

peerpress

Recovery-Focused Community Newsletter
Bringing the Community Together

Presented by Jade Park (he/they), CPC



Agenda

- Intro
- Community Newsletter
- The Power of Storytelling
- Creativity
- Advocacy
- Affirmation
- Q&A and Feedback

Intro

Vol 1. February 2024

peerpress

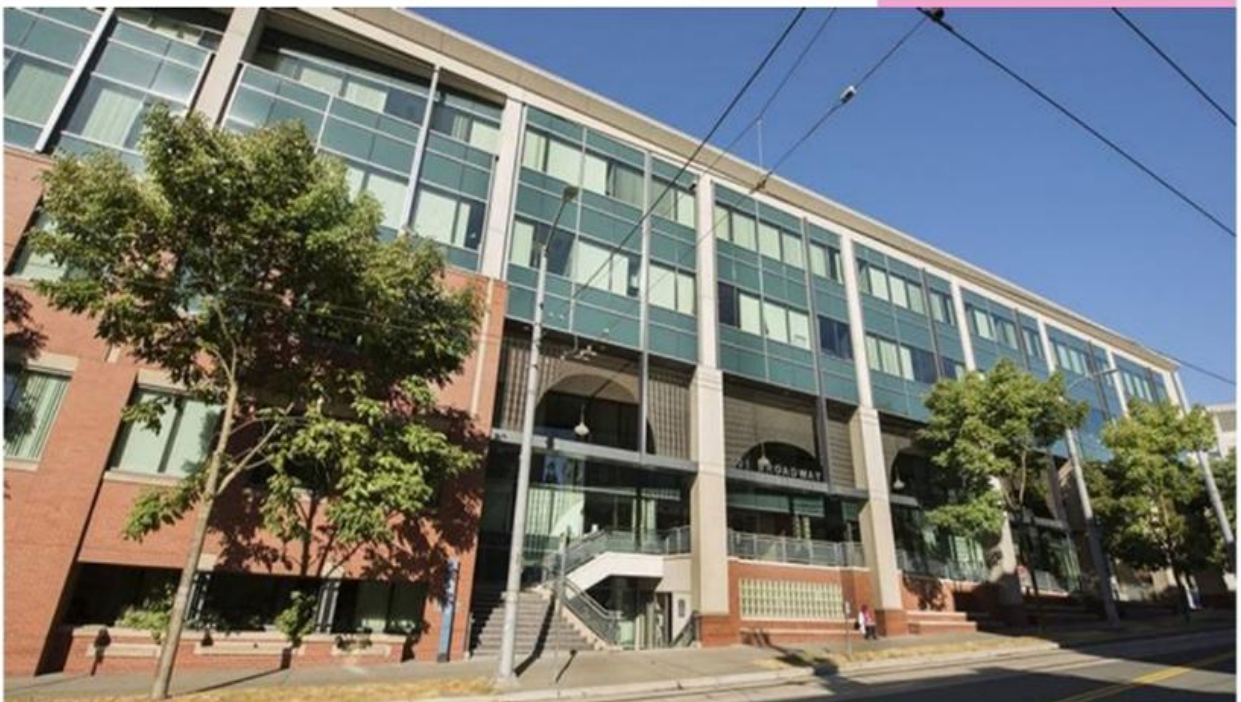
Bringing the community together

"Be softer with you. You
are a breathing thing.
A memory to someone,
a home to a life."

Harborview Medical Center

Psychiatry

Mental Health and Addiction Services



Letter to my son *by Noel I.*

Gratitude *by Angie K.*

Distinguished Staff
Nominee Teri Jo
Punteney



Community Newsletter

- Engaged
- Informed
- Connected
- Empowered
- Celebrated
- Relevant Content
- Tailor to the Purpose
- Authenticity
- Visual Presentation
- Consistency
- Advocacy

The Power of Storytelling

*Empowerment
Authenticity*

Vol 4. June/July 2024

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Bringing the community together



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I Saw God's Face

By Jason P.

I saw God's face. It was a nurse who ran around in a too poor over crowded hospital in Renton. They ran too fast moving and grooving and helping everyone they saw. That person with the smoothest voice looked and sounded like a god to me. They saw my friend Jose and saw that Jose needed help the most that night. That person looked like a god to me.

