



WWEN Connection

Wisconsin Women's Education Network

on Addiction, Recovery & Prevention

Fall 2006



*"Be the change
you want to see
in the world."*

—Mahatma Gandhi

Putting a Face to Recovery . . .



by Shelly

I grew up in a middle class family. My dad worked hard and was rarely home. I believed my parents' expectations influenced my brothers to pursue college and that I should find a husband to support me. I was like a doll for my mom to dress up and make perfect. I always felt inadequate, like I was not enough.

In middle school, I started taking my mom's diet pills. I believed if I were thin and attractive I would be loved and popular. My use progressed throughout high school. I married at 19 hoping it would please my parents and help straighten me out. That relationship only lasted one year.

After graduating UW-Madison, I attempted to teach 4th grade while using cocaine as often as possible. Feelings of loneliness and hopelessness were constant. I realized the only reason I did not commit suicide was my family's love for me.

To support my drug habit, I would steal. I was finally caught in both Oregon and California. Luckily, charges were never pressed. I had been to at least six therapists but always lied or talked the talk. Finally, after moving to Kentucky, I was caught stealing again, lost my job and went to see yet another psychologist. She told me she couldn't help me until I went into inpatient treatment. I entered treatment January 28, 1983, in Lexington, Kentucky. I was pregnant and had no support or self-worth and I was willing to surrender and get help.

In treatment, I realized I was a sick person trying to get well, not a bad person trying to get good. I had to deal with so many painful issues including a therapeutic abortion and dealing with prior sexual abuse—treatment was my new beginning.

The staff saw something in me I did not see in myself. The medical director encouraged physical activity to reduce cravings and improve self-worth. By the end of treatment I was able to run up to three miles and felt like a new person. I also went to a 12-step group daily. After one year of being sober, they invited me to work at the hospital as an aide and I spent the next year helping others. In 1985, I returned to Madison. It was a challenging transaction leaving my mentors and support.

Today, I am married almost 20 years to a wonderful and supportive spouse and have two teenagers, a daughter 15 and a son 17 ½. Wow, that's a challenge! I now own and operate Connections Counseling, a clinic for young people. It is a strength-based clinic focusing on mentors and service work. Connections is a vision and dream come true! I have also been involved in creating Horizons High School—Madison's first sober high school. My mom, my greatest supporter, recently died. She believed in me when I didn't believe in myself and I miss her everyday.

Recovery is a lifetime process. My awareness has increased such that I can identify the signals for seeking spiritual or professional support. Today, I feel blessed to have almost 23 years off drugs and the ability to acknowledge the importance of balance. Quiet time, nature, family and my women friends are an integral part of my soul.

Today, I cherish each day and trust the process. I realize my purpose is to provide hope for others to find their paths, and so the journey continues . . .

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Report Reveals Alarming Trend in Drug Use Among Girls



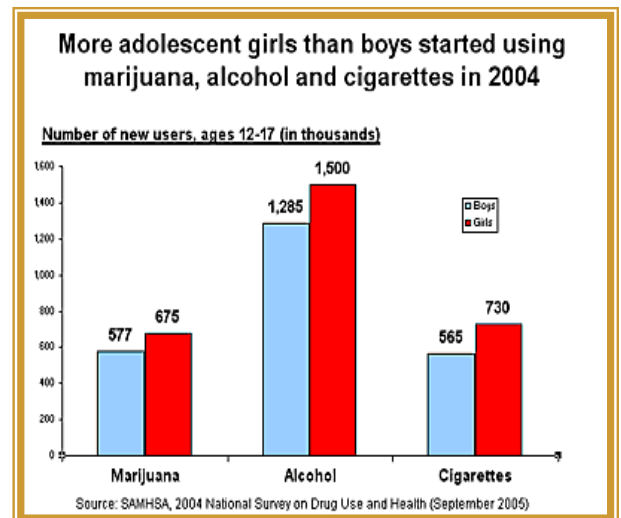
February 9, 2006 -- Despite commonly held beliefs that boys are at higher risk for using illegal substances, recent data indicate that girls have caught up with boys in illicit drug and alcohol use and have actually surpassed boys in cigarette use. More girls are also starting to use illicit substances than boys.

Although substance use among teens has shown steady declines in the past few years, the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign is urging parents to be aware of the vulnerabilities unique to girls that can lead to substance abuse.

According to the latest research:

- ⊗ For the last two years that research is available (2003-2004), more teenage girls than boys started using marijuana, alcohol and cigarettes.
- ⊗ When girls use illicit drugs, marijuana is the most commonly used substance. In fact, girls use marijuana more than cocaine, heroin, Ecstasy, methamphetamine and all other illicit drugs combined.
- ⊗ Adolescent girls are particularly susceptible to the physical and mental consequences of substance abuse, especially at a critical time in life, when their bodies and brains are still developing.
- ⊗ Studies show that marijuana use may increase the risk of depression among girls. In fact, more than twice as many girls than boys reported having at least one major depressive episode in 2004.
- ⊗ Girls may develop symptoms of nicotine addiction faster than boys.
- ⊗ Adolescent girls who consume even moderate amounts of alcohol may experience disrupted growth and puberty.

For more information, please visit:
<http://www.drugfree.org/portal/>



Connections

COUNSELING by Shelly Dutch, Director



Connections Counseling, a unique and eclectic clinic, where a combination of psychotherapy, group work and personalized mentoring is provided. It's also the home of *Teens in Control* and the *College Connections*, which was started 14 years ago. We've expanded from a staff of one (me as the Director) to a staff of 12 therapists, two psychiatrists, two office staff and more than 30 mentors. We work as a team in coordinating care for all clients and we're certified as an AODA and mental health clinic.

