

New Program Takes Collaborative Approach, Treats Whole Person



Best Practices Method Asks Consumers to Take an Active Role in Their Recovery

Bridgeway recently launched its new Wellness Management and Recovery (WMR) Program, a collaborative, holistic approach to treating mental illness. Bridgeway is one of only thirteen mental health providers in Ohio to adopt the initial WMR program, which applies a best practices approach for achieving wellness management. Bridgeway is also the only provider in Cuyahoga County to receive a WMR grant from the state to provide these services.



Kelly Wesp, WMR Program Coordinator for ODMH Coordinating Center of Excellence, speaks at Bridgeway WMR program kick-off event.

The WMR program, unique for its emphasis on wellness management rather than illness management, asks Bridgeway consumers to be advocates for their own mental health, recovery and well-being.

WMR's 10 week program features weekly two-hour sessions in which four to six consumers gather with two co-facilitators—one clinical professional and one individual. Bridgeway consumers are also encouraged to bring a "support person"—a family member, friend or significant other—with them to WMR sessions each week to act as an advocate on that consumer's road to recovery.

"One of the biggest issues with the treatment of mental illness is that loved ones are typically not brought into the mix," said Jennifer Kruse, Bridgeway's recovery services supervisor.

Participation in Bridgeway's WMR program is completely voluntary. Each consumer and support person choose to show up each week and take an active role in the treatment of their mental illness.

To date, results have been encouraging. "The consumers in this first cycle of WMR are making the choice to show up each week and become a vital part of their own recovery," said Deborah Barris, Bridgeway's chief operating officer. "WMR is a refreshing change for consumers that are used to receiving isolated, non-collaborative treatment for their mental illness."

Bridgeway's WMR program is part of Ohio's Wellness Management and Recovery program. The statewide WMR program is coordinated by the Wellness Management and Recovery Coordinating Center of Excellence (WMR CCOE), a statewide entity that seeks to improve clinical quality by accelerating the adoption of best mental health practices in Ohio's mental health system.

"WMR is a collective learning process," said Kelly Wesp, program coordinator, WMR CCOE. "Clinical professionals provide skilled treatment and education, whereas consumers serve as the experts on how a disease manifests within their own body," she continued. "This is really the first program where consumers can take ownership of their wellness."

WMR CCOE is supported by the Ohio Department of Mental Health and is a partnership among Southeast, Inc. (Franklin County), The University of Toledo (Lucas County) and the Lorain County Mental Health Board.

Viewed as a best practices approach, Ohio's WMR requires Bridgeway to contribute to the ongoing research as to the effectiveness of the program, as well as other strategic measures, including a 24-hour training session for peer specialists and staff members.

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Bridgeway, inc.

A network of mental health & recovery services

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A Challenging, Yet Rewarding Journey



As I began to collect my thoughts about this message to you, I was drawn to the quote from Will Rogers when he said: "Even if you are on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there." We in the behavioral healthcare field know how difficult it is to operate a not-for-profit organization in normal times, but I am sure that most of us would agree that these are not normal times. A shrinking local economy, a decade-long freeze on Medicaid rates, fewer dollars for essential non-Medicaid programs and services, and a continually growing list of unfunded mandates are a few of the issues that keep us running.

Over the past 24 months, in the midst of these challenging times, the Board, staff and consumers of Bridgeway have accepted an even greater challenge to position Bridgeway as the premier provider of behavioral healthcare services to consumers with persistent and chronic mental illness in Cuyahoga County. This process has been painful and difficult but necessary to position us to best

fulfill our mission. We reaffirmed our core services and set criteria by which we assessed every program and service. We re-assessed our management structure and created a structure that is leaner and can respond quickly to the changing environment. We have taken on the challenge of a fee-for-service environment and are working actively to improve our performance month by month. We have embraced Wellness, Management and Recovery (WMR), Integrated Dual Disorder Treatment (IDDT) and Supportive Employment as the models that will move us forward.

Mission and vision are vital to our activities. They have provided us focus and give us the energy to stay on the right track and to keep moving. I am extremely appreciative of the strong role the Board of Trustees has played in the process. I am impressed and proud of the efforts I see from Debbie Barris, our COO, and her staff. Please read Debbie's column in this newsletter to get a more detailed update on our activities.

As Bridgeway continues to become stronger and begins to realize its goal, it truly will be the premier provider of behavioral healthcare services to Cuyahoga County. Our pledge to you is that we will never stop our efforts to improve ourselves.



Thank you for your continued support as we move forward.