God to me looked like a non-binary peer counselor who showed up to every meeting with the tools of healing and hugs even though those were frowned upon. This counselor just held us strong almost as if just by their strength they could fix and mend the broken in us. And maybe they did. They gave us their culture and made us feel seen and human. When others, doctors and nurses, made us feel like patients. They made us feel like friends and human. They believed in us and their rock hard solid belief in us helped us find our way back to ourselves. I saw a god in this solid as a rock person.

I see God everyday in my brother. When my mom's hands were too shaky from giving her dad's eulogy, my brother took her into a room to feed her himself. When I was at my worst most manic and needing someone to just let me walk and talk out some steam, my brother did that for me even though it was a super hard confusing walk for both of us and gave him lots of anxiety. He fought the whole damn confusing health care system for me and got me as he always did and has done home. He showed up with such brotherly care, fear, and compassion. I see god in him. I see God in all three of these people as Les Miserables taught to love another person is to see the face of God. My mom raised me on that play and those words are the crescendo and I know them to be true. We can all be gods but only in that we love others and care for them fully and without constraints. To fully love another person requires forgoing our ego and leaving it on the alter as sacrifice only in that path can we see another as purely and truly as is needed. My bipolar eyes see this and know it true. You can trust me as I have walked and ran with gods as most gods don't really stop running; they have too much to do.

MY STORY

Don't give up.

Anonymous

The first time I saw him in the inpatient psychiatry, he seemed completely detached from his surroundings. He was there, but he wasn't really there. It was not because of his psychosis. It was because he had lost all his hope.

'What happened to him?' I thought to myself. I saw myself in him. I also saw my brother. I saw many of our peers. Complete hopelessness. The darkness suffocated me standing in the middle of the psych ward. I know what hopelessness feels like. I know what it did to me over and over again.

It wasn't that long ago when I learned what dissociation was. The recurring dreams that always make me feel lost, confused, and disconnected. Hundreds of thousands of human bodies hanging upside down. My five-year-old-self staring at the breathless human bodies. Unable to move or breathe. Suddenly I remembered. It was me. That's what happened. I watched myself hanging upside down. My dad was holding me by my ankle ready to throw me against the wall. Dissociation. I watched the whole thing. Terrified.

The abuse lasted for another ten years. I grew up in fear every single day. I wanted to disappear. I wanted to die. I stopped talking. I stopped existing. Every night I wished that my real family would show up in the morning and save me. My wishes never came true. I stopped wishing. Hopelessness.

Home? Home is a place of abuse. Home is a place of terror. I never knew what safe felt like. I still don't feel safe anywhere. I got really good at covering up my fear, my sadness, my loneliness, and my despair. No one knew what I was feeling. No one knows what I feel.

The tiny light inside me never died. No, it wasn't tiny. It was bigger than anything. Bigger than hopelessness. There was something out there for me. My purpose.

He didn't talk. He didn't make eye contact. I invited him to the tea ceremony and meditation. He declined. One day he came. He sat down quietly. He drank the tea. He watched me playing the singing bowls. He thanked me and left. He came to every tea group since then. He opened up to me. Suddenly, I saw a tiny flickering light inside him. Hope. I saw hope.

MY STORY

One day he asked me quietly, “I want to get GED. How do I do that? Can you help me?” I saw more and more flickering lights inside him. Fragile and timid. But they were alive. I felt a shift in him.

Sadly, his depression and psychosis were overpowering. He struggled. One day he told me, “I wish my mom would take care of me.” I felt a stabbing pain in my heart. We are not much different. We feel the same. I remembered the silent wishes I had when I was growing up.

Despair. A failed suicide attempt. Hopelessness. Substance abuse. Risky behaviors. More self-destructive behavior. That’s how things go. Story of my life.

Someone said this to me. “You can’t fix everything. That’s not your job. Just be there for your peers. That’s important, too.” But I want to fix everything for the peers. I know I can’t. That makes me angry.

Things weren’t going well for him in the psych ward. It was decided that he couldn’t stay with us any longer. Is this the end for him? What’s going to happen to him? Another loss.