The entire experience is about *connection*. From the moment a referral comes to our intake coordinator, a call-back is guaranteed within 24 hours. Each client is matched with an appropriate clinician based on information provided at intake. Trust and strong positive relationships are critical for growth and healing to occur (we take our initial matching very seriously). Some factors we consider when assigning clients to clinicians are male vs. female preference, young vs. seasoned clinicians, primary AODA and/or mental health issues, etc.

We have five groups ranging from 18-28 in age; five adolescent groups that range from 13-18 in age; two adult men's groups (OWIs and AODA issues); and, two women-specific groups, that address self-esteem, trauma, eating disorders, abuse and AODA issues.

At Connections Counseling, women-specific issues are emphasized. Research indicates female groups allow young women to address self-esteem, body issues, abuse, and various culturally specific topics when they feel safe and supported. We also have women therapists co-facilitating these groups, allowing them to explore their fears and celebrate their strengths. Incorporating play and experiential activities as part of the counseling experience enhances one's ability to trust mentors and believe in personal growth. We encourage clients to hangout at our "Rec Room" which has a pool table and game room, or to do service work.

Connections Counseling began Madison's first opiate recovery groups. Our two certified psychiatrists perform medication management and therapy which create the most effective and successful outcomes. We also have two family therapists who are an integral part of our team. We expect our clients to involve family in their recovery process. This provides opportunities for families to comprehend their role and identify strategies for self-care to best support one another.

Our greatest gift to each client is our 24-hour availability, either by the client's primary therapist or through our mentoring program. Each client achieving three months sobriety is invited to attend groups free of charge as helpers. When they have one-year sober, they may speak with our traveling panel and have their pictures on the "Wall of Fame."

Connections Counseling recognizes that long-term recovery depends on connection and fun. We as staff are strong advocates for each client. We believe in them and help them feel valued and not alone. Incorporating nature, physical activity and fun in their lives is critical. We provide activities to help clients participate in sober situations. Many of our clients stay connected by giving back to others which is the true essence of recovery. What better way to connect than having those that were once lost share how it works.

Horizon High School, a recovery high school, and the Aaron House, a sober house for college students (opening Fall of 2007), are part of our passion and vision to continue to connect with our community and support one another.



Focus on Treatment

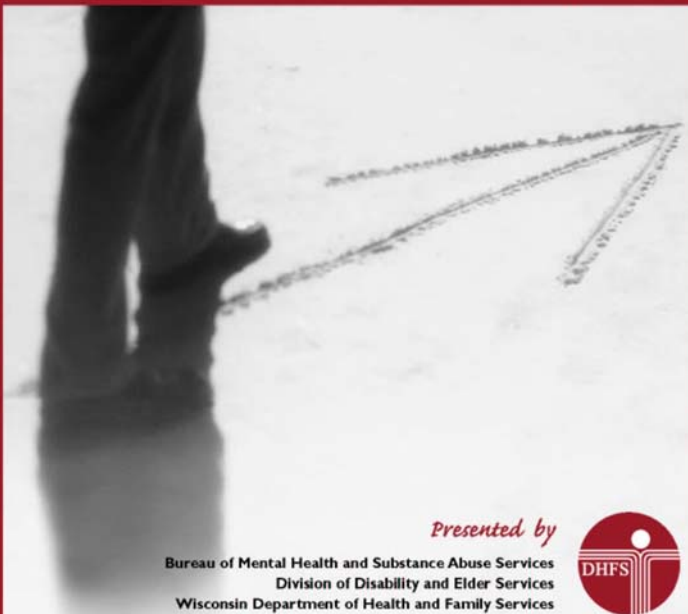
Open House
5:PM-8:PM
Monday, September 25, 2006
Connections Counseling LLC
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Telephone: 608•221•1500
<http://www.connectionsounseling.com/>




2nd Annual Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services Training Conference

SEEKING EVIDENCE OF CHANGE:
How to Measure Recovery in Substance Abuse and Mental Health

Wed. & Thurs. — October 25 - 26, 2006



Presented by
Bureau of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services
Division of Disability and Elder Services
Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services



The NEW Stevens Point Holiday Inn & Convention Center
1001 Amber Avenue, Stevens Point, WI 54481

Featuring:

Women-Specific Workshop

Thursday, October 26, 2006

1:00—2:30 PM (#30)

Continued 2:45—4:15 PM (#37)

Unique Substance Use Disorder Treatment Issues for Pregnant Women

For some women with substance use disorders, pregnancy creates a window of opportunity to enter treatment, become abstinent, quit smoking, eliminate risk-taking behaviors, and lead generally healthier lives.

Serving this population of women requires expertise far beyond the usual knowledge base. Programs, and the people that serve high-risk pregnant women, must be able to combine the medical, prenatal, substance abuse, and mental health care of the mother along with the care of the infant.

This workshop will address the fear, misunderstanding and trepidation about the real needs of the women and their infants, the liability related to birth outcomes, the funding for a multitude of services, and the training necessary to adequately provide complex services.

Dr. Francine Feinberg, Executive Director,
Polly Blecher, RN, Maternal Health Specialist,
and **Patricia Aniakudo**, Evaluation/ Research
Coordinator, Meta House, Inc., Milwaukee, WI

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For More Information, contact:
UWSP Continuing Education at: **800-898-9472, Press 3**
www.uwsp.edu/conted/conferences/
Click on "2nd Annual Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Conference."

The secret of health for both mind and body is not to mourn for the past, worry about the future, or anticipate troubles but to live in the present moment wisely and earnestly.

- Buddha

