

# Summer 2020 Newsletter

## Hope through Telehealth



In times of crisis, the risk of relapse increases. That is why treatment services are more important than ever right now. We can schedule substance use and mental health assessments quickly with a caring, compassionate counselor - all via telehealth. All telehealth services, including group sessions are conducted using a safe and secure platform.

Our outpatient substance use and mental health treatment programs are now available in a virtual environment; allowing patient's to seek treatment no matter where they are. All telehealth services, including group sessions are conducted using a safe and secure platform.

This has allowed for more flexibility with parents at home working remotely or those that were unable to be in-person for an appointment due to transportation challenges.

On average we are seeing over 200 patients per day via telehealth, with the majority served in Clark County and Bellingham serviced by 168 clinicians and this offering continues to grow each month.

Appointments can be made by calling (800) 604-0025 and leave a message. Calls are returned within 24 business hours.

## Crisis Triage & Stabilization Program Opens in August

The Crisis Triage and Stabilization will open this August! It will provide safety and security for adults as a less restrictive alternative to hospitalization or it can decrease the length of hospitalization. Crisis Stabilization includes short-term, face-to-face assistance with life skills training, offers medication education and provides linkage to follow-up services.

These services are patient focused and strength based. The environment and service delivery helps patients feel welcomed, valued, affirmed and validated. They play an active role in the treatment planning process promoting empowerment and resiliency for future experienced crises. The support team consists of licensed substance use and mental health professionals, licensed nurses, peer support specialists, licensed prescribers and case managers.

This new program supports the recovery, health and well-being of the patients served and focuses on enhancing their quality of life. It also builds resiliency to behavioral health crises and prioritizes restoring and improving function and successful integration back into the community.

Admission is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by calling (360) 205-1221.



## The Recovery Resource Center Has Re-Opened!

We are pleased to have our Recovery Resource Center re-opened. This phased approach began July 1<sup>st</sup> with limited hours and an occupancy limit of four people inside the building at a time. Book and coin sales are available Tuesday-Friday from 8:30am – 10am and again from 4:30pm-6pm. Emma Jackson is still providing Case Management Services by appointment. Phone: (360) 397-8246 ext. 30903 or email: [ejackson@lifelineconnections.org](mailto:ejackson@lifelineconnections.org)

Bill Ballard functioned through 45 years of substance use until 2000 where he came to Lifeline Connections. He began drinking at the age of 14 and had a stable home. He never saw his dad drink; only smoked cigarettes and drank coffee. It wasn't until he got into recovery that his mom told him that they almost divorced when he was five years old. He went to a treatment center in California for six months while she stayed home with him. He thought "Why didn't you tell me that years ago?" Bill's substance use contributed to the end of his two marriages. His long road to recovery included a year in prison and he gives credit to drug court helping save him. He said he never had a clear head for most of his life. His road to recovery began in jail after writing the judge to apologize, asking for an opportunity to do his best but admitting he didn't know how. After ten more days in jail, Bill was admitted into inpatient treatment at Lifeline Connections. He gives a lot of credit to the counselors during his time there, teaching him the tools he needed to stay in recovery, maintain a job and even mentor others that need it. Bill has been in recovery for ten years as of August 2, 2010.

## Bill Ballard's Road to Recovery



## Art of Recovery



In honor of National Recovery Month, Lifeline Connections is launching an exciting new way for people to share the art, writing, and other creative projects they have generated as they recover from substance use and mental health disorders. "Art of Recovery is an opportunity for people to share joy and hope with each other," said Chelsea Perrone, Development Specialist at Lifeline Connections. "September is a month when we honor the incredible work people do to get well from substance use disorders. We want to celebrate that work all month by offering a way for people to tell their own stories through art and other creative expressions."

The activity will launch via Lifeline Connections' Facebook and web pages. Submissions will be curated by Lifeline staff to ensure that participants can remain anonymous if they wish. For more information about how to submit projects for consideration, contact Chelsea at [chouse@lifelineconnections.org](mailto:chouse@lifelineconnections.org) or (360) 397-8246 ext. 30546 for more information.