The last time I saw him was in his seclusion. Empty room. Gloomy ceiling light. The maddening construction noise. Couldn’t get any worse. He seemed completely detached from this world. He was just lying there unable to move. Hopelessness had completely consumed him. The flickering lights had disappeared without a trace. He turned his head and looked at me.

“You came to see me? Good to see you. Thank you, Jade.”

I held his hand and told him, “Don’t give up. Don’t ever give up on your life. You still have hope. Don’t give up! I’m still here.”

“Thank you, Jade. You are my brother. I won’t give up. I promise.”

He squeezed my hand.

“When the officers come to take you, don’t resist. Just go with them, OK? Don’t fight with them.”

I left the room and walked away feeling lost.

I hope he doesn’t give up. I hope he doesn’t forget his promise. I hope his tiny flickering lights come back. Every hope matters. He matters. That’s what I believe.

MY STORY



My Journey

By Draven L. Peer Support Specialist

I spent the vast majority of my life homeless. Some of my earliest memories are of traveling, drifting from family member to family members/ family friend's places, sleeping on the floor or camper. Other times, sleeping in a van or staying in a shelter, like Salvation Army in Ocala, Florida or a women's halfway house out in the boonies of Missouri (how fitting that was in Washington County if memory serves).

I remember my mom exhausting herself with various factory jobs trying to take care of me and my brothers. Things started looking up when my mother met my dad, Jack. He helped to alleviate a lot of the burden on her in the form of support and love I can only dream to have one day, though my mother still worked a lot. Jack, though he was sick, still was able to help keep her head up and come out of herself. One of my biggest regrets is that he and I started off not on the best footing. I'm just glad we grew close in the end.

By the time I was maybe around the age of 13 or 14, I started venturing out on my own more and more. When I was 15, I stayed briefly with my biological father. I grew to despise him, and things got overwhelming, so I officially struck out on my own. I made my way to Springfield, Missouri on foot. A few folks picked me one along the way and helped me get closer to Springfield a little bit at a time. Once there, I decided to continue to be self-sufficient and gather resources.

After a few years I was doing well. My partner and I had a place, though my name wasn't on the lease. Then we both grew weary of Springfield and Missouri as a whole. We started doing research and building a list of resources and comparing information with options for Seattle. Travel guides, YouTube videos, the works. We stumbled across a video of a Mr. Lantz Rowland giving a tour and explaining the concept of self-managed encampments. It felt like magic, it was such a beautiful concept. We made our plan and headed out.

MY STORY

We arrived in Seattle after 3 days on a cramped Greyhound bus and hit up the outdoor meal site under the bridge on 6th and Cherry, then headed to Tukwila to check in at Tent City 3 on Halloween 2012. Since then, I have been an active activist and participant of Share/Wheel and Nickelsville off and on. I've even taken up leadership roles and spoken to City Council, in other forums, and at other events.

Back there in Missouri, my mom's going for a job that makes 18 dollars an hour. That'll cover everything, rent, bills, food. Up here it's different. While the pay here is much more, so is the cost of living, making getting back on your feet quite the struggle. Yes, it's doable but not in such a strict timeline as the city gives most shelters for how long a participant can receive assistance.

When we got the stimulus checks during Covid, here in Seattle the money went quickly. Rent costs more and a single stimulus check doesn't cover it; meanwhile, I've got acquaintances in the Midwest who covered multiple months of rent with it. It was ludicrous to not adjust the assistance during that period to match the area's average cost of living so that it actually assisted those in more expensive areas.

At Tent City 3, Jarvis, the camp's bookkeeper gave me a push and got me involved in the Occupy CEHC. About a decade later, I got into Nickelsville. There, it was easier to look for work besides just temp jobs. I started working at Amazon and was able to move in with my then-partner, but things went haywire, I lost my job, and went to work at Funko, but lost that when the contract ran up, and then took another temporary contract at Nintendo. I moved back to Missouri when my dad died to take care of my mom and eventually came back to Nickelsville 2 years ago.

That's when I learned that living at Nickelsville had given me the skills to work as a peer support specialist. If I didn't have the self-advocacy and the skills learned just through living in self-managed villages, I wouldn't have the credentials to do what I'm doing now. Working with people at Nickelsville, learning that each person has their own story, and their own rate of recovery was essential for me as a peer support specialist. It's also what I learned from self-management: personal accountability and having a voice in things instead of staff telling you what to do. It gives you a sense of purpose, that I can make a change of things instead of staying in this hole.

