 11:00 Bingo 1:00 Budgeting 6:30 NA Meeting</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Question of the day 9:45 Meditation 10:30 Adult children of Alcoholics/Dysfunctional families 10:00 Tall Ship Tours 1:00 Singing and Dancing</p>
<p>15</p> <p>Question of the day 9:45 Meditation 10:15 Documentary of Emotional Intelligence 11:15 Calming Coloring 1:00 Trauma Survivors</p>	<p>16</p> <p>Question of the day 9:45 Meditation 10:15 Journaling 10:30 Creative Arts 12:30 TED Talks 7:00 NA Meeting</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Question of the day 9:45 Meditation 10:15 The Gifts of Imperfection 11:15 Men's Group 1:00 Adverse Childhood Experiences</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Question of the day 9:45 Meditation 10:15 Women's Group 11:00 Fun and Games 1:00 Healthy Meals on a Budget 6:30 NA Meeting</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Question of the day 9:45 Meditation 10:30 Adult children of Alcoholics/Dysfunctional families 12:30 Crafts</p>
<p>22</p> <p>Question of the day 9:45 Meditation 10:15 Control your emotions 11:15 Calming Coloring 1:00 Trauma Survivors</p>	<p>23</p> <p>Question of the day 9:45 Meditation 10:00 NH Mental Health Peer Alliance 10:15 Journaling 10:30 Creative Arts 12:30 TED Talks 7:00 NA Meeting</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Question of the day 9:45 Meditation 10:15 The Gifts of Imperfection 11:15 Men's Group 1:00 Adverse Childhood Experiences</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Question of the day 9:45 Meditation 10:15 Women's Group 11:00 Bingo 1:00 Soup or Salad Making 6:30 NA Meeting</p>	<p>26</p> <p>Question of the day 9:45 Meditation 10:30 Adult children of Alcoholics/Dysfunctional families 1:00 Singing and Dancing</p>
<p>29</p> <p>Question of the day 9:45 Meditation 10:15 Feelings: Handle them before they handle you 11:15 Calming Coloring 1:00 Trauma Survivors</p>	<p>30</p> <p>Question of the day 9:45 Meditation 10:15 Journaling 10:30 Creative Arts 12:30 TED Talks 7:00 NA Meeting</p>	<p>31</p> <p>Question of the day 9:45 Meditation 10:15 The Gifts of Imperfection 11:15 Men's Group 1:00 Adverse Childhood Experiences 5:00 Board Meeting via Zoom (Members Welcome!)</p>		

Writing About Your Mental Health Condition, Substance Use Disorder or Homelessness Experience to Gain Perspective on Your Situation

Many people talk about journaling as a great way to process the trials and tribulations of your life—and it is. Prose is another way to gain perspective on your experiences.

Don't tell. Show.

Show us the situation that made you angry, happy, sad, etc.

Breathe life into it.

Write what you know—what you experience firsthand.

“They led me to my own cell on the outskirts of the Common Area. I closed the door. I didn't want to deal with other prisoners. I didn't want to see anyone. I didn't want to talk with anyone.

Female prisoners gathered by my cell-door window and invited me into the Common Area. As they stared at me, I felt like a freak in a show. I sat on my bunk, remained silent, shredded toilet paper into tiny pieces and dropped them into the sink and toilet. For some reason, it kept me calm.

I stared out the window at a lone tree with naked branches lit by a spotlight. I focused on it. I was that tree—alone in the spotlight—and yearned to be outside. I had no idea how long I might be stuck in jail.”

Be specific.

“When I landed in the Women's Section, I was tired from not sleeping and smelled disinfectant. I couldn't see straight, but fellow inmates invited me to play cribbage at the cafeteria table in the Common Area. I struggled to concentrate on the cards: Ace, Ten, Five, Jack, Queen and King. It took me a few minutes to discard two blurry cards into the crib.

As we played, I talked about my Dad. ‘He taught me to play cribbage when I was eight. I miss him a lot.’

Rebecca, my red-haired cribbage opponent, held cards in her big, work-roughened hands. Then, she said she missed her children. Later, she showed me pictures of them covering the walls of her cell. They looked like miniature versions of her: freckled, fair-skinned and sturdy.

During a trip to the Exercise Yard the next day, Rebecca kept the guard occupied in conversation while the rest of us shot a basketball into a rusted-iron hoop. Not much else to do in a

cement-lined courtyard surrounded by four brick walls. When we walked back inside, we visited the bathroom that smelled of menstrual blood and urine. Each toilet was separated by a steel wall, punctured with circular cutouts. Tampons plugged the holes. Rebecca took the toilet closest to the door. She protected us from the interested glances of the guards. I was grateful for her willingness to do so and thanked her later.

