

Staying with Sobriety



LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY BEHAVIORAL MEDICINE CENTER

Spring 2004

Making a Difference

Volunteers Aiding Staff, Patients, and Themselves

The compassion of the volunteers at Loma Linda University Behavioral Medicine Center (LLUBMC) can be seen in the tireless effort they give each day. Perhaps it is because they understand the patient's enormous struggle, uncertainty, and fearfulness; perhaps it is because of the connection they have with staff; perhaps it gives them purpose; or perhaps it is their way of giving back for the new life in recovery they now have. Regardless of the reason, LLUBMC greatly appreciates and admires the ten volunteers that dedicate their hearts' service to the patients on unit 100.

Approximately 4 1/2 years ago, former patients, Bob and Robert, were asked to look at setting up a volunteer program for the Chemical Dependency unit. Although they had no formal training, they had recently completed the program and clearly understood what patients were experiencing. They took their new-found freedom from addiction and set out to help others by establishing the volunteer program on the unit. These two gentleman proved they were willing to do almost anything as their first

assignment led them to hauling boxes as the unit relocated to the main floor of the BMC. "We help out in anyway we can," smiles Bob.

In a short time, their duties and the number of volunteers grew as they became more entwined in the inter-workings of the Chemical Dependency unit. Helping with paperwork, stocking, assisting in the orientation of new patients and medical students,

supporting counselors during groups, aiding in the arts and crafts workshops, and even running their own volunteer-only support groups three days a week are some of the tasks carried out by the volunteers. In addition to their vital roles at LLUBMC, these individuals also volunteer for the Recovery Alumni Association (RAA) by assisting in the management of the men and women's sober living homes, as well as, the countless activities

the RAA provides LLUBMC's patients, families, and the community.

While these ten individuals are not monetarily reimbursed, their quality of life is heightened each time someone suffering the disease of addiction smiles, they receive hugs from the children, and the gratefulness of the staff. One volunteer remembers a woman who relapsed after receiving treatment. Unwilling to let her give up, the volunteer went to the hotel where she was staying and talked her into coming back for treatment. If having done nothing else, this volunteer may have saved her life by giving the support she needed.

Loma Linda University Behavioral Medicine Center applauds the efforts of all our volunteers. In honor of National Volunteer Week, April 18-24, we are pleased to bring these individuals to the spotlight and give them the recognition they deserve. Our volunteers greatly enhance the quality of care, aid in carrying out the mission of LLUBMC, and impact the lives of countless individuals. ■

Volunteers

These are the ones who give so much
To soothe our fears with a tender touch.
They arrive each week with a smile so dear
And help to wipe away the most awful fear.

They come in all colors, shapes and ages
And give of their time without any wages.
Each has a talent they are willing to share
With families who know how much they care.

They come in all weather, rain or shine,
To work from nine to nine.
From answering phones to mopping floors,
They find great joy in doing chores.

We are very lucky, there is no doubt,
For Volunteers we can't do without.
To each one we'd like to say
Thanks for putting sunshine in each day.

— author unknown

For more information call 909-558-9245.

The Source

The following sources will assist with any questions or concerns regarding sobriety.

Web Sites:

LLUBMC
www.llu.edu/llubmc

Recovering
Alumni Association
www.bmcraa.org

Alcoholics Anonymous
www.alcoholics-anonymous.org

Narcotics Anonymous
www.na.org

Southern California
Narcotics Anonymous
www.todayna.org

AA Newsletter
www.aagrapevine.org

Publication:

Title: *How to Talk so Kids will Listen and Listen so Kids will Talk*

Author: Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish

This book provides the reader with some wonderful parenting techniques to help improve communication with their children. It provides some very concrete exercises to help change the problem areas that some may be experiencing. The reader is presented with innovative ways to learn how to listen to their child, have cooperation in the family, and find effective alternatives to punishment. This book can also help a parent teach a child how to appropriately express their feelings. ■

FAQ

How to Volunteer at Loma Linda University Behavioral Medicine Center

Q *What would I do as a volunteer at Loma Linda University Behavioral Medicine Center?*

A The primary goal of a volunteer on the Chemical Dependency unit is to support patients in maintaining their sobriety. The duties of a volunteer vary according to the needs of the patients and staff. Frequently these individuals assist with orientation, groups, crafts, and the numerous activities planned by our Recovery Alumni Association.

Q *How often would I need to volunteer?*

A The time allotted for an individual to volunteer on the unit is dependent upon their schedule. Currently, there are individuals volunteering between 6 and 35 hours per week.

