

CURRENTS

A publication of Riverbend Community Mental Health, Inc.

SUMMER 2018

Drop by. Let's talk.

Shanna Large and her team at Choices are opening new doors for addiction treatment



CURRENTS

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Questions, comments, and suggestions can be sent to Karen Jantzen at kjantzen@riverbendcmhc.org.



Founded in 1963, Riverbend Community Mental Health is a private, nonprofit organization providing specialized behavioral health services in central New Hampshire.
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Core Services

- 24/7 psychiatric emergency services
- Counseling services for children, adults, and families
- Community and school-based services for children
- Substance Use Disorder treatment for adolescents and adults
- Community support, integrated behavioral and physical healthcare, vocational services, and residential programs for adults and seniors



Thank you! Your support enabled over 100 kids to attend summer camp this year.

Ain't nobody like to be alone...

Bruce Springsteen once sang: *Don't make no difference what nobody say, Ain't nobody like to be alone...* For all you aficionados of The Boss, you know the line comes from his 1980 hit entitled Hungry Heart. Excusing the double negative, I think Bruce might be onto something here.

We are finding that loneliness is at the heart of many of our chronic problems in society today. The [UCLA Loneliness Scale](#), the accepted standard of measurement for loneliness, asks a participant to rate 20 statements on a scale from 1 to 4. It found in a large study that most Americans are lonely – just over 50%. This coincides with the fact that living alone is the way of life for 30% of people nowadays contrasting with 20% in 1980 and 10% in 1970.

Research shows that loneliness itself can make people more negative, critical, and judgmental, which in turn adds to their sense of isolation.

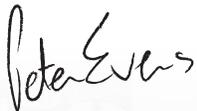
Humans are not built for a solitary life, and we must do more to help people in our communities and workplaces to be more connected – not just those who struggle with mental illness but everyone.

[Stay Work Play](#) recently found that 40% of people between 20 and 40 years of age who work in the Granite State do not feel they belong in their communities and lack a significant relationship in which they feel mutual trust. This is our workforce. These are our people!

This year Riverbend will work to address this issue of isolation in our communities. We will be addressing ways to combat loneliness, improve connectedness, and promote better self-care. All of our lives are improved by our ability to meaningfully connect with one another.

Look out for a new radio show coming in September on WKXL where we will be discussing this issue and many others as part of a strategic approach to engage and involve our community!

As E. M. Forster said in the epigraph to *Howards End*, 'Only Connect. Live in fragments no longer'.



Peter Evers, Chief Executive Officer





Drop by. Let's Talk.

Walk-in service is just one of many changes at Choices

DidYouKnow?

90% of Americans with a substance abuse problem started smoking, drinking, or using other drugs before age 18.



Choices, Riverbend's addiction treatment program, has experienced a lot of change over the past year. The program has moved to a new location at 3 North State Street, enjoys dynamic new leadership, and has welcomed over 125 people into treatment since last fall.

"It's been a very busy few months," Shanna Large, Director, said, "and there has been a lot of change. There is so much potential here — both at Choices and through the wider Riverbend organization — to really help people begin and maintain their recovery." Large has added several new staff and she's looking for more. "We're hiring," she said, smiling.

Large explained that she is building a team that includes not only people with addiction and drug counseling credentials, but also college graduates with a commitment to the field, and people with lived experience who are open to training.

One of the fastest growing positions on the Choices team is the Peer Recovery Specialist (see page 5), and Large emphasized the important role these staff members have in the treatment and recovery process.

"As the program grows — and it's growing fast — Peers will be the first point of contact for many new clients," Large said. "And it makes sense, doesn't it? Talking to someone who has been exactly where you are is a good place to start a recovery conversation."

Peers are also the people who follow up in other ways. Peers go out into the community and check in on clients. They'll drop by and say hello and find out how things are going. "That kind of support, particularly in the beginning of recovery, can be critical to maintaining recovery." Large said.