David J. Lundeen,
President and Chief Executive Officer
Community Care Network, Cleveland
Christian Home and Bridgeway

Bridgeway Secures Support With Evidence-Based Practices

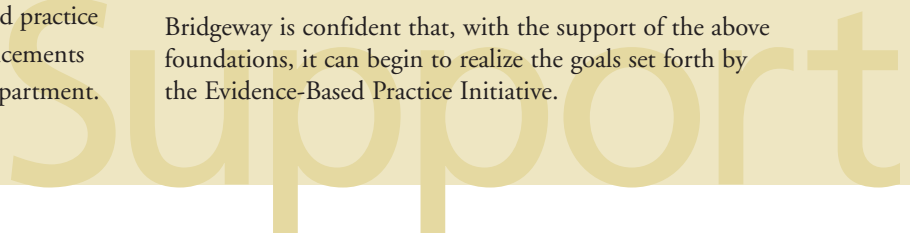
Over the past decade, research in the field of mental health has demonstrated that there is consistent scientific evidence that some specific clinical practices, called Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs) work well in improving outcomes in the lives of individuals diagnosed with a severe mental illness. During the next twelve months, Bridgeway will transform its clinical service delivery system by utilizing a combination of scientific theory and practice requiring intensive staff training and technology enhancements with the formal establishment of an agency medical department.

The goal of this Evidence-Based Practice Initiative is to increase the capacity of Bridgeway to promote, implement, document, and monitor high quality consumer services.

BRIDGEWAY IS GRATEFUL FOR THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND PARTNERSHIP OF THE FOLLOWING FOUNDATIONS IN ITS EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE INITIATIVE:

- The Margaret Clark Morgan Foundation \$78,025
- Community West Foundation \$35,000
- Woodruff Foundation \$25,000

Bridgeway is confident that, with the support of the above foundations, it can begin to realize the goals set forth by the Evidence-Based Practice Initiative.



First-Time Director of Medical and Acute Care Services to Ensure Consistency of Care

In order to enhance its commitment to providing the best possible mental health and recovery resources to its consumers, Bridgeway has added a new position to its staff. Patricia Brewer has joined Bridgeway as its Director of Medical and Acute Care Services.

In this new role, Brewer will be directly responsible for managing the agency's two crisis stabilization units, direct supervision of the agency's nursing department, overseeing best practices, ensuring quality of care and integrating the services of her staff with all agency health-related services and programs.

"I am very excited to fill this new role," says Brewer. "I believe very much in community treatment and in the ethics behind Bridgeway," she continued. "Bridgeway's leadership team has given my position and my program real direction; I am proud to be a part of that."

Prior to joining Bridgeway, Brewer served as the chief nursing officer at Laurelwood Hospital, part of the Horizon Health Care Corporation in Willoughby, Ohio, overseeing clinical and pharmacy services and directing the clinical supervision and administration of the organization's mental health services and counseling programs. She also initiated standardization of nursing best practices and implemented improved physician documentation for mental health services.

In addition, Brewer has held various positions in psychiatric and behavioral health care and served as clinical instructor for the psychiatric and mental health divisions at Washburn University and the Stormont-Vail School of Nursing—both in Topeka, KS.

Brewer earned her master's degree in nursing with an emphasis on mental health nursing from the University of Iowa. She holds a Registered Nursing License from the Ohio Board of Nursing.

Consumer Profile

TURNING MENTAL ILLNESS AROUND



Consumer Jeff Brownel has learned to manage his mental illness and is now a full-time Bridgeway employee.

Jeff Brownel is Bridgeway's newest co-facilitator for the recently added Wellness Management and Recovery program. He is also a full-time employee for the Living Miracles support group, a recovery-based peer support initiative for individuals suffering with mental illness. Brownel is a solid influence for Bridgeway consumers—a rock on which they can stand to effectively manage their mental illness.

But it wasn't always this way.

Five years ago, Brownel had reached his all-time low. Throughout his 20's and 30's, he suffered from severe, worsening alcoholism and depression. He had problems with the law that eventually resulted in a felony conviction. Because of these compounding factors, Brownel, a professional truck driver, was unable to get out of bed for days at a time. He subsequently lost his job and eventually his home. Brownel tried several times to take his own life—he had truly hit rock bottom.

"When my illness hit, it took everything from me," he said. "I pretty much spent a full year under the influence," he continued.

"Deep inside, I wanted to get going again, but I didn't know how to do that."

Seeking shelter and a place to ride out his mental health crisis, Brownel showed up at the Strickland Crisis Shelter in Cleveland, oftentimes the front door to services for individuals facing these types of crises in Cuyahoga County.

"When I first showed up at the crisis center, a social worker cracked a joke," said Brownel. "That was the first time in months that anyone had made me smile. From then on, I felt comfortable with the people at Bridgeway, like they really cared about me." Brownel's experience at the crisis center began his road to recovery.

"People have a plan, but they can't always follow it," said Debbie Barris, COO of Bridgeway. "It's like losing five pounds—you may want to do it, but it's difficult to actually commit."

Brownel continued at the same pace for several years—in and out of recovery—until he joined Bridgeway's Hearth, a 90-day program geared toward helping individuals develop social, employment, illness management and recovery skills in order to gain competitive employment.

After completing Hearth, a position opened in the Living Miracles program for a part-time program assistant, and Brownel was hired to fill it. He was also recently charged with leading peer support groups focused on recovery through Bridgeway's new Wellness Management and Recovery Program.