I worked for 3 months while living at Nickelsville, saved up money, and moved into my own place. That alone was 90 days, but I needed a lot longer than that. Sadly, I was hasty and decided to move after a few checks instead of building a decent nest egg of funds, to ease things and make it easier to maintain housing. It is my experience that putting any timeframe on folks recovering from homelessness is nothing more than a deterrent to any hope of people to get back on their feet.

What I said earlier, about everyone having their own rate of recovery: from my own experience with dissociative identity disorder, I used to just wake up places, with no recollection of how I got there. I also don't see what other people see in the mirror due to my body dysmorphia. I used to wear a mask everywhere. It took me 20 years to take off the mask. That's not the kind of change you can make in 90 days. For those of

MY STORY

us who are anti-social, Nickelsville helped, because I had to go to meetings, I had to pass people on my way to the bathrooms and showers. These small brief interactions, while minor to some, were instrumental to my recovery and adjusting. It kept me from totally withdrawing into my shell.

That time I spent at Nickelsville, I was also developing the skills I use in my job as a peer support specialist. All of PC or triad stuff we were doing, everything we naturally do as leadership, managing what everyone else is going through, trying to find some way to connect to people, meet them at their level... It's all experience for peer counseling. Most of the things we're doing here at work were things we were doing at the village.

Now I'm still organizing with SHARE and Nickelsville. I drew up a list of self-managed shelters to give to people. A staff member at WHEEL reached out to me to come to WHEEL and talk to people and offer peer support services for participants. There's one guy who needs professional medical help but is too anxious to get it. I could help him as a peer support specialist. There are lots of people like that in shelters I could start talking to. Before, I'd be too anxious to do anything like that, but now I've got all this experience through SHARE and Nickelsville, and I'm doing it all the time.

Draven speaking for Nickelsville at STOP THE SWEEPS rally
November 2, 2022



MY STORY



Strange Medicine

Dr. Dana D., MD

**Of note: all identifying information re: the client and many specifics of the clinical situation have been changed to protect privacy and ensure confidentiality.*

Em was in her second trimester of pregnancy when she walked through the office door, announcing her medications were running low and that her partner was worried. She told me she was spending hours a day staring at the light from a flashlight – an activity that protected her from visiting demons. And I (a know-nothing, relatively brand-new doctor) found myself Em’s psychiatrist.

Our near weekly visits soon ballooned with complexity. She and her partner were fighting at times. She hated her medications. The flashlight wasn’t helping. Her extended family was far away. This and so much more.

And then these occasional voices began. Voices that would sometimes suggest she would be better off dead. And nothing I could think of – including all those meds I kept urging her to take – seemed to help.

Some weeks before she gave birth, we had a particularly long session. I was frustrated and exhausted. I was terrified something – a *something* that my brain would barely even let me name – was going to happen to her or her baby.

MY STORY

At the end of that appointment, my body did something unconsciously: I crumpled. Without meaning to, I let my helplessness show. Em noticed it immediately. She *saw* me. She reached out and lightly touched my arm and said, "Dr. Dieringer, it's going to be okay." She said this in such a way and with such a true smile. I'll never be able to fully put words to it because it was one of those moments that is genuinely and generously given to *just you* by another person: a moment that I can only ever know.

I should have been comforting *her*. But the not-so-secret secret Em saw was that I wasn't just terrified for her. I was also terrified I was a bad doctor. That I would let her down. That everything is – and would be – my fault.

But Em didn't see quite see it that way. *She* held the hope for us in that moment. She got me back into my body, back in the room, back to working *with* her. Over the next few weeks, I began to see I had been missing out. Missing out on opportunities to *celebrate* her pregnancy with her. Missing out on her tremendous humor and kindness that would - and ultimately did - serve her so well as a new mom.

Here I was, working out how to be a good doctor, and alongside me the whole time, Em was working out how to be a good mom. We were two people looking for connection in a really difficult situation, and Em had been the one brave enough to see if we could find it in one another.

Each week, she would take two buses to come to see me even though we sometimes disagreed on treatment steps. She trusted me even though I was far from perfect. She forgave me. She cared for me. She hugged me. She invited me to the hospital to meet her daughter, just one day old. I was one of the first people to welcome her into the world.