Harper, a Native American woman, was the nicest murderer I ever met. She joined us at the cafeteria table for lunch. A long, brown braid rested against her orange-clad back. She had warm brown eyes and crooked teeth. We ate bologna sandwiches—white bread, yellow mustard and pink meat—with purple Kool-Aid. She told me she killed her husband in self-defense. I believed her. She showed me pictures of her children. I thought they must have had her eyes and her husband's straight teeth as they smiled for the camera. Then, I admired her devotion to her family. Now, I wonder if she killed her husband to protect them."

Verbs are important.

Stay in the active tense as much as possible.

As an exercise, write ten nouns on the left side of a page (e.g., lilacs, azaleas, horses, dogs, muscles, dinosaurs, seeds, videos, etc.). On the right side of the page, write fifteen verbs that go with an occupation (e.g., cook: saute, chop, mince, slice, heat, broil, simmer, taste, spice, bake, brine, marinate, whip, stir, etc.).

You end up with some original sentences:

"Dinosaurs marinate in the tar pits.

Lilacs sliced the sky with their purple spears.

Horses mince their way across the dressage space.

Videos chop up images into a photo montage.

Dogs whip their tails in a blur of happiness to see me."

Go further.

Push yourself. Go further than you think you can.

"'Twinkle Toes' had lived at Bangor Mental Health Institute (BMHI) for forty years. She reminded me of the cartoon character from Edward Gorey's introduction to *Masterpiece Mystery*.

Her long-waisted figure was topped by short white hair. Wrinkles gave character to her face. She often wore diaphanous materials that fluttered around her as she moved. Each night, she took off her nightgown and streaked down the hall. I heard her feet run down the hall, followed by a staff stampede. She splashed water in the bathroom. She giggled as Staff tried to herd her back into her room. She had no hope of getting out of BMHI. No family remained on the outside to support her. She had outlived them all and flitted, ghostlike, through the hallway.

'Twinkle Toes' made me realize how much I wanted to get out of BMHI. I didn't want to be stuck there for years. She inspired me to take my medication. I realized I was grateful I had friends and family in New Hampshire to support me.

Mom tried to transfer me to New Hampshire Hospital, but I refused to go. I wanted to stay put. I had begun to feel comfortable with the Staff, other patients and the building itself. It echoed with voices from the past and present."

Recommended Reading

Author	Book Title	Reason for Recommendation
Natalie Goldberg	Writing Down the Bones: Freeing the Writer Within	This book includes few rules—a Zen approach to writing.
Natalie Goldberg	Wild Mind: Living the Writer's Life	Includes exercises to get your pen moving. Helps you make sentences come alive.
Lee Gutkind	You Can't Make This Stuff Up	An essential guide to engage and inspire readers and writers.
Rebecca Rule and Susan Wheeler	True Stories: Guides for Writing from Your Life	A great guide to get you started. Includes many exercises.

I hope writing true stories is a way for you to gain perspective on your life experiences. It helped me gain insight on my life.

Submission by Sharon Reynolds, Peer Facilitator

Making a Calming Box

Theory

Using actual objects that serve to distract and self-soothe are great in times of distress. Tangible objects are especially helpful in times of emotional upset to give immediate comfort and can serve as a distraction.

Implementation

Boxes can be purchased reasonably at craft supply stores or the dollar store. You could also use small shoe boxes.

In times of anger or any other emotional distress, having tangible reminders of life skills learned will help you control your anger or other intense emotions.

Examples include:

- **Deck of cards, crossword puzzles or sudoku**-Rather than just being symbolic, these objects in the box can provide alternative activities to cope with upsetting events.
- **Stress ball** - Serves as a reminder that a stress ball is like a stress resilient personality-it retains its shape, it is soft, it has no rough edges and it always bounces back-and it feels good to squeeze.
- **Glitter Calming Jar**-A glitter calming jar, made up of water, glitter and glue, can be a great resource to help calm and settle our minds while the glitter settles to the bottom slowly after the jar is shaken (many recipes can be found on the internet). Can help us stay
- **A Journal** -Having a "go to "place to write out our thoughts in times of crises can help us stay calm and process emotions in a healthy way. It also helps to look over past entries to develop a healthy perspective.
- **A smiley sticker** – Helps us to remember to stay positive and optimistic and look at the brighter side of a situation.
- **Small toy Kaleidoscope**- Watch the colors change and turn. It can be very calming.
- **Bubbles** – Encourages deep breathing while blowing bubbles and watching them disappear.
- **Pinwheel** – Helps to focus on our breath as we blow slowly to turn the wheel by blowing slowly.
- **Small Play Dough** -Good sensory outlet that you can mold and shape.

Feel free to find other objects for your boxes that will offer you more resources when you need to "calm down".

Yours in Wellness Carole

Member of the Month

Sarah Leonard



Sarah has been coming to Infinity for about a year. Sarah says she keeps coming because "It has become as safe place to receive support for my mental wellness and I enjoy the positivity and the activities." Sarah's favorite group is Boundaries because she has been successful in using the group skills in her everyday life.

