At the Heart of Wellness
With McCall & Help

Message from Maria

Coutant Skinner, LCSW, CEO

Dear friends;

On Christmas Day, NASA launched the James Webb Space Telescope on its mission to answer some of the most complex questions that our minds can conceive. How did we get here? What is the history of our universe? How did the very first galaxies form? Webb is the scientific successor to the Hubble telescope. In 1995, astronomer Bob Williams focused the Hubble on a patch of empty sky for

Family & Recovery

It is that time of year when we gather with our loved ones to celebrate the holidays. In an idyllic world we imagine a holiday celebration that imitates our favorite Hallmark Movie. But what we often get instead is a quasi-National Lampoon’s Christmas Vacation kind of experience. Hopefully it's one we can find humor in. However, when you or a loved one is coping with a substance use or mental health disorder, the holidays and family gatherings can be overwhelming. We know that in recovery it goes beyond the individual.

The Family Impact

These disorders have a deep and substantial impact. Often, family members are the first to identify when their loved one may have a problem or be returning to use and starting to develop negative patterns that can lead to worsening symptoms. They may need to take on additional household and childcare duties, financial burdens, and disrupted social events. Children can experience difficulties at school and behavioral problems. All of this can lead to both sides being fearful, angry, or resentful, negatively impacting mental health and recovery. It can be the most vulnerable time for relationships.

Recovery is a Parallel Process

Families can greatly benefit from therapy. There is often limited information and understanding of mental health and substance use disorders. Therapy and support groups can
100 hours. He took quite a bit of criticism for doing so from his colleagues who thought it was a waste of valuable time and resources. What he found, however, changed our understanding of the universe completely. There, in the seeming nothingness of the dark, Williams had detected what’s now known as the Hubble Deep Field, filled with more than 3,000 galaxies. The discovery cracked open our comprehension and imagination.

What lies beyond what we can see - in ourselves, in another? In the darkness, in what initially appears to be nothing? Each of us has those dark places, the places we avoid; fear, pain, anger, shame, envy or perhaps most daunting of all...the parts that at first appear empty. Seekers peer into the darkness, and find answers, and often many more questions.

The Webb telescope has a complex shield that protects the cameras from the light, heat and radiation of the sun. The sophisticated work provide education and information, allowing family members to be more understanding and responsive to their loved ones’ needs. It can also increase awareness of their role in recovery, identify destructive patterns, and provide the tools to change them. It can dramatically change their loved one’s trajectory.

But I don’t Want My Family Involved…

We are deeply impacted by our connections and attachments. Sometimes people are hesitant to include family in the recovery process. They feel so much guilt and shame already and by including their loved ones in treatment they feel it will lead to more chastising, blame, criticism, and being identified as the “problem”. Or those long standing, painful and conflictual relationships are at the root of what led them to substance use or a decline in their mental health.

In family therapy there is no blame, and every family member has their part. Each person has played their role in the family system, and that role no longer has a purpose. Changing family behavior in parallel to the loved one in recovery will make their journey much less difficult.

Put Your Oxygen Mask on First Before Helping Others

It is proven that family involvement dramatically improves outcomes for anyone in behavioral health treatment. If everyone is making a concerted effort together, dynamics can change deeply and quickly. However, changing behavior is difficult. Families are often so overwhelmed and concerned about their loved one’s behavior they forget to take care of themselves. Part of that self-care is being able to set boundaries that are comfortable and realistic. Therapy and support groups can help determine how to set those boundaries that show care and concern while providing much needed self-love.

The Many Pathways to Recovery

When someone changes how they function in a system, the whole system changes. Building understanding creates
of focusing on those ancient galaxies depends on reducing the influence of that powerful light. Webb must stay in the darkness to achieve its mission.

For us, this is so very challenging. The temptation is to fold up our ‘shields’ and say; nope, that’s too hard, too painful, I’m going back to the comfortable, well-lit places. I get it, my friends and I’m with you. There appears to be a lot of darkness these days and it’s scary. But when we retreat, we lose out on the depth of understanding the exploration brings. We all wish for relief, for peace and connection. But that can only be achieved by doing the deep work. My hope for 2022 is that we can be one another’s team of scientists, bravely encouraging one another to gently but steadfastly keep our lenses fixed on the dark places.

Gratefully,
Maria

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empathy and compassion in this process, which in turn takes much of the shame and guilt out of behavioral health issues. If you or a loved one is looking for support, we offer many options which could be right for you:

**Group & Family Therapy**

- McCall Outpatient (860)496-2100 or Residential Programs (860)496-2107; [click here to learn more](#)
- Help, Inc. Outpatient Services (475)444-4357 or Help, Inc. Residential Programs (203)756-8984; [click here to learn more](#)

**Family Navigator**

- Part of our Recovery, Engagement, Access, Coaching, Healing (REACH) program, the Family Navigator helps connect dads, partners and other caregivers with substance use or co-occurring disorders to treatment and recovery support resources. Contact Julia Federle to learn more (959) 901-2725

**Contact Leann Mitchell, LCSW, Director of Family Services** (860)496-2139 for the following programs:

- [Recovering Together Family Support Group.](#) Meets on Zoom every Wednesday 5:30-7PM, free of charge and open to the public.
- [Parenting Support Services](#) for parents of children under the age of 18:
  - Positive Parenting Program or Triple P – focusing on parenting skills
  - Circle of Security Parenting – focusing on attachment security between parents and children.

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**Did you miss our WZBG Interview?**
Click on this link to hear this month's interview on WZBG 97.3 with Dale Jones and Leann Mitchell, LCSW, Director of Family Services. They discuss the role of family in recovery and the services we have to support families throughout treatment. Tune in on the 3rd Wednesday of every month at 8:20 to hear us in real-time.

Thank you to all of our donors who have given to our annual appeal. You are making a difference in the lives of so many and we are grateful for your support. If you haven’t donated yet, it is not too late! Give the gift of hope this holiday season - click the links below to donate today.

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