I came to medicine to heal others, never knowing there would be times it would heal *me*. Never knowing, there can be a strange, powerful type of medicine that is made, in part, of our own wounds and weaknesses.

I suspect that I am not the only one in mental health care – whether a staff-person, provider, client, or patient – who carries a voice that says some version of: *I am not enough*. But, often, there are folks – like Em – at our hearts' door, knocking furiously. Healthcare is at its best when we let their knocking echo and drown out that voice. Open the door, let them in.



POETRY

Cocoa Butter Kisses

By Felicity V.

I have cocoa butter kisses
Cocoa butter kisses
Then I stained October blue while my angel is still looking at you.
But you can't play pretend
If you plea, if you flee,
you must be running from something. I call it suicide.
Who do you, what do you mean, best friend
I told your lies.
I told you I'll get you high.
If you, you mumble too much, kid
You got to get my chances a try to see if fuck around
If you found out, If figures were my insane passage
Boy, wouldn't you be proud
Be proud to call me yours
because my lips are painted red to be insane like me
Go ahead and change my name like Merry
Merry-go-Round
You made another mistake by staying still under cocoa butter kiss
Tells me good night
I love Zero
Thoughts uncoun

POETRY

Those People

By Turtle

THOSE people you say, they are you and I
I don't want to pry but, aren't we all trying to stay alive
We are just the same, made from suffering and pain
Thriving to survive by keeping our faith near by
Those people are a joke, not like me you say
Only by grace and mercy did the trouble stray
Jumped over you but not too far
Can't you see it in brave hearts of ours
Hearts that long, and wish and hope
That existence has a purpose, reason, vision and scope
Those people should be loved, understood and cared for
Why, because it is written, directed and lives on every shore
Mirror of me, distorted, bruised and weak
Yet resilient, while battered by storm and rain
Can withstand it all the same
Them guys - not looking up, glancing at identification
To see where you are stationed don't reveal their revelation
Be open to possibilities of joy while giving
Cause them guys need to also be living
You people don't despair cause love, joy, peace is in the air
Or at least somewhere out there

Archetype

By Shelly B.

Expressions etched in glass or carved in sculpting stone
Free archaic images beneath the surface throne
Mind's eye ever so brightly shining
Forecasting the future's tone
Granting present times conclusions to begin past memories know

Concepts flutter in the air deviating sounds of silence
Passing through times perception of reality
Acknowledging information's power of alliance

Transferring ideas exchanging in one's mind
Lingering on one's tongue
Gliding on wings widespread
Thoughts singing a song among gathered ears unsung

Elements of nature unearth true colors shaping a future yet untold
Searching for a path still unchosen
Occurring as history unfolds



POETRY

Meaning

By Stanley R.

Meaning of meaning

Meaning of colorful flowing poem

Of emotions reaching

Touching

Feeling

Within one's own

POETRY

Untitled

By anonymous

I

One day a man leaves his home
“I’m off to find what the world has to offer me” - said he
And so he searched
And the pack he carried burdened him
And the sun beat him
And the night chilled him
And the road fought him
And one day he found what he was looking for
It was his home
So he returned to her
Bereft of his longing,
He was no longer the same man.

II

Oh, how the mind wanders with chaos
Revels in it
Is the calm and beautiful too boring?
For the chaos can be anything, after all...
But the beautiful is always what it is.
That allure—sure intoxicating, but always remember:
Only toxins are intoxicating.
When you feel love,
Is it pure?
Or is it intoxicating?

Creativity *Art*

Vol 6. October/November 2024

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Show Your Heart is an ongoing community art project.

Join us at **Show Your Colors** group

Every Monday at 11:30am in R1069

Strength Advocacy

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Interview: Donny L. by Maria P.

Titchener Circles by Owen R.

Maka, the cat by Paul S. & Keith J.

Poems by Isaiah B., CJ H., Sage L., Shelly B.

Up Close & Personal by Sarah H.

A kids tale by Paul S.

Just the two of them by Jeremy E.

**Without Shelter,
People Die:
The Fight
To Save
Brighton Village**
by Draven L.

ADVOCACY

Without Shelter, People Die: The Fight to Save Brighton Village

By Draven L.