Walk-In services

The program's treatment philosophy is all about meeting people where they are — with compassion and understanding — and building from there. Large explained that this kind of approach is essential when providing walk-in services.

"One of the biggest changes that we've made over the past few months is providing walk-in services," Large said. "This changes how we function as individual counselors and therapists, and also a team," Large continued, "but everyone who works here recognizes the importance of that first step into treatment, and everyone embraces the challenge of helping someone take it."

Large went on to explain that while walk-in services are helping some people take the first step into treatment, it is also about helping people already in recovery to take the next step. "If someone in recovery is struggling, we want them to drop by for support," Large said. "Recovery is a process that always needs a bit of maintenance now and then," she added.

New marketing materials that began to circulate in April say that "someone can meet with you immediately" during regular office hours, Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM — 6:00 PM. And people have started to respond.

As of May 1, when the new walk-in service was only a couple weeks old, fourteen people stopped by the Choices offices and asked to see someone. Two from that group have entered treatment.

"It's working," Large said. "We're seeing one or two walk-in clients each week now, and I expect that number to grow as the word spreads, and the program grows."

Begin where you are, and build from there

Choices offers a range of addiction treatment services for adolescents (14+) and adults (18+) who are living anywhere in New Hampshire. Services can include individual therapy, group therapy, the Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP), and Medication Assisted Therapy. Choices also provides Case Management services for clients participating in the Drug Court Program (see page 7).

"We want people to be able to start wherever they feel the most comfortable — which is usually making some kind of regular individual therapy commitment — and then build from there," Large explained. "Medication Assisted Therapy always includes an additional therapy component of some kind," Large continued, "and our on-site lab makes toxicology screenings easy and fast."

Continued on page 5



Addiction treatment services include

- Individual therapy
- Group therapy
- Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP)
IOP is a multi-week program that involves intensive therapy and skill-building.
- Medication Assisted Therapy (MAT)
MAT must be paired with one or more of the other services listed.
- Toxicology Screenings
- Peer Support
- Case Management
Drug Court clients only

ChoicesSM
choicesnh.org



Peer Recovery Specialist

The Peer Recovery Specialist is a member of the Choices treatment team, and supports clients through the stages of recovery and change in a way that no amount of clinical training can replicate. An essential job requirement is having lived experience with substance use and/or other addictions.

"This is an incredible opportunity for individuals who have lived through the recovery journey for several years and have a desire to help others through its most difficult early stages," Large said. "Peers can reach out, follow-up, and facilitate with clients in ways that other staff just can't."

Other than bringing lived experience to the position — and a general knowledge of the system of care for substance misuse and mental health treatment — there are only a few other requirements.

"Applicants must be a Certified Recovery Support Worker or be willing to get this certification," Large said. "There is also a credentialing process that must be completed at Concord Hospital, which grants the Peer Specialist hospital privileges."

There are currently six Peer Recovery Specialists on the Choices staff, and Large expects that number to grow in the coming months.

DidYouKnow?

20.1% of New Hampshire adults reported, in 2017, either binge drinking (having four or more [women] or five or more [men] drinks on one occasion in the past 30 days) or chronic drinking (having eight or more [women] or 15 or more [men] drinks per week). This is a increase of 1.7% over 2016.

Source: **America's Health Rankings**

“Recovery is a process that always needs a bit of maintenance now and then.”



Removing worries about cost

Choices also makes it clear that clients shouldn't worry about cost. “No insurance? We'll help you figure it out” is the message in marketing materials.

“We really don't want unfounded fears about cost to be a barrier to seeking treatment,” Large said. “And these unfounded fears really *can* be one of the barriers for some people who really need help.”

Most Choices clients — if they don't have private insurance — can probably qualify for Medicaid. Riverbend regularly helps people through that process to secure basic health coverage.

“We are providing services all the time without knowing whether we will be reimbursed,” Large said. “Private donations, special grants, and other kinds of support help make up the difference. And this support has a *huge* impact on maintaining and expanding the addiction treatment services that are so needed today in New Hampshire.”

