How It’s Worked for Me

CLIENT TESTIMONIAL: “CATHY”

When I first moved to Chicago for graduate school I was only in the beginning stages of dealing with my chronic depression and suicidal feelings, fueled by a history of trauma and neglect. My school’s student counseling service sent me to Cathedral Counseling Center because I was ill and had very little money. I was alone, didn’t want to get out of bed, eat or live. It seemed like I could not even pull myself together to form a coherent thought. Talk therapy alone was not going to work for me if I was not going to get out of bed to come in to see my therapist. I needed medication to help lift a very heavy fog. I was very fortunate to be able to work with the psychiatrist at Cathedral Counseling Center to help find the proper medication to treat my depression and suicidal thoughts. He got me samples of medications, too, when I couldn’t afford to pay for them.

My therapist and psychiatrist worked closely together to help me find the right balance of medication. The communication between the two was vital because I often could not find the words to describe how I felt beyond saying everything felt horrible. And I don’t like to admit it now but I was stubborn, not intentionally, I was just very confused and I didn’t trust that anything could help me. I needed some support and structure just to get me to take my medication properly.

I feel like a very different person now. I will probably be on some form of anti-depressant for the rest of my life and I accept that. I’m deeply grateful for all of the help the Counseling Center has given me because I would be dead without it.

“I was alone, didn’t want to get out of bed, eat or live.”

–CATHY, CENTER CLIENT

Organizational Excellence Award

ILLINOIS PSYCHIATRIC SOCIETY HONORS THE CENTER

Cathedral Counseling Center was honored to receive the inaugural Organizational Excellence award from the Illinois Psychiatric Society on Saturday, January 18, 2014. The Center was recognized for our novel program and funding model that provides care to low-income residents and other underserved individuals who would otherwise fall through the cracks.

As a local branch of the American Psychiatric Association, the Illinois Psychiatric Society has served as the voice of psychiatrists in Illinois for 75 years, representing approximately 1,100 physician members trained in the treatment of mental illness.

IPS President, Linda Gruenberg, DO, presents award to Executive Director Maureen R. Kelly, LCSW (right).

(Continued on page 6)
Dear Friends,

Some years ago, I heard the late Irish poet, Seamus Heaney, laugh at his own foolishness in agreeing to give a commencement address: “All I have learned about living can be summarized in three bits of advice—Get started, keep going, and when you fall down get started again.”

The audience laughed and nodded in appreciation of Heaney’s simple wisdom. I thought of his words on the morning of January 8, when we learned that a pipe several floors above us had frozen and burst, and that our beautiful, newly expanded Center was several inches deep in what we reminded ourselves was clean, hot water. Thanks to the quick response of our operations director, Donna Van Nett, the Garland Building management, and Pepper Construction, the water was gone by mid-morning and repairs were completed by the end of January. All offices, even those that had been the most badly damaged, are now back in use.

During those weeks, I was struck by the resilience and generosity of both staff and clients. Donna and Clinical Director Cindy Walls moved people into unaffected offices that had to be accessed by back routes, but down the halls I only heard words of explanation and sympathy, no complaints and some laughter.

Isn’t that the best we can ask of our clients and ourselves? That when life challenges us, as it always will—with dismal weather, natural disasters, and personal losses—we take a deep breath, remember to be grateful, and take the next step?

Ways of developing better resilience through the therapeutic relationship is the focus of our professional development seminar series this year, and our growing dialectical behavior group therapy program. Thank you for all you do to help us keep going and start over and over again.

Sincerely,

Maureen R. Kelly, LCSW
Executive Director

PS. Please save these dates: April 10th with author David MacLean, and October 2nd for our 40th anniversary gala! See back panel for details.
Finding the right therapist can be difficult. Even for those of us with adequate health insurance coverage, it can be overwhelming to find good care. Web searches produce scores of names and phone numbers, raising logical questions and conflicted feelings.

Who is this professional? How much will it cost? When can I see them? Is this really going to work? What if I need medication? How long will I need to remain in treatment?

Here at the Center, our program provides professional, comprehensive mental health care, enabling people to get the help they need, people who otherwise might not be able to afford treatment. We are committed to providing private practice quality care on a sliding income-based scale—this includes our onsite psychiatric evaluations and medication management. Psychiatric services were added shortly after the Center was opened in 1974, and led by our first Medical Director, the late Dr. Bob Buchanan. Today, our medical team includes four board-certified psychiatrists: Medical Director Mark Gindi, MD, and Consulting Psychiatrists, Ashley Bassett, MD; Sandra Sheinin, MD; and Melanie Venable, MD.

“For some clients, psychotherapy or ‘talk therapy’ can be enough to help them through a difficult time; but for some, medication is needed to keep the front brain ‘online’ long enough to be able to engage in therapy,” stated Executive Director Maureen R. Kelly, LCSW. “We’re proud to offer psychiatric services onsite.