Nickelsville, a pioneering organization in Seattle's tiny house village movement, has been working tirelessly to provide safe and empowering shelter for those in need. Our latest project, Brighton Village, a tiny house village in South Seattle, was abruptly canceled by Mayor Bruce Harrell, despite being in the final stages of establishment.

As someone who's lived in Seattle and in Sanctioned Encampments (*including SHARE'S Tent Cities and Nickelsville's Tiny House Villages*) since 2012, I've witnessed the devastating impact of the city's homelessness crisis. The area around 3rd and Pike, where I used to shop, has become a stark example of this crisis. Since the sweeps of homeless encampments began, I've seen a massive influx of people forced onto the sidewalks, with nowhere else to go.

The excuse given by Tanya Kim, Director of the Seattle Human Services Department, was that we failed to meet arbitrary benchmarks for community engagement. This is ridiculous, as there was no actual List of Benchmarks presented nor published by the City's Human Services Department. Furthermore it has always been our standard practice to host community meet-and-greet Q&A events to introduce ourselves and address any concerns the neighborhood may have. In fact, we held the required Community Notification Meeting on July 21st 2024.

The wording is important as that's what's required under the ordinance. The need for shelters, especially tiny house villages, is dire. Seattle has been in a state of homeless emergency since 2015, with:

- **16,385** homeless people on any given night
- **60%** of homeless individuals unsheltered
- **Over 400** homeless people dying unsheltered last year
- **Over 200** unsheltered homeless deaths this year

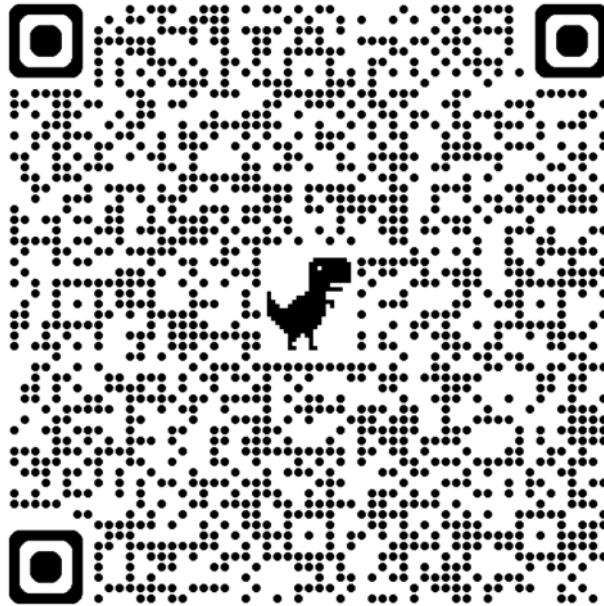
Under the Harrell administration, sweeps of encampments have **tripled** to over **2,800** last year.

ADVOCACY

However, pushing homeless people from place to place doesn't solve the crisis. Instead, Nickelsville advocates for more shelters, especially tiny house villages, which are the preferred choice for many homeless individuals.

I hope you will all join Nickelsville in their call to action: Mayor Harrell must reinstate the Brighton Village project. Without shelter, people die. It's time for our city to prioritize the lives and dignity of our most vulnerable neighbors. Stay tuned for updates on our upcoming press conference.

**Please use the QR code below to sign the petition to save
Nickelsville's Brighton Village.**



For any more info, please feel free to reach out to Nickelsville staff via e-mail.

staff@nickelsville.works



* Photo credit: actionnetwork.org

Introducing the Safety, Restraint, Seclusion (SR/S) Taskforce

By Dr. Dana Dieringer, MD

The use of restraint and seclusion is a top challenge facing psychiatric hospitals. The painful and lasting impacts of restraint and seclusion have been powerfully and eloquently documented; indeed, publications ranging from this very Peer Press to The New York Times* have relayed these important stories. Harborview Mental Health Services has formed a **Safety, Restraint, Seclusion Taskforce** to accelerate and amplify already pre-existing quality improvement efforts surrounding restraint and seclusion. We are working to reduce restraint and seclusion incidence and duration while promoting safe and equitable environments for clients and staff alike.