How it works...

The Choices program is more than just a list of services, and, like many things, addiction treatment is a “you-get-out-of-it-what-you-put-into-it” process. The program offers a lot to any person ready to make the commitment to treatment and recovery.

“You have to want to be here,” Large said. “There's no other eligibility requirement to get started. You just have to choose it. That's how treatment begins.”

For new clients, initial meetings might be with a Peer Recovery Specialist and/or Therapist to work out the specifics of the treatment program and other details. For many individuals, enrollment in the Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) is what comes next. This program provides participants with a solid foundation for understanding their addiction and developing new skills to maintain a substance-free life.

“We ascribe to a harm reduction (see page 7) model of care as we develop any treatment plan,” Large explained, “and for some individuals that means starting with safer use and moving eventually to abstinence.”

Family and friends

Choices also provides family programs to help the people surrounding the client to understand how addiction has impacted them. Family and friends are encouraged to learn more about the role they can play in the client's recovery, as well as how to begin a recovery journey of their own.

“Sometimes the people closest to the person struggling with this disease don't realize how much the disease has affected their lives, and involving family and friends in treatment is almost always helpful in making recovery successful,” Large said.

Also, family and friends can be a major distraction in the early stages of recovery — and family dynamics is one of the key reasons clients give for relapse and withdrawing from treatment early. When possible, working with the people closest to the client just makes good sense. Research tells us that the longer a person is in treatment and is surrounded by other people in recovery, the better the long-term outcome.

Ongoing support

Achieving and maintaining sobriety is a relatively short-term milestone in a much longer recovery process. Choices staff encourage attendance at self-help support groups (Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), Narcotics Anonymous (NA), and Alanon) and assists each client in developing the internal skills they need to create and maintain a positive support system around them.

“Being sober changes all your relationships,” Large said. “Recovery is about letting go of many things – and sometimes this means letting go of people who are deeply enmeshed with you in your addiction. But the program also opens doors into a new life, and that means new relationships, too, and that’s a good thing.”

Many people with substance addiction(s) have some mental health and medical issues too. According to the [2014 National Survey on Drug Use and Health](#), approximately 7.9 million adults in the United States have co-occurring mental health and addiction disorders. “Addiction distorts everything in a person’s life,” Large said. “It affects the mind and body, and we need to treat the whole person if we’re going to treat addiction successfully.”

Over time, Choices staff remains available to help clients navigate the existing system of care, so they can address any co-occurring mental health and/or medical issues that might affect their recovery. Choices clients are also encouraged to stay connected through ongoing individual therapy and/or participation in a Choices-facilitated group.

“I think recovery from anything is honestly one of the most incredible things a person can do,” Large said. “If you come into this program with an open mind and are willing to make changes, you have a very good chance at achieving and maintaining sobriety and creating a new life for yourself. Choices equips you with the skills and support a person needs to make better choices – and ongoing recovery is about making many choices – taking many small steps – moment-by-moment and day-by-day.”

Learn more about Choices and our addiction treatment programs at choicesnh.org

Like us on Facebook.



Drug Court Program

The Drug Court Program is a special project that Choices provides under contract to the [New Hampshire Judicial Branch](#), and working with Merrimack County Superior Court.

The Drug Court Program at Choices has a dedicated staff and combines community-based treatment with strict court supervision, providing intensive treatment wrap-around services to adult offenders who have been convicted of committing nonviolent crimes to support their drug habits. “This is a very serious group,” Large explained, “and they have a lot on the line when they enter our program.”

Choices staff usually gets involved early in the process and helps to evaluate potential clients before the court process is finalized. The offender must complete an application – and then that application is reviewed by everyone involved in the case – the prosecutor, defense attorney, judge, Choices staff, and others – before final recommendations are made. It can take awhile for that review to be completed by all parties. The individual is usually incarcerated during that review period.

