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Widening Circles: Colorado Recovery's Monthly Newsletter

December 2017

Let the Light Shine

As winter sets in darker days are ahead. For some people the lack of light can affect mood. According to the Mayo clinic Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) can be treated effectively with bright light therapy, medications and counseling.

"It is important to talk with your doctor if you have other disorders such as Bipolar. "For bipolar disorder, the advisability and timing of using a light box should be carefully reviewed with your doctor. Increasing exposure too fast or using the light box for too long each time may induce manic symptoms."-Mayo Clinic

A light therapy box mimics outdoor light. Researchers believe this type of light causes a chemical change in the brain that lifts your mood and eases other symptoms of SAD. Sleep researchers are also highlighting the importance of light to promote alertness and balance circadian rhythm. Avoiding direct light into the eyes via screens is an essential sleep hygiene tip.

Generally, the light box should:

- Provide an exposure of 10,000 lux of light
- Emit as little UV light as possible

Typical recommendations include using the light box:

- Within the first hour of waking up in the morning, SAD light alarm clocks available on-line
- For about 20 to 30 minutes
- At a distance of about 16 to 24 inches (41 to 61 centimeters) from the face
- With eyes open, but not looking directly at the light

For more information contact your Colorado Recovery doctor

The Sutherland Bipolar Center

The Sutherland Bipolar Center had been a great resource for clients and staff alike. They provide up-to-date, evidenced-based research on Bipolar Disorder. Clients at Colorado Recovery are encourged to attend their 8 week series held quaterly in Boulder County. Their website offers great educational information on Bipolar disorder. For more information visit: www.rdsfoundation.org

December Activities

TREEHOUSE and TRANSITIONAL

Weekdays: Outpatient Breakfast
Mondays: Treehouse Lunch, North Boulder Park Outing and Hike
Tuesdays: Transitional Community Meeting and Dinner, Music and Creative Expression Group
Wednesdays: Boulder Creek Clean Up, Pita Pizza and a Movie
Thursdays: Chess Group, Treehouse Planning Session and Outing
Fridays: Coffee group, gaming group and crafts group

THERAPEUTIC GROUPS

Mondays: Art Therapy
Tuesdays: CBT
Wednesdays: DBT, Career Exploration and Movement Therapy
Thursdays: Co-Existing Disorders, Social Support and Expressive Writing
Fridays: Coffee Group

STAFF TRAINING

December 19th, 11:30-12:45
Trauma-Informed Yoga and Mindfulness Interventions
With Christie Slatterly, MA, LPC

A Nonlinear Recovery Story

A therapist at Colorado Recovery recently received the following e-mail from a former client. It is a wonderful reminder that recovery is not linear, it can be circular and lessons can be cumulative.

I hope this email address is still functional so that this reaches you. If not, I'm putting the sentiment out into the universe anyway. I feel compelled to.

Much has transpired in my life since we last spoke some 18 months ago. Things fell apart again for me quite rapidly upon my return to Denver. My initial relapse with alcohol that you were privy to in late February gave way to a full-blown, largely silent, spectacle of pitiful, incomprehensible demoralization that would bring me to my knees by October. I finally forced my way into treatment at the Raleigh House on November 4, 2016 and have been sober since. Thankfully I remained sufficiently medication-compliant during my venture back into active alcohol and drug addiction that my coexisting issues were not triggered as well, at least not to a point of having a dual crisis.

Sobriety, not just abstinence, but true recovery, seems to have been the missing piece to my life puzzle. Since getting and remaining sober, my life has changed for the better in ways I could not have imagined. My life today is generally as simple as it is full. I have been working full-time at Panera since April and am almost entirely financially self-supporting for the first time in my life. I have been living in an Oxford House since my discharge from treatment on February 1st and have no intentions of changing that situation anytime soon. I am an active member of a 12 Step Fellowship, working with a sponsor, attending meetings daily, and holding down several service commitments. I have a completely new social circle (my old one was basically nonexistent anyway), my relationship with my family is better than it ever has been, and for the first time in my life, I'm genuinely ok with where I am more often than not.

At this point, I'm starting to think about what my next steps could be from a work and/or schooling standpoint. The myth of the "working actor" that I so clung to no longer appeals to me in the way it once did, I feel more inclined toward service. I think ideally I'd like to combine my performance background with some kind of therapeutic approach to help others with coexisting disorders. I feel an intuitive inclination towards Naropa, but am still in the very early stages of figuring out what's next. The possibilities seem endless, provided I continue doing what I'm doing. And I'm in no hurry to get anywhere (another first).

I also wanted to express my gratitude to you for helping me while I worked with you at Colorado Recovery. I appreciate that you were never overbearing and generally trusted my judgment for my course of action. Thank you also for not pushing any kind of addiction-recovery related approach to life when we worked together. I needed to fall down a bit more to shatter my denial about my alcoholism and drug addiction. Perhaps that's a strange thing to say to a therapist, but I firmly believe that I needed to discover and accept that facet of my experience for myself before anything could really change. I'm grateful we crossed paths. Thank you for being present for me.

All my best,

~Ben

Newsletter to be published quarterly: Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter

The newsletter for Colorado Recovery will be published quarterly starting in 2018. Hopefully can continue to share intersting information each season. If you would like any information it will soon be posted on our new website and therapists can share our activity calendar with you. If you have any questions please contact: kgrebe@coloradorecovery.com

"True self-care is not salt baths and chocolate cake, it is making the choice to not build a life that you need to regularly escape from." -Brianna Wiest