This work is complex, important, and necessarily multidisciplinary. We are a group currently comprised of physicians, therapists, leadership, and bedside staff. Individuals with lived experience of serious mental illness – particularly those who have experienced restraint and seclusion first-hand – are essential stakeholders and contributors to this work. Through peer support specialist communication and resources such as Peer Press, we aim to regularly provide updates on our progress. We welcome the ideas and perspectives of all as we work to build safe and healing mental health spaces. As one of our first steps, the Taskforce wants to share Harborview Mental Health Service's new vision statement:

Harborview Mental Health Services commits to treating all persons with dignity, respect, and individualized care. We pledge to safely reduce restraint and seclusion incidence and duration in our psychiatric emergency services and inpatient units. We acknowledge that these interventions are without intrinsic therapeutic value and recognize they pose physical and emotional risk to clients and staff. Building from evidence-based guidelines, staff expertise, and the experiences of individuals with serious mental illness, we will work together in collaboration. We will develop interventions, policies, and treatments to create a future where the use of restraint and seclusion is unnecessary.

* "In the House of Psychiatry, a Jarring Tale of Violence" by Ellen Barry, published May 21 2024 in The New York Times



Spreading LOVE Is Medicine

By Lucas McDonald, ARNP

“Breathe in the world, breathe out love” is my mantra. Mantra is medicine, but that is a story for another day. Today, I would like to think about what it means to breathe out love, to spread love as a practice in self-healing, a medicine created within, but which only becomes chemically activated in the presence of others. Part of this does require some level of self-love, but that is a process I am much too much of a novice in to speak on. What I can say from personal experience is that the act of cultivating love, meditating on love, in order to spread it, allows it to grow strong within you, and tends to rub off even on one’s own unworthy self.

At risk of wading into depths of spirituality that I may drown in, it seems necessary to define what it is I mean by love. Buddhist teachings would call it loving kindness, a boundless, ever-expanding ability to care and cultivate compassion for others. The ancient Greeks philosophized on the idea of agape, a love for all of humanity. From a Christian perspective, John would tell us “God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

It is a concept I have pondered previously, but began to become more concrete a few years ago, amid much national turmoil and collective aggression, with reading Reverend Dr. Jacqui Lewis’ book *Fierce Love*. The good Reverend stands in the theological lineage of those who see Jesus as a revolutionary of love, who walked the path of peace towards real change in his time and can inspire movements in the here and now. The by line to her book kind of says it all “A bold path to ferocious