When a person is finally accepted into the program, he/she is told by the judge to report directly to Choices to begin treatment.

Treatment in the Drug Court Program at Choices includes intensive therapy and comprehensive support for 18-24 months, helping clients to not only achieve and maintain sobriety, but also find and maintain stable housing and employment, if needed.

“The goal of the program is to keep people out of jail and reduce recidivism, which can be as high as 80 percent for this population,” Large said.

As of June 30, there were 47 clients enrolled in the Drug Court Program.

For more information see the [NH Drug Court Handbook](#)

Principles of Harm Reduction

Harm reduction is a set of practical strategies and ideas aimed at reducing negative consequences associated with drug use.

Learn more at harmreduction.org.

Counseling Associates

Therapy is a process of clarification and discovery that can truly transform a person's life...

— Lynn Anne Palmer



"I want people to experience Counseling Associates as a safe place to identify challenges – to grow in self-awareness and overall life satisfaction," Lynn Anne Palmer said, when asked to describe her approach as the Clinical Manager of Riverbend's therapy practice that provides individual, couples, group, and family therapy.

"Therapy is a process of clarification and discovery that can truly transform a person's life, and I'm excited to bring this group of highly-talented therapists into the community in a new way."

Lynn Anne Palmer, who had previously been the integrated therapist and behavioral health specialist at Concord Family Medicine, assumed leadership at Counseling Associates this past winter. One of her main goals is to make Counseling Associates a more visible and more highly utilized part of Riverbend's total service offering.

"The resources we have available to us through the larger organization are phenomenal," Palmer said. "We can be a much more active part of a continuum-of-care approach to providing services for the community."

Palmer's vision reflects the integrated model of care being implemented throughout our larger health care system (see [Currents](#), Spring 2017). She plans to work more closely with Riverbend's other programs as well as help Counseling Associates staff get out into the community by presenting workshops and other programs where the public is invited to participate.

"There are numerous opportunities in the community – and within the existing system of care – where Counseling Associates can play a larger and more active role," Palmer said.

Integrated care

Palmer's experience as the integrated behavioral health clinician at Concord Family Medicine has provided her with a valuable perspective on the role a therapist plays in a Primary Care Practice (PCP) setting.

"An integrated care setting enables us to realize – or at least move much closer to – same day service," Palmer explained. "Some days you might see five or more new people. You need to have a special kind of focus and energy to work with individuals for the first time. For me it is extremely rewarding to help people take the first steps toward receiving treatment they really need to live better, happier, and healthier lives."

Therapists at PCP locations (see page 10) are part of Counseling Associates and provide short-term support to individuals at the PCP location. If the issue is not short-term, the client transitions to longer-term treatment through Counseling Associates, Choices, and/or the Community Support Program.

"We're learning how to make those transitions better for everyone involved – the client, physician, therapist, and others," Palmer said. "Integrated care is about helping individuals address a range of challenges that are affecting their physical health. It's about helping people get healthy and stay healthy. Counseling Associates is an important option for the medical community to have available as a resource for patients."

DidYouKnow?

Nearly **60%** of adults with a mental illness didn't receive mental health services in the previous year.

Source: [SAMHSA](#)

The adolescent-to-adult transition

One area where Palmer intends to focus some attention in the months ahead is with Riverbend clients who are engaged with the [Children's Program](#) and approaching their 18th birthday. Adolescence can be a challenging time under the best of circumstances, but for those facing mental health challenges, this period can be especially difficult.

"We lose some kids and families at that point," Palmer said. Palmer is referring to adolescents who don't need or want the wrap-around support services provided by the Community Support Program, but still need help negotiating their unique challenges.

"Most of the kids in the Children's Program are very aware of and grateful for the support that Riverbend has provided to them and to their family," Palmer said. "I think some can feel abandoned by the system when they turn 18 because service provision changes so dramatically at that point."