Our psychiatrists work side-by-side with our therapists, helping evaluate and monitor each client’s needs.”

Some other sliding-scale programs lack continuity for low-income clients who require medication as part of treatment. A client may see a graduate student for weekly therapy at a community center, then have to travel to Stroger Hospital and wait for hours to receive a medication evaluation by the on-call psychiatrist. In this scenario, there is limited communication, if any, between clinician and psychiatrist, and the psychiatrist is managing this client’s case on top of other pressing demands. The client must advocate for his/her needs with regard to side effects and other concerns, and the distance and lack of connection may impede a coordinated treatment plan.

In contrast, our model allows clients who need medication evaluations to see a psychiatrist who works just down the hall from the clinician’s office, allowing for a team approach to treatment.

At a recent meeting, our clinicians had an opportunity for questions and answers with two members of our psychiatric team, Medical Director Mark Gindi, MD, and Consulting Psychiatrist Ashley Bassett, MD. Together they addressed topics that varied from the benefits of good “sleep hygiene,” to discussing recreational drug use with clients, to the win-win of client education.

Dr. Gindi shared his belief that good sleep is the cornerstone of mental health. He said, diagnostically, he starts by addressing the client’s sleep habits—or “sleep hygiene.” This can be as simple as establishing a new bedtime (Continued on page 7)
Our “West Wing” expansion and capital fundraising campaign was a priority for 2013, but we are not done yet! The mental health crisis in Illinois demanded our response and we’ve risen to the occasion. Our expansion adds 5,700 square feet to our Chicago Loop offices, and doubles our impact in the coming years as we add to our services, allowing us to treat nearly 2,000 people annually.

In October 2013, we hosted an open house, ribbon-cutting and blessing of our expanded facility. Almost 100 people filled our new conference room to capacity—and enjoyed tours and festivities.

To date, we’ve raised nearly $920,000 of our $1,000,000 target—but the actual total cost of our expansion is $1,200,000. We continue to receive gifts from our community of friends, and encourage you—if you haven’t already given to the West Wing—to make a gift today. Visit cathedralcounseling.org to give online, or contact Kristin Schmidt, Director of Development, at 312-252-9500 x115.

Many thanks, Jon.

After more than 11 years on Cathedral Counseling Center’s board of directors, Jon Hagstrom stepped down as he had served—quietly, thoughtfully, responsibly. But he leaves big shoes to fill. Jon was a steadying presence during years of great growth and change—two major facility acquisitions, capital campaigns and construction projects—and when he endorsed these plans, usually after asking the hard questions, we all felt much more confident.

Vice President Christine Fisher described Jon this way:
“Jon was always the calm, sensible voice of reason on the board and our financial conscience—like the rudder on our ship.

When I joined the board I could tell he cared passionately about the continued health of the organization, but he didn’t say much or seek the limelight. No matter what the topic or plan, he just wanted to make sure we stayed on track financially and kept our debt manageable so the financial security of the organization would not be threatened. He gave us much needed business and financial perspective during a period of frenetic growth. He was also personally generous. He and his wife Norma even hosted a lobster dinner as a fundraiser and a ‘friend-raiser’ in their home. Jon was a great, kind, practical and smart board member during a critical period for the Center. We appreciate his wisdom and guidance, and we will miss him a lot.”

WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Gaurava Agarwal, MD, Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine
The Rev. Kevin Goodman, Assisting Priest, St. Chryostom’s
Derek Neathery, Partner, Quarles & Brady, LLP
Alison White, CPA, Alison White & Associates
We want to acknowledge the invaluable contribution made by the law firm, Quarles & Brady LLP, to our recent West Wing expansion by providing all legal work pro bono. Several Quarles lawyers, led by Board Vice President Christine Fisher, a real estate partner, spent more than 250 hours, valued at more than $100,000, offering extensive advice in a variety of areas, including structuring and negotiating the West Wing acquisition, advising the Center on its consultants’ contracts, and closing a $1.1 million acquisition and construction loan. Quarles also successfully handled appeal of the Center’s sales tax exemption denial, and is currently working on the property tax exemption for the West Wing.

“They went above and beyond. Their incredible team worked tirelessly for the good of our mission—and helped us achieve our vision of expanding. We couldn’t have done this without Quarles & Brady’s generosity and expertise,” stated Executive Director Maureen Kelly.

Community service is a major part of Quarles & Brady’s commitment to corporate social responsibility. Quarles supports representation of those who cannot afford legal assistance as a means to give back to the communities in which its attorneys practice. Support of an organization like the Center, which makes mental health care available to many, is aligned with these community goals. For its extensive pro bono and diversity initiatives, Quarles has received many awards from appreciative clients, various bar and other legal associations, and organizations that serve the public good.