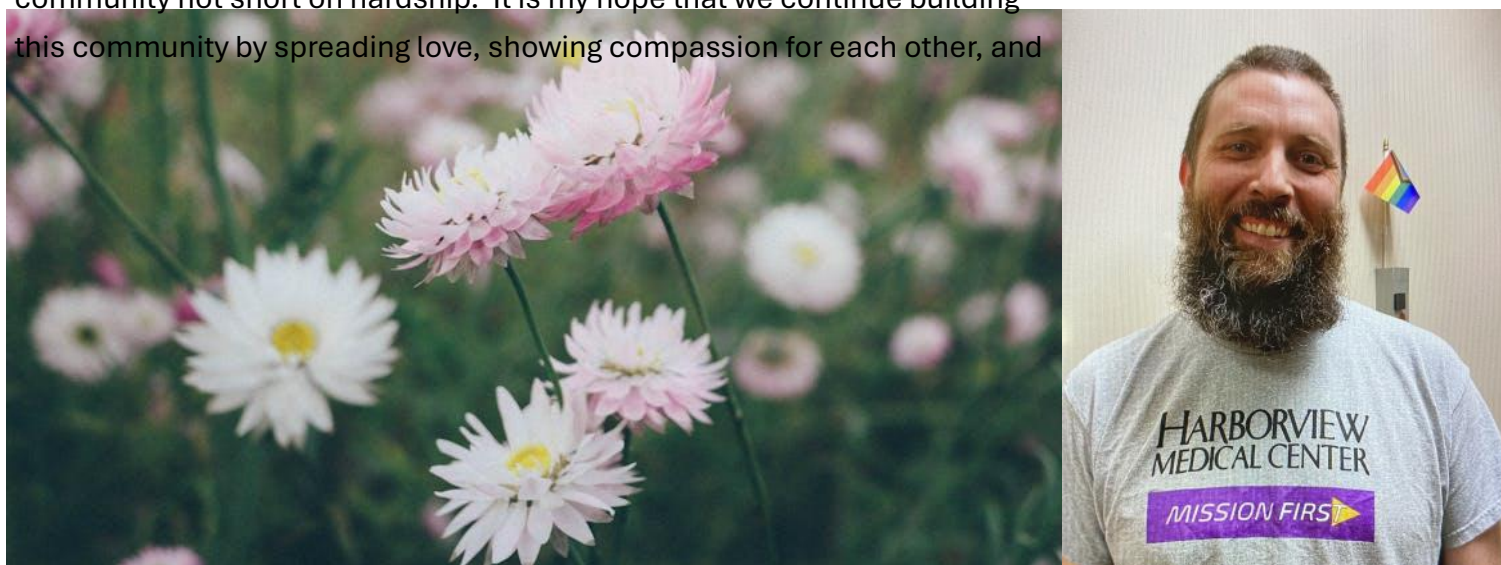
PEERMARY CARE

courage and rule breaking kindness that can heal the world.” I am not usually too much into self help books, but this one offers a way of being that puts all this ancient wisdom into practice.

As strongly as I feel about this form of medicine, I rarely talk about it with patients. The “L word” is wrapped up in all sorts of meanings and bringing it up may feel like I am coming on too strong, being too corny or woo-woo perhaps. One of the few occasions I was brave enough to share it came with a patient with all the reasons to see the futility of fruitless expressions of love for one another. From a childhood full of trauma, to a young adulthood haunted by a society that fears him and criminalizes him for the color of his skin, to a manhood challenged by physical and mental health challenges, he has all the experiences in the world to doubt a loving universe. Still, he was seeking help, seeking healing and community, attempting to become a better man for his family. He expressed his well-earned cynicism about putting himself out into the world, given what he has gotten in return so far. All I could offer is that spreading love is not about the immediate response, but about cultivating love within to shine into the world. I know my words did nothing to change his history, and probably little to soften his cynicism, but in that moment I know he felt my love for him manifest in my true desire to help heal his pain.

It was this moment of connection that it is all about. It is being bold enough to be vulnerable, brave enough to show emotion, to step outside of our comfort zone of politeness and from behind our shield of professionalism and offering ourselves to our fellow humans. When I shared the idea of spreading love as medicine initially on my clinic’s white board, I tongue in cheek attributed it to the Brooklyn School of Medicine, which a quick Google search tells me is part of the State University system of New York. I of course was referring to the late, great Notorious B.I.G. shouting out “Spread love, it’s the Brooklyn way.” The Brooklyn of the 80s Biggie grew up in was politically disenfranchised and economically disconnected, but the sense of belonging to one’s community was strong, forged by hardship, but also by human connection, by spreading love.

As vulnerable as it feels to feebly put this into words, I want to share this with you all, our community, a community not short on hardship. It is my hope that we continue building this community by spreading love, showing compassion for each other, and



Resilience **Affirmation**

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The wound is
the place
where the
light enters
you.

- Rumi



Your life has purpose.
Your story is important.
Your dreams count.
Your voice matters.
You were born to make an impact.

Source: unknown



sparksofhope.org

When you can't look on the bright
side, I will sit with you in the dark.

Source: unknown

"Mental health is too important to leave to the professionals alone."

- Vikram Patel

"Don't walk through the world looking for evidence that you don't belong. Because you will always find it.

Don't walk through the world looking for evidence that you are not enough. Because you will always find it.

Our worth and our belonging are not negotiated with other people. We carry those inside of our hearts.

I know who I am. I'm clear about that. And I am not going to negotiate that with you. Because then, I may fit in for you, but I no longer belong to myself. And that is a betrayal I am not willing to do any more."

- Brené Brown

"Diversity is a fact. **Equity** is a choice. **Inclusion** is an action.
Belonging is an outcome."

- Arthur Chan

Q&A



- **Thoughts**
- **Feelings**
- **Emotions**
- **Opinions**
- **Suggestions**

Thank you

Jade, CPC, Executive Editor

Owen, LICSW, Staff Editor

Sage, CPC, Staff Editor

Maria, LMHCA, Staff Editor