Palmer is working closely with Elyn Schreiber and others at the Children's Program to smooth the way for more young people approaching adulthood (18+) to make a transition to Counseling Associates for ongoing services. "We can play an important role in supporting adolescents," Palmer said, "as they take on adult responsibilities and develop more independence."

Other Opportunities

"This isn't a one-size-fits-all business, and Riverbend and its partners have a phenomenal capacity for treatment customization and providing different levels of service," Palmer said. "I know there are individuals living with serious mental health challenges —debilitating depression and anxiety, for example — who don't want or need the services provided through the Community Support Program. Counseling Associates can be a viable and preferred treatment option for some people who need help."

In the coming months, Palmer also hopes to support the Counseling Associates staff in developing short, topic-focused presentations for the public and local community groups.

"There's a lot more we can do to break down the barriers to receiving treatment just by getting out in the community more and creating opportunities to talk about behavioral health issues," Palmer said. "The Concord Hospital Center for Health Promotion, for example, provides a great venue for reaching out to the public in new ways and getting good information out there."

Being your Best Self

Counseling Associates therapists provide specialized, evidence-based treatment for a wide range of issues, and have a strength-based, positive, and goal-directed process for working with clients. "Everyone at Counseling Associates is committed to helping you gain clarity, confidence, and conviction in creating the life you want," Palmer said.

Continued on page 10

Counseling Associates

Services

- Individual Therapy
- Couples Therapy
- Family Therapy
- Group Therapy
- Special Topic Groups

Areas of Specialization

- Addiction Concerns
- Adolescent/Young Adult Transitions
- Anxiety/Stress Management
- Career/Education Concerns
- Communication Conflicts
- Cultural Differences
- Depression/Mood Disorders
- Domestic Violence
- Dual Career Issues
- Eating Problems
- Grief and Loss
- Health Concerns
- Infertility
- Life Transitions
- Mid-life and Aging Issues
- Postpartum Issues
- Post Divorce Conflict
- Retirement
- Separation and Divorce
- Sexual Orientation/Gender Identity
- Sexual Trauma and Sexual Harassment
- Spiritual Differences
- Step Parenting/ Step Families



Therapists have their own style and areas of expertise (see page 9), but everyone shares the same overall philosophy about the process of personal change and growth, and the important role of the therapist in that process. “We are here to help you discover your strengths, learn new skills, and realize your potential,” Palmer said. “We are here to help you become your best self.”

“Some of us learned these skills from parents and teachers when we were young,” Palmer said, “and some of us need to learn these skills as an adult. As an adult it’s you who decides how much you want to stretch, learn, and grow.”

Palmer is referring to the skill development involved in pursuing one’s dreams, sustaining motivation to reach goals, developing good habits, and learning how to take care of oneself in a healthy and helpful way.

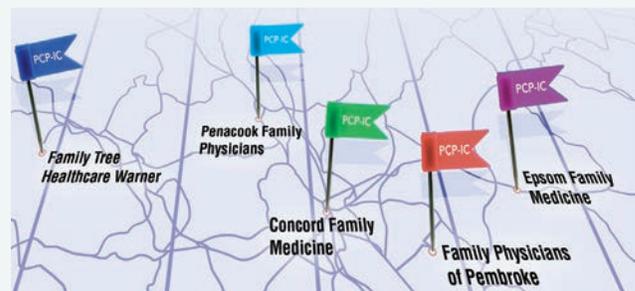
“We go to therapy to treat problems as well as to improve our lives,” Palmer said. “Therapy is also about making a good life even better.”

To learn more about [Counseling Associates](#) see our website or call 603-228-1600.

If you are a business leader or represent a community group or faith-based organization and would like to discuss a special presentation, please contact: Karen Jantzen in the Office of Community Affairs: kjantzen@riverbendcmhc.org



Integrated Care in the Concord area



Since 2014, Riverbend has worked with the [Concord Hospital Medical Group](#) to advance the integration of behavioral health treatment in the primary care settings that make up the group. This means that Riverbend Counseling Associates therapists are becoming part of the medical team at these practices, providing assessments, consultations, short-term therapy, and referrals.