Q *What are the requirements to be a volunteer on the Chemical Dependency unit?*

A Volunteers on the Chemical Dependency unit

must be clean/sober for a minimum of 90 days, complete the LLUBMC Chemical Dependency program, be recommended by a counselor, attend orientation, undergo a background check, complete an annual TB test, and abide by all LLUBMC policies and procedures.

Q *Where can I get more information?*

A For further information regarding volunteering, please call Robert at 909-558-9309. ■

Is Relapse Part of Recovery?

When I hear expressions like “relapse is a part of recovery” or “it is normal for an alcoholic/addict to relapse” it makes me concerned. Some people might interpret that as “I’m not really into recovery unless I relapse” and others might think that no matter what they do, they are going to drink or use again. I do not believe that relapse is a normal part of recovery; however, there are times when a relapse could be viewed as therapeutic. People who go through treatment and/or get involved in a 12-step fellowship are given suggestions on what they need to do to stay clean and sober. When people are not willing to follow directions and relapse, then maybe, their relapse may finally convince them of the need to follow direction and therefore be considered a therapeutic relapse. I also have a difficult time considering relapse as “normal” especially when you consider this a fatal disease.



Relapse for many means death or loss of family and job. These consequences of relapse should never be accepted as a normal part of life or recovery.

At the BMC we use the 12-step philosophy of recovery because we believe “it works best for most.” The 12-step approach to staying clean and sober includes “relapse prevention”. We believe relapse prevention is important and offer it in our program to help individuals identify their relapse triggers. By taking this approach we help those who have relapsed take a more thorough look at

the things they were not willing to look at in their prior attempt to stay clean and sober.

Finally, there are a large number of folks who have co-existing disorders. If these co-existing disorders are not addressed at the proper time, then it increases the risk of a relapse episode.

Relapse is a big subject. Perhaps it is enough to say that relapse rates are too high and there are more relapse prevention suggestions than we can address here. There are numerous books available on the subject that may be useful.

Hope everybody had a good New Year. For some it was the first clean and sober New Year of many to come. ■

*Written by
Andrew Wildasinn, CADC
Clinical Coordinator
LLUBMC Chemical
Dependency Services*

Life's Journeys

A closer look into the world of mothers and addiction

With careful hands our mothers tuck us in at night, lend a listening ear, uphold all holiday traditions, insist on a family portrait, scurry around town in their minivan, and always gets the potato salad recipe just right. These characteristics are not unlike the three moms we sat down with, except one thing – they have an addiction. Like millions of others, Heidi, Carol, and Sandy struggle with their sobriety every day.

The painful memory of just before they received treatment at Loma Linda University Behavioral Medicine Center (LLUBMC) brought back horrible visions of their struggle with the disease. A toddler watching his mother get sick in the bathroom after drinking, the realization that medical treatment would not be possible without sobriety, and hearing the words “I hate you” from her three-year old son was enough for these three women to seek help.

All three of these courageous women found themselves at the doorstep of LLUBMC afraid of what was to become of them, but knew in their hearts that they had to be there. It did not take long before they found comfort in the safe environment created on unit 100. The struggle through detoxification, however, was anything but pleasant. But in spite of the initial physical discomfort they had to endure, there was a deep and peaceful understanding that they could no longer bring damage to their lives. Treatment continued as these women moved into LLUBMC's sober living homes just a few short miles from the facility. Their trust began to develop with staff and each other. Slowly, the mothers and their families began to learn the skills necessary to fight the disease of addiction. Communication, honesty, knowledge, and even parenting skills are some of the aspects of treatment these women found most useful.

Since they completed treatment life has not been easy, but they know that they and their families will be okay. Carol recalls a horrible moment when she realized that her daughter was addicted to pain pills. During her treatment she had developed the knowledge of the warning signs and was able to get her daughter help. Heidi proudly states that she and her young son “just graduated kindergarten” and Sandy, knowing that she is “blessed with way more in recovery than before the disease” heard her son say, “I love you” a year after she completed treatment.

The decision for any mother to enter treatment can be paralyzing with the realization of having to admit the addiction, leaving her family during treatment, and the unknown. Sandy now understands that the small rewards such as seeing her kids smile when she is feeling good is worth the struggle. “Everything gets better – even the worst times are better.” ■

At a Glance

March

Alumni Carnival
Sunday, March 28, 2004

1:00 – 6:00 pm
LLUBMC gymnasium

What a great way to spend a Sunday afternoon with your family and LLUBMC alumni! This carnival is sure to offer fun for everyone with games, contests, clowns, face-painting, and snacks. For more information, please call Annie at 909-307-2238.

