Message from Maria

In this month’s interview on WZBG, Glenn Ryan said; “Recovery isn’t a battle to be waged…it’s a joy-filled way of life. And it’s a blessing to be able to help others who are suffering so they can find that joy.” The wisdom in that sentence is just awesome! How different do we feel about something when we think of it as a chore…as something we are reluctantly resigned to do, or, as many think, ‘battle’ our demons to be healthy? And how does that change when we choose to look at our life choices with joy?

I’m not a person in recovery…I work hard to understand and empathize with others who are. It has been shown that in the early stages of recovery, the weight is too heavy for the individual to lift alone, and so they rely upon the assistance of others to pick up the weight. Over time, the individual becomes stronger and requires less direct assistance. Eventually, with time and practice, the individual develops the strength to lift the weight with a minimum of help from others.

That analogy tells the story of early recovery, but it equally applies to long-term recovery. In the world of behavioral health treatment, great emphasis is placed on helping clients to achieve recovery. For many clients, developing the skills and supports necessary to live a life beyond active addiction represents one of the most difficult challenges and most rewarding achievements of their lives. It is therefore little wonder that early recovery, the transition away from active addiction, occupies a place of paramount significance in our collective understanding of overcoming substance use disorders.

Unfortunately, however, a tendency to focus on early recovery alone can obscure the reality that overcoming substance use disorders is a lifelong process, and it can crowd out discussion of the unique experience of long-term recovery and the challenges that come with it. "While we know a great deal about addiction, we know very little about recovery", states a study in the Journal of Psychoactive Drugs. “What little is known [...] indicates that the recovery experience changes substantively over time and makes changing demands on the individual". Perhaps, then, it is helpful to consider long-term recovery through the lens of a more familiar process of personal growth and maintenance.

In some ways, recovery is like lifting weights. In the early stages, the weight is too heavy for the individual to lift alone, and so they rely upon the assistance of others to pick up the weight. Over time, the individual becomes stronger and requires less direct assistance. Eventually, with time and practice, the individual develops the strength to lift the weight with a minimum of help from others.
with those who are, but I realize I will only at best be able to approximate that journey from an outsider’s perspective. So, I listen to my friends and colleagues who are traveling that path and am often struck by the parallels with other life experiences.

As with any deep human transformation, we must approach change with all sorts of supports that fit our personal experience. For me, that’s primarily my people. I need my tribe by my side through times of trial and times of celebration as well as the day to day stuff. It helps me to think through things out loud and hear feedback…I love to experience life both in the moment and again and again through the stories that follow…and dinner conversations with my husband and kids is as good as it gets. Clearly, I’m an extrovert and obviously, that’s not everyone’s way of moving through the world. But, the one commonality here is that my ‘go to’ doesn’t just come into play during the perfect days or even just the tough days. It’s the daily attention to those relationships that assures that I’m in balance…and when I’m not, I can feel it, count on my people to notice it, and can work to get back to okay in fairly short order. If attention to your ‘go to’ feels like a battle or a chore…whether that’s going to meetings, working out, reading, going to church or whatever it is that fills your bucket…you’ll probably soon tire of it. Choosing joy as it relates to that attention may just be what sustains us all. Thanks for that Glenn!

McCall's Heart

The McCall Center for Behavioral Health is fortunate to have a remarkable group of staff members who are dedicated to our clients, our community and our agency. Beginning this past January, and continuing throughout the year, we will be featuring a staff member. We know how amazing our staff is and we think it is important for you, our readers, to get to know a little bit about them as well. For McCall staff this is not just a job, they love this agency, believe in its mission, have hope for their clients (even when those clients feel lost and hopeless) and know that their work is critically important to turn the tide of the ravages of addiction toward the journey of health. Our staff are the HEART of McCall and this month we are featuring Karen Luks.
My best to you always,
Maria

Make a difference in someone's life and support McCall today.

Our mission is to provide comprehensive integrated substance abuse and mental health treatment to help people lead healthier and more productive lives.

Your donation will directly support our prevention, recovery and community programs and help us provide clients with the support they need—regardless of their ability to pay. Click here to donate today!

Hometown: Easy Canaan, Connecticut
Position: Parent Educator, Prevention Department
My favorite quote: Chances, Choices, Change
What I love about my job is that I have the opportunity to encourage and support those who may be struggling with life’s challenges.