## Safety during COVID-19

Lifeline Connections is now able to provide in-person treatment at all locations with the completion of several key protocols and safety measures designed to ensure patients and staff are not exposed to COVID-19. Physical distancing is set up in all lobbies and wall-mounted tissue boxes, face-mask dispensers, hand-sanitizer and temperature-reading kiosks are in place.

With the acquisition of Clorox 360 electrostatic sprayers the agency can also provide safer inpatient care. COVID-19 testing is part of required procedures for anyone admitting to Lifeline's withdrawal management and residential treatment programs to further increase safety in those settings. "Telehealth has worked well for our outpatient care programs as we've navigated through this time, and it's still available," said Jared Sanford, Chief Executive Officer at Lifeline Connections. "But for many people, in-person care is essential to help them build a strong and lasting recovery. We're pleased we can offer it once again."

Thanks to the following organizations for helping procure the personal protective equipment needed to meet Washington State and CDC guidelines for safe in-person care at our Aberdeen, Vancouver, Bellingham and Mount Vernon offices:

- [Grays Harbor Community Foundation](#)
- [The Moore-Wright Group](#)
- [National Council on Behavioral Health](#)
- [Southwest Washington COVID Response Fund](#)
- [United Way of Grays Harbor](#)
- [United Way of Whatcom County](#), via [The Resilience Fund](#)
- [Whatcom Community Foundation](#), via [The Resilience Fund](#)

## Give More 24!

Back by popular demand, Lifeline Connections is envisioning new ways to participate in Southwest Washington's signature day-of-giving event; scheduled for Thursday, September 24th.

"We're so grateful to our supporters who understand the work we do" said Jeri Mortimore, Development Director at Lifeline Connections. "One of those 'sweet' partners is excited to help us make the day fun and interactive while staying safe from COVID-19 exposure."

Give More 24! is a social-media, online-driven event that raises funds across Southwest Washington. At Lifeline Connections, funds will support harm reduction efforts such as making sure locking medication bags are available for anyone who has to keep medications safe from young children in their homes. "With all the time we're still spending at home," added Jeri, "it's more important than ever that our patients feel they can keep their children safe."

Details about Give More 24! will appear via Facebook and email beginning in early September. If you are interested in supporting Lifeline Connections, or would like more information, contact Chelsea at [chouse@lifelineconnections.org](mailto:chouse@lifelineconnections.org) or (360) 397-8246 ext. 30546.



## Employee Highlight – Amber Martin



Amber Martins' passion for nursing can be traced back to her pre-professional days. Whether as a lifeguard patrolling the beaches in California or in carrying on the legacy of nursing in her family; she has been on the nursing path from the start. She has a visceral yearning to dispense comfort and compassion, to make even the slightest difference and to advocate; all by being in the service of others. She currently provides this servant leadership as the Withdrawal Management Program Director at Lifeline Connections.

Amber became a nurse approximately 12 years ago; specializing in wound care, psychiatric nursing and leadership. Her years educating in wound care helped her realize her love for teaching. She nurtures this by educating future

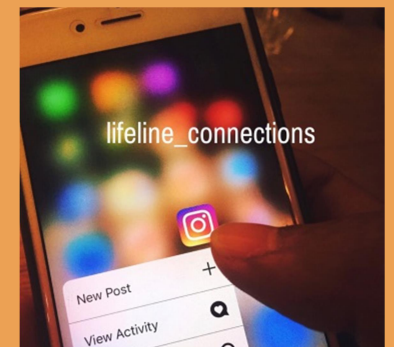
nurses through their prerequisite clinical rotations. As a Nursing Director for the past five years, she led a nursing team that was WA state deficiency free in all audits. But the opportunities she experienced as a psychiatric nurse lead her to where her true career interests lie.