April

17th International AA Men's Conference
Friday – Sunday, April 16-18, 2004
Marriott Oak Brook Hotel, Chicago, Illinois

A weekend retreat in the beautiful Chicago area! Plan to attend this “Gratitude in Action” men's conference. For more information, please call Les A. 773-978-4582 or Milton 773-994-7226 or email ChgoIAAM@msn.com.

Planning Committee
2nd Thursday of each month
7:00 pm

Hilton Hotel, San Bernardino, California
Gather your great ideas and join us in planning the next Inland Empire. AA Convention to be held Oct.22-24, 2004. The Planning Committee is seeking volunteers to come and be of service.

June

AA Desert Pow Wow
Thursday - Sunday, June 17-20, 2004
Indian Wells, California

A long weekend of activities is sure to please you with the numerous events planned. Marathon meetings, golf tournament, tennis tournament, 10k fun run, dance, banquet, and more await you! Basic registration is \$20.00 with additional charges for extra activities. For more information, visit www.desertpowwow.com or call Sher Ali J. at 760-360-5529 or Kathy O. at 909-674-3022.

For more information call 909-558-9224.

RAA New Years

Ringing in the new year was a time for many of us to reflect on our accomplishments throughout the past year, set new resolutions, and rejoice in the company of our family and friends. The Recovery Alumni Association (RAA) did just that on December 31st. The evening demonstrated that a holiday, traditionally pegged with alcohol, can be enjoyed clean and sober.



white motif, the fellowship of one another, and enjoyable music provided by a DJ. Doors were not only open to past patients, but also family members and the recovering community. This was a tremendous opportunity for the RAA to share the experience of a sober holiday celebration. The event also positively influenced the children as their families spent the evening together celebrating their clean life and envisioning the tremendous possibilities they now have before them.



The RAA Activity Committee members eagerly greeted the nearly two hundred people who passed through the gymnasium at Loma Linda University Behavioral Medicine Center. Attendees were treated to a gym transformed into a reception hall with a classic black and

The New Years Eve party was the last event in 2003 successfully planned by the RAA Activity Committee. As always, the endless hours these volunteers spent planning the festivities brought a great deal of joy to so many. The BMC is grateful for the RAA and would like to formally thank Annie H., Beckee F., Kim D., and Janice W. for another outstanding event! ■

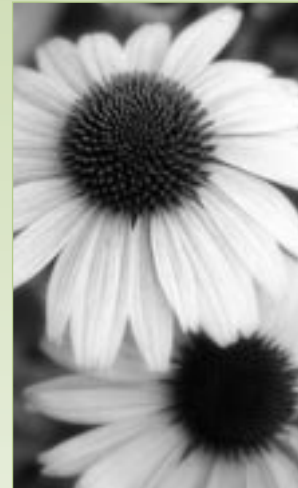
A powerful question?

As facilitator for spiritual resource groups, I frequently tell members that I learn from them all the time. Last week was no exception. We opened group with a musical song for meditation and then went around the circle sharing responses to an opening “ice breaker.” Then I felt impressed to change the topic from what I had planned to present that day.

I challenged the group, “If you could take God out for a cup of coffee and could ask Him one question, what would it be?” They thought for a few moments, and then began listing a bunch of powerful questions: “Why did God allow someone to hurt me when I was little?” “Why did God allow someone close to me to get sick and die?” “Why...?” Then someone asked, “Why does loving hurt so much?” I sat down and we simply sat together in silence for a couple of minutes, each one

reflecting ... profound question huh?

A powerful question, one that has been rolling through my head ever since. Why does it hurt so much to love? As I’ve shared this question with various people



one answer is clear. The power lies in “the love.” No one has ever been severely hurt by someone they simply “liked.” The reason love has the power to hurt so much is because it conversely has the capacity to fill in empty

places and voids like nothing else can. It is because love can fulfill so much it can hurt so much too.

Recovering addicts recognize that the drug of choice was used to fill a void created by the lack of love or to numb oneself from the pain inflicted by rejection of one who they loved so much – a spouse, a parent, a sibling. When one recognizes the reason love hurts, he or she is able to understand loves’ incredible power for good as well. Letting down the concrete protective barriers and allowing people back into our hallowed sanctuaries is one step towards recovery – of body mind and spirit. ■

*Written by
Vaughn Grant, Chaplain*

Please write to the address below if you wish to have your name removed from the list to receive announcements or notices introducing new services, health educational programs and events, or products of Loma Linda University Behavioral Medicine Center. All reasonable efforts will be taken to ensure that your request is honored.

Promotional Services
c/o Access Center
245 East Redlands Blvd, Suite A
San Bernardino, CA 92408

Staying with Sobriety

Chemical Dependency Services
1710 Barton Road
Redlands, California 92373



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