Sarah enjoys reading, training her cat, teaching, sports, art and listening to music when she is not no one here. One thing knows about her is that she has terrible eyesight and wears contacts. Sarah most admires honesty in people.

Feel like you would like to contribute by being a member in the spotlight, contact Carole and she will work with you. Everyone has a story!

Infinity Peer Support Location and Contact

55 Summer Street, Rochester, NH 03867 • **Phone:** 603-948-1036 or 603-948-1048
info@infinitypeersupport.org www.infinitypeersupport.org

Limited Transportation in May and June: Call 603-948-1036

Business Hours: Monday—Friday (In-Person) 8 AM—5 PM, Tuesday, 8-4

Providing a non-medical approach to mental health wellness and recovery for adults 18 years of age and older who reside in Strafford County.

All services are free-of-charge.

To receive our calendar and newsletter, call (603) 948-1036 or email us at info@infinitypeersupport.org Visit our website at www.infinitypeersupport.org for more information.

Infinity Peer Support Mission Statement

Mission Statement: Our members are dedicated to building a community with an alternative, peer-oriented approach to mental health wellness and recovery.

Warmlines

Warmlines are located all over the State of NH. These telephone lines are staffed by peers and provide support to people who are struggling to cope. **You do not have to be in a crisis to contact warmlines.**

To be on a Warmlines Outreach Call List, call Infinity Peer Support at 603-948-1036.

Alternative Life Center, Conway, NH: 1-866-447-1765, Every Day: 5 PM—9 PM

Connections Peer Support Center, Portsmouth, NH: 603-427-6966, 1-800-809-6262, Every Day: 5 PM—10 PM

CornerBridge, Laconia, NH: 1-800-306-4334, Every Day: 5 PM—10 PM

Monadnock Peer Support, Keene, NH: 1-866-352-5093, Every Day: 5 PM—10 PM

Stepping Stone, Claremont, NH: 1-888-582-0920, Sun., Mon., Wed: 4 PM—9 PM, Tues., Thurs., Fri., Sat.: 4 PM—8 PM

Helpful Phone Numbers

Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK

Bipolar Support Group: (603) 431-6703 x 3167 (Diane Cyr)

Sexual Assault Hotline: 1-800-277-5570

Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-866-644-3574

Peer Respite

Due to COVID-19, some peer respites are operating at reduced capacity or are shut down.

H.E.A.R.T.S. Peer Support Center, Nashua, NH: (603) 864-8769 or (603) 882-8400

Monadnock Peer Support, Keene, NH: (603) 352-5093 or (866) 352-5093

Vaccine Update

Infinity Peer Support info@infinitypeersupport.org www.infinitypeersupport.org Phone: 603-948-1036

Visit vaccines.nh.gov for more information about vaccines: qualification and registration. You have to register before you can be scheduled for a vaccination date and time. If you do not have a medical provider, call 2-1-1 for more information.

Rochester Fixed Vaccination Site: No Appointment Needed. Walk-Ins Welcome.

Spaulding Commons, 306 North Main Street, Rochester, NH 03867. Open Monday through Friday 10 am to 7 pm and Saturdays 9 am to 2 pm.

COVID-19 Testing

If you would like to be tested for COVID-19, call your medical provider, call Convenient MD at 1-822-263-0131, register at <https://prd.blogs.nh.gov/dos/hsem/?/page id=8479> or call 603-271-5980.

Community Action Partnership of Strafford County – 603-435-2500 – Help with food, shelter, jobs, healthcare, fuel & electrical assistance.

Information Referral – Call 2-1-1 or 866-444-4211 – 24 hours per day.

NH Legal Aid – The Centers for Disease Control extended the eviction ban until January 31, 2021. Visit nhlegalaid.org or call 800-639-5290 for more information.

Seacoast Street Outreach (ages 12 to 22) – 603-851-1320 or 603-716-6083

Shelter Referral via Coordinated Access – 603-435-2448

Call first and they will attempt to locate shelter in the area. May need to leave number and wait for call back.

Additional Services

Bureau of Elderly & Adult Services: If you suspect an elder or adult needs help, call 1-800-949-0470 or 603-271-7014.

Peer Substance Use Disorder Support: SOS Recovery Community, located at 4 Broadway in Dover, 603-841-2350, ext. 2 and are located at 14 Signal Street in Rochester, 603-841-2350, ext. 1.

Hand Up Syringe Exchange Service

- Mondays, 6 to 7:30 pm, Olde Farm Lane, Rochester, NH.
- Tuesdays, 5 to 6 pm, St. Thomas Church, Dover, NH.
- Wednesdays, 6 to 7 pm, Elm Street, Somersworth, NH.
- Fridays, 6 to 7:30 pm, Olde Farm Lane, Rochester, NH.

Transportation

COAST Bus (New Schedule): (603) 743-5777. If you need bus tickets for wellness appointments or court obligations, visit Infinity Peer Support.