Brownel now successfully leads several committees at Bridgeway in the areas of education, advocacy and fundraising for the mentally ill. He is living productively in Bridgeway's independent housing, sharing his Cleveland home with another Bridgeway consumer.

Brownel credits Bridgeway with saving his life and providing the necessary support to sustain his recovery and wellness. "Recovery is not a straight line," said Brownel. "It's a gradual process. There are definitely some bumps and turns in the road."

Brownel hopes that by sharing his story, he will encourage people to take the first step in asking for help with managing their mental illness, so that they—like him—can live whole and complete lives.

Chief Operating Officer's Corner

BRIDGEWAY THRIVING, DESPITE CHALLENGES

Winter has arrived on the North Coast and exciting new things are occurring at Bridgeway. Bridgeway continues to recruit mental health professionals committed to moving Bridgeway to the next level of excellence. Pat Brewer, Director of Medical and Acute Services joined our leadership team in September; Melissa Longstreth, LISW joined the Recovery Services Division in October to provide clinical leadership to the Unbar Program. Mary Becka, LISW also began working at Bridgeway this month to provide leadership to the Intensive Community Psychiatric Support team and oversee the implementation of the Integrated Dual Disordered Treatment team.

Bridgeway was selected as the only site located in Cuyahoga County to participate in the Wellness Management and Recovery Program. This ten week group program pairs mental health professionals with mental health consumers to co-lead a wellness-based recovery program. We have completed the training phase of this initiative and will be conducting recruitment activities for group participants in the coming months. Two groups are slated to begin in January 2008 and a third group will be offered in March.

Bridgeway hosted the Weed & Seed's annual Trunk or Treat at the Detroit main campus. This fun activity for kids and families living in the Weed & Seed area provided a safe trick-or-treat recreational activity for more than 500 children. Special recognition goes out to Bridgeway's Playhouse/Images staff that operates our two after-school prevention programs for kids, which assisted in



Over 500 children participated in this year's Weed & Seed Trunk or Treat, hosted by Bridgeway.

making this event a huge success. Participants enjoyed a hay ride with horses and a hay wagon, face painting, games, a costume contest and of course lots of candy and treats.

Community Care Network's pharmacy celebrated its second anniversary on October 1, 2007. The pharmacy, located at 8301 Detroit, has served over 1244 clients since opening two years ago. This unique venture is available to all Bridgeway clients and fills over 2200 prescriptions each month.

Bridgeway's leadership team continues to position itself to address the difficult financial times mental health providers find themselves facing. Funding reductions are expected from the Cuyahoga County Mental Health Board in non Medicaid revenue for the next fiscal year. Staff and Bridgeway board members will be challenged to implement strategic initiatives that address how to maintain a continuum of care of quality mental health services and absorb the impact of a seven percent financial reduction. Agencies continue to face increasing costs in employee health insurance, utilities, salaries and overall operation; while enduring flat reimbursement rates from Medicaid.

Bridgeway over the last year has reorganized the agency to address these financial concerns and to improve the overall operation of the organization.

Bridgeway is proud of the changes we have implemented and proud of the hard work and patience staff have demonstrated in the last year. Recruitment and retention activities have created treatment teams that are the best in the county. Their commitment to the clients we serve and to Bridgeway's mission is to be commended. Without a qualified and committed staff we can not assist mental health consumers in their journey of recovery.

As we look to the future I am optimistic about Bridgeway's future. We face difficult financial times but also new opportunities to implement evidenced based care that will improve our effectiveness and our efficiency. The merger of the Cuyahoga County Mental Health Board and the Alcohol and Substance Abuse Board in Cuyahoga County represents an example of how, in a new and changing environment, opportunities to grow and change will be available to us.

Deborah Barris,
Chief Operating Officer, Bridgeway

(Continued from cover)

Bridgeway's WMR implementation committee secured the grant to begin WMR services and has been participating in state training sessions. Committee members include Kruse; Barris; Cheryl Lydston, director of residential services; Nancy Keener, board of directors member; Amber Gibbs, Living Miracles advisor; Marie Burkett, residential program manager; Judy Fields, director of support services; Aysha Wilburn, Quality Improvement Coordinator and Jeff Brownel, peer support specialist and Bridgeway consumer.

Bridgeway plans to start five to eight WMR groups within the next year. The organization is currently identifying and recruiting consumers that would prosper from these programs.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON BRIDGEWAY'S WMR PROGRAM, CALL KRUSE AT 216-281-2660, EXT. 173.

SAVE THE DATE

BRIDGEWAY ANNUAL BENEFIT BREAKFAST

FEATURING KEYNOTE SPEAKER
SANDRA STEPHENSON, DIRECTOR OF THE
OHIO DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 29, 2008
8:00AM TO 10:00AM
THE ENGLISH OAK ROOM AT TOWER CITY CENTER
CLEVELAND, OHIO

INVITATION TO FOLLOW. FOR MORE
INFORMATION, CALL 216-476-0333.