In 2017, at the Primary Care Provider (PCP) locations named above, almost 650 individuals and families were helped in the following ways:

- Regular screenings for depression and substance misuse by the PCP – and immediate facilitated referrals – mean more people get treatment sooner.
- Providers report increasing compliance with treatment plans that involve lifestyle changes – such as smoking cessation, diet changes, and weight loss.
- Providers report a greater understanding for all patients about the connections between behavioral health and physical health, and more openness to having the behavioral health “conversation.”

Learn more about integrated care in New Hampshire at the [NH Department of Health and Human Services](#), and in the Spring 2017 issue of [Currents](#).

DidYouKnow?

43.3 million

adults struggle with a mental health issue each year

16 million

adults live with Major Depression

4.2 million

adults are living with an Anxiety Disorder

Serious mental illness costs the US

\$193.2 billion

in lost earning every year.

Source: [SAMHSA](#)

Other things of note...

Let's make Mental Health First Aid as common as CPR

TAKE A COURSE **Mental Health First Aid** is an 8-hour course that teaches you how to help someone who may be experiencing a mental health or substance use challenge. The training helps you identify, understand, and respond to signs of addiction and mental illness.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE **Mental Health First Aid** is intended for all the people and organizations that make up the fabric of a community. Certification may meet CEU requirements.

WHO ATTENDS Chambers of commerce, professional associations, hospitals, nursing homes, rotary clubs, parent organizations, social clubs and other groups, professionals who regularly interact with a lot of people — such as police officers and human resource directors, primary care providers, school and college leadership, faith communities, friends and family of individuals with mental illness or addiction, or **anyone** interested in learning more about mental illness and addiction.

LEARN MORE For details about the training program visit riverbendcmhc.org or email mhfa@riverbendcmhc.org.



..... SAVE THE DATE TO STOMP STIGMA

Sunday, September 30, 2018

NAMIWalks NH

CONCORD, NH | REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN AT WWW.NAMINH.ORG

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Please join us!



Champions for Mental Health Awards

2018 Champions

Christine Cummings
Jeanne Ryer
Sharon Sweet



Wednesday October 17, 2018
5:30 to 7:30 PM
Capitol Center for the Arts
44 South Main Street, Concord
Tickets: \$50 per person

For registration and sponsorship information call 226-7505 ext 4334 or e-mail development@riverbendcmhc.org

You can also register and process your donation online at riverbendcmhc.org

September is Recovery Month



Millions of Americans with a mental health or substance use disorder have transformed their lives through effective treatment. Success often goes unnoticed. This September we will celebrate those living in recovery.

Find out what's happening in New Hampshire at nhrecoveryhub.org

Riverbend LOCATOR



1 Franklin Office
 53 Kendall Street, Franklin
 Services for children and adults

2 Mill House
 30 Tremont Street, Boscawen
 Supported residence for adults

3 Administration
 278 Pleasant Street, Concord
 Offices of the President, Community Affairs, Finance,
 Operations, Human Resources, Quality Assurance

4 Twitchell House
 111 Pleasant Street, Concord
 Supported residence for adults

5 Psychiatric Emergency Services
 40 Pleasant Street, Concord
1-844-7-HELP4U (1-844-743-5748)

Choices
6 3 North State Street, Concord
1-844-5-CHOOSE (1-844-524-6673)
 Addiction treatment for adolescents (14+)
 and adults (18+)

7 Fayette
 4-6 Fayette Street, Concord
 Supported residence for adults

**8 Community Support Program
 Integrated Center for Health**
 10 West Street, Concord
 Services for adults

9 Children's Program
 105 Loudon Road, Bldg 3, Concord
Information Technology Department
 105 Loudon Road, Bldg 4, Concord

10 Counseling Associates
 130 Pembroke Road, Concord
 Individual, couples, and family therapy