Having maintained an interest in furthering her education, she is currently working to complete her MSN and seeking to sit for the CARN examination; an addictions nursing certification. Outside the office, she volunteers at a free health care clinic and can always be found with a book in her hands and two or three on her night stand. She says she will devour nearly any book on world religions, spirituality, cultures or language/linguistics welcomes a respectful conversation on said subjects.

She was born in the beautiful mile high city of Denver, Colorado and raised near the sandy beaches of the surfing capital of Santa Cruz, CA. She has three "children" which includes a 22 year old son, 19 year old daughter who recently married and a 16 year old son. She counts the three of them as her greatest blessings. Her education, career, and interests, may seem well put-together but there were many obstacles. From raising her three siblings, a divorce and battling cancer she says, "It has not been without difficulties but I know that with support and steadfast love for one another, we can make it through the hard times and look back and see successes".

"Amber is a caring and compassionate employee who understands the people we serve and the need for self-directed and collaborative care. She has also been instrumental with providing information and support for our agency's preventative response to COVID-19. Amber is an amazing employee and human being. I am so grateful to have her as part of our Lifeline team." –Brandy Branch, Lifeline Connections' Chief Clinical Officer

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announcements  
and updates!



**Lifeline Connections does not tolerate racism, prejudice, hatred, abuse or violence in any form.**



On June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Lifeline Connections issued the following statement:

As an organization committed to the behavioral health of all, we must speak out and join the national voice decrying the oppression, in justice and suffering of black people in our country and in the communities we serve.

Inclusion and diversity are core values at Lifeline Connections. We are committed to equity and justice in our daily work.

We also commit to actively participate in conversations and actions in the communities we serve to address and correct persistent injustice, systemic inequality and structural barriers to equity.

*We commit to standing beside and supporting the black community to change what can no longer be tolerated.*

***Thank you to all of the staff at Lifeline Connections for your continued flexibility and dedication to our patients and each other as we pave this new road ahead during COVID-19 and develop high quality telehealth services!***



*Thank You*



### **Generosity in the Time of COVID**

Imagine this scene: Darcy has just graduated from a residential treatment program for a health condition she's battled for eight years. She's full of hope, but nervous about what happens now that she's back home. She's already scheduled her first outpatient appointment—but then she hears the office is closing due to a global health crisis. The counselor's office is also scrambling. Darcy's next phase of treatment is critical, but counselors are also vulnerable to the pandemic. How can they stay linked to Darcy and keep everyone safe?

Across town, another organization is also scrambling. For 36 years they've funded their community's needs, but suddenly everything is upside down. They call a meeting, and within days more than \$4.6 million is raised for The Southwest Washington COVID Response Fund. They ask their community a simple question: what do you need right now?

The counselor's office responds: could you help us buy laptops with webcams so we can stay connected with Darcy? Eight days later, they have the money they need. At Darcy's first outpatient she meets her new counselor via her smartphone, and she's terrified. She's lost her job, she's supposed to report to the judge but the courts are closed, and she's afraid she's going to relapse. The counselor listens then begins to talk. Darcy hears hope for the first time in days. She sees that her counselor is calm and she begins to calm down. By the end of her session, she realizes she has the tools she needs to remain well—and she has a caring counselor who is still there for her.

"Foundations and government agencies have provided life-saving resources to help our most vulnerable people stay connected to help during this time," said Jeri Mortimore, Lifeline Connections' Fund Development Director. "I've been doing fundraising for more than twenty years, and I've never seen a foundation act so swiftly and generously. The Community Foundation for Southwest Washington is the best example of all that is right and excellent about this region."

The Community Foundation for Southwest Washington stands as a beacon of nimble, incisive leadership, its members demonstrating the community's best heart and generosity in this time of COVID-19. Since March 23—the day Governor Jay Inslee issued Washington's stay-at-home order—the Southwest Washington COVID Response Fund has awarded and distributed 121 grants to meet the critical local needs emerging from the global pandemic. These grants are keeping people fed, housed, and well, both physically and emotionally.

Thank you to the donors, trustees and staff of The Community Foundation for Southwest Washington who didn't hesitate this spring. Your community is grateful.