Established in 1892, Quarles is a national law firm with more than 460 attorneys in eight offices. The firm serves clients in the areas of health care, bankruptcy, commercial litigation, corporate services, tax, environmental, intellectual property, labor and employment, product liability, real estate, and trust and estate law, along with numerous specialty areas within these categories such as tax exempt organization work. Its clients include household names like Bank of America, the MacArthur Foundation, GE, Harley-Davidson, UPS, the Donnelley Foundation, the Driehaus Foundation, and the Field Museum of Natural History.
Finding ourselves in a newly expanded space this year led to some interesting questions about what it means to be rooted, as mental health professionals, in our work. In the spirit of re-grounding ourselves, we introduced this year’s workshop theme, “The Elements of Treatment.” Starting last fall in our first workshop, “Ethics in Clinical Practice: Monitoring the Use of Self,” on Saturday, October 19, we looked at ethical questions in clinical practice. Dr. Terry Northcut of Loyola University’s School of Social Work joined Shisha Amabel, LCSW, Cathedral Counseling Supervisor and Staff Therapist in a discussion about the importance of consultation and how over-identifying with clients, financial matters and other interpersonal factors can sometimes obscure our work. More than 35 attendees were present, offered lively case examples and described the presenters as thoughtful and accessible.

Two additional Friday sessions, 9 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., continue the conversation about essentials of clinical work.

“The Relationship in Treatment: Building a Connection,” on Friday, February 21, examined the dimensions of the therapeutic alliance. Bruce Koff, LCSW, Therapist and Co-founder of Live Oak, and Leigh Rocklin, LCPC, Staff Therapist here at Cathedral Counseling Center, were featured.

Finally, for our spring workshop on Friday, April 18, we turn our attention to “Vitality: Gaining and Sustaining Traction in Treatment.” Psychiatrist and Cathedral Counseling Center Medical Director Mark Gindi, MD, and Staff Therapist Katherine Carrane, LCSW, will discuss the phenomena of therapist boredom and “stuck” clients.

We hope you will join us for another stimulating morning! For more information or to register, please visit cathedralcounseling.org/development/workshop_series.html or contact Nina Riccardi, Director of Professional Development, at 312-252-9500 x146.
medication. Once the individual is sleeping well, he said, this helps them address what is “really going on.” He shared medical research that indicates newer technology—including TVs, laptops, tablets and smartphones—stream wavelengths of blue light that can mimic daylight. Looking at these screens before trying to sleep can disrupt your circadian rhythm, making it harder for you to fall asleep. Dr. Gindi wisely quipped, “Smart phones are the worst thing to happen to sleep since jobs.” Both Dr. Bassett and Dr. Gindi recommend stopping screen time at least 30 minutes before you want to fall asleep, and ideally one to two hours before.

As marijuana is legalized for medical use in Illinois, and recreational use elsewhere, clinicians wanted to know how to address use of the drug when clients may need medication as part of their treatment. Dr. Gindi tells his patients “we’ll never know” if the medication is working if pot is used while in treatment. Dr. Bassett urges clients to evaluate their relationship with the drug, as like alcohol, it is often used to self-medicate.

Dr. Bassett respects clients who make an effort to educate themselves about their diagnosis, but encourages them to “think about the source.” There is a lot of information available online, and recommends accredited websites like those of the Mayo Clinic, National Institutes of Mental Health, or the National Alliance for Mental Illness, rather than personal blogs or message boards.

Both Drs. Bassett and Gindi are honest with clients who resist medication in treatment. “Like talk therapy, it’s a resource or a tool,” said Dr. Gindi, “One sometimes needs to divest meaning from taking a medication. If you were a diabetic and I needed to prescribe insulin, we wouldn’t have this complex of a conversation about what it means to rely on a medication.”

Dr. Bassett encourages her clients to put it in perspective. “You’ve spent 24 years without this medication—why don’t we try 6 weeks on and see how you feel?” In the end, she says, “Instilling hope is part of our job,” that helping clients at the Center achieve a “fuller self” is the goal of treatment.
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Save the Date for These Upcoming Events

David Stuart MacLean, author of “The Answer To The Riddle Is Me”
APRIL 10TH, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.
Great new book reading, talk and signing. Tickets $10, or $30 with a signed book. To purchase tickets, visit www.events.org/david or call Nina Riccardi, Director of Professional Development, 312-252-9500 x 146.

OCTOBER 2ND, 6 – 10 p.m.
40TH ANNIVERSARY GALA

Fabulous at 40!
Save the date to celebrate 40 years of service and community!
Open Bar • Seated Dinner • Auctions • Raffle • Entertainment

If you are interested in sponsorship opportunities or donating auction items, please contact Kristin Schmidt, Director of Development, at 312-252-9500 x115.