Oregon Behavioral Health Support Program

Member Newsletter

Issue 7: May 2022



Celebrating Treatment, Celebrating You!



May was Mental Health Awareness Month. We dedicate this special issue of the newsletter to you and all you do.

If you're reading this, it means you've done one of the hardest and most important things you can – getting mental health treatment and support. It's not easy to ask for help. It's not easy to fight society's stigma around mental health issues and treatment. It's not easy to fight through the pain and shame that we may face. But you're doing it. And whether you're new to treatment, or have been in it for years, it's time to celebrate YOU.

Mental Health Awareness Month

Each May the National Alliance for Mental Health (NAMI), SAMHSA and other organizations promote awareness and education about mental health during May.

Did you Know?

Mental health is as important as physical health.

Nearly 1 in 5 Americans has a mental health issue and about 1 in 20 has a serious mental illness.[1,2]

Mental health awareness month started in 1949 by the organization, Mental Health America to raise awareness about mental health.[3]

Supporting others can actually benefit you and your health. A study found that giving support reduces stress-related activity in your brain.[4]

For More information, please visit:
National Alliance for Mental Health (NAMI): https://bit.ly/3sJbzjk
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: https://bit.ly/3lnyJHS

Comagine Health

For Your Health

We're in the midst of allergy season here in Oregon and COVID-19 cases are rising again. Below are some tips for feeling well and staying healthy:

- Remember to take your prescribed medications
- Talk to your doctor if you need help managing allergy symptoms
- Talk to your doctor about getting a COVID-19 booster
- Socially distance when possible
- Consider wearing a mask in crowded indoor spaces or avoid crowds when possible
- Get tested for COVID-19 if you feel sick (fever, body aches, sore throat, etc.)

For the latest about COVID-19 in Oregon, see https://govstatus.egov.com/OR-OHA-COVID-19.

Member Success Stories

A Lamp Under a Bushel Still Shines
By Geoff



I spent many years struggling with my mental illness; having to cross state lines so I didn't get a record in the system. I worked to try and keep my voices and spirits a secret from everyone. With all this I still had hope. Any Hope is good hope! In order to enter into society, I had to be treated. Accepting care and avoiding the fight with psychiatric treatment, without giving into the system, was part of my success! Suicide has been a part of my life too, but I made a promise to stay alive and I have been able to keep that promise! Last year, I survived a near death experience when I walked away from my group home, was off my medications and my symptoms got worse; I even experienced the death of my soul. A good Samaritan found me unconscious on the street in the snow and called 911. I never had a chance to learn who that person was, but I owe them my life, heart and my soul.

In the past year, I have reached two big goals. The first was managing my symptoms enough to earn my peer passes after being in secure programs for more than a decade. I like being able to go into the community on my own. The second goal was to play my guitar more and I have worked so hard on my music. I practiced every day that I felt up to it. I worked on my chords, my lyrics and my concepts of the message of my music. Although I have played guitar for over 40 years, I love to learn and have taken both zoom and in-person music lessons during COVID. My next goal is to learn to sight read better. With the final DVD I put out, I was able to stay with the blues. Here is a link to one of my YouTube videos: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xRytP1pvNfU

I am so grateful to be living where I am, to be working towards my goals and to have the support of my family and my staff.

Never give up hope and never give up on your goals!
– Geoff

---

[1] National Institute of Mental Health. Mental Illness. Available at: https://bit.ly/3lo70He

[2] NAMI. 202 Mental Health by the Numbers. Available at: https://bit.ly/3FYhUg3

[3] Leigh Center for Clinical Research. The Inspiring History of Mental Health Awareness Month. Available at: https://bit.ly/3sK7xHk

[4] Inagaki TK, Bryne Haltom KE, Suzuki S, et al. The Neurobiology of Giving Versus Receiving Support: The Role of Stress-Related and Social Reward-Related Neural Activity. Psychosom Med. 2016. Available at: https://bit.ly/3wqZD88

Member Success Stories cont.



Ricki

Ricki surpassed his goal of reducing his cigarette use from a pack a day to half of a pack. He completed his goal in February and then set a goal to quit completely. Ricki was proud to announce that he quit cigarettes completely as of April 17, 2022.

"I'm doing it for my health," he said. I quit 11 days ago and I'm feeling good. I'm refusing to do that anymore."

Ricki said that his faith and prayer played a big part in his ability to quit smoking, along with practicing other replacement behaviors and coping skills. "I have been playing my guitar a lot lately too. It's something that keeps me in a good mood."

Also, Ricki went from feeling unsure in the kitchen to now making at least his breakfast every day and dinner for the whole house once a week. Ricki has been an active participant in his program and gets along well with housemates. They have been supportive of Ricki on his journey. "My peers have been encouraging me to quit. They help distract me and take my mind off things.

Ricki's Comagine Health case manager said, "When I met Ricki, it was clear that he wanted to change, but felt like it was a long road ahead of him to meet his goals. I encouraged him to take it one day at a time and make small, steady changes. It can be disheartening when you feel like you're making big strides but have a setback. Consistency is key."

She said that Ricki was able to gradually reduce his cigarette use over time, which helped him achieve this success and make it sustainable. He has had an excellent attitude toward meeting his goals, despite numerous setbacks and challenges. Ricki's house manager stated, "He's an inspiration to us. We're very proud of him and his accomplishments."

We Want to Hear from You

If you would like to be featured in the newsletter, please talk to your Comagine Health care manager or care coordinator.

We welcome your suggestions for this newsletter. Send your ideas to ORBHSupport@comagine.org.



We're Here for You

We're here to support you. Please contact us with any questions or concerns.

- Call us at 888-416-3184.
- If you use TTY/TDD, you can call us by dialing 711 and then our phone number: 888-416-3184.
- Send an email to ORBHSupport@comagine.org.
- Send us a message by using our contact form: https://comagine.org/program/oregon-behavioral-health-support/contact

Translation

This newsletter is also available on our website in Spanish: https://comagine.org/resource/2160

and English: https://comagine.org/resource/2159

If you would like a copy in another language, please let us know by email us: ORBHSupport@comagine.org.