

Who's In Control?

Whisman beats depression and builds confidence through Peninsula programs

When you are 11 years old, you are supposed to be riding your bike, having adventures and counting the days till Christmas. You are supposed to be learning new things, going places and dreaming big dreams.

But when Lindy Whisman was 11 years old, there wasn't much she could think about, do, or enjoy. She was suffering from intense migraines, and already on a path that would lead to crippling depression. Multiple health issues forced young Lindy into pain management.

She began taking medications, living a somewhat sequestered existence, and subsequently began to feel that she had lost control of her life. By the time she came to Peninsula as an adult, Lindy had already been through several therapy programs with only limited success, and had been having suicidal thoughts for years.

"It was like a deep hole," Lindy explains. "I just fell into it, and I couldn't get back out."

That changed when she began therapy at Peninsula. Her therapist called in Peninsula Recovery Services Manager Mary Nelle Osborne, PhD, who recommended the Recovery Education Center (REC) at Peninsula Lighthouse.

"I was very open to it, because I had no hope for myself, in any aspect of my life," Lindy says. "They say that your reality is what you make of it, and my reality seemed black."

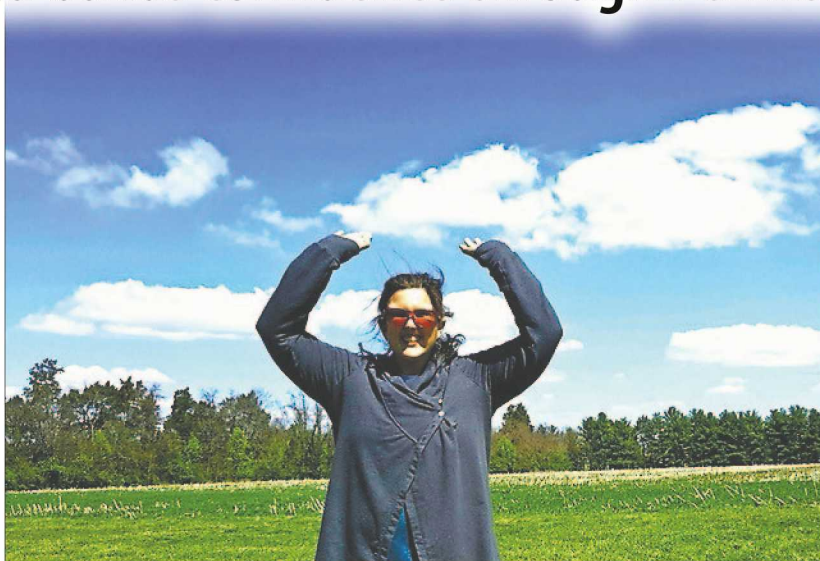
Osborne explains REC is a program

that provides an encouraging environment where those with mental illness can get on the right track for a successful future, and enjoy a better quality of life. Participants are encouraged to work toward spiritual, mental, emotional and physical well-being.

"We hear again and again how REC students start to feel hopeful again, and we see them start to rebuild their lives using the information they are learning and the support of peers in a safe community," Osborne says. "The REC program is a living laboratory where individuals are encouraged to put into practice what they are learning."

Lindy's first goals in the program were to lessen her depression and to better manage her anger toward herself. REC helped her develop a Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP®) to pinpoint what triggers her depression, anxiety, and even those suicidal thoughts, nailing down specific coping mechanisms for when those triggers happen.

"I learned that I could actually have control over some things in my life," Lindy says. "I started making choices for myself, and I felt freedom like I'd never felt before."



Lindy Whisman is in control of her own mental health thanks to the Recovery Education Center at Peninsula Lighthouse.

the difference is staggering. "It's like I woke up and I started breathing!" Lindy says. "I've found that I have a great amount of strength within myself."

Gone are the feelings of isolation, and gone are the self-imposed restrictions. "On my best days, I know that I can do anything I want," Lindy laughs.

"I've learned how to be grateful, and that was a huge turning point," Lindy says. "When I have a negative thought, I try to turn it into a positive, and that has made a world of difference for me."

Simple things that used to cause a sense of panic within her aren't so threat-

ening anymore, like walking into a crowd of people, or striking up a conversation with someone she's never met before. Lindy says it's as if new doors are magically opening up in front of her, and she now has the skills and the support to walk through those doors.

Lindy is living independently, and while some days are harder than others, every new day is always filled with hope. That's something she didn't have before.

"The professionals at Peninsula held out hope for me until I had some of my own," Lindy says. "I would tell anyone to go there – and I do."

To learn more about the Recovery Education Center and other outpatient services at Peninsula, call 865-970-9800 or visit peninsulabehavioralhealth.org.



Mary Nelle Osborne, PhD

Peninsula Outpatient Centers

For people experiencing mild to severe mental health issues, Peninsula Outpatient Centers provide a wide range of services including individual and group therapy, support groups and medication management. With outpatient centers in Knox, Loudon, Sevier and Blount counties, Peninsula serves individuals of all ages across East Tennessee. Each patient meets with Peninsula clinical staff at his or her first appointment to determine the best course of treatment. A patient's plan may include daily medication, psychotherapy, case management or a combination of these.

The physicians at Peninsula Outpatient Centers may recommend an Intensive Outpatient Program to provide more concentrated care than traditional outpatient sessions. For six to eight weeks, participants in the Adult or Adolescent Intensive Outpatient Programs come to the outpatient center in Knoxville four to five times a week to address issues that need intense treatment but do not require continuous care. These conditions include depression, anxiety disorders, anger management, ADHD, relationship problems, grief and loss and self-injurious behavior.

Alcohol and drug treatment is available through the Adult Intensive Outpatient Program at the Peninsula

Lighthouse campus. For women suffering from addiction, Peninsula Outpatient offers Women in Treatment, a program for uninsured women age 18 to 64. Through this program, women can work on self-esteem, trauma, communication techniques, body image issues and other topics that are vital to well-being and happiness.

If you or a loved one is experiencing any symptoms of mental health issues, visit www.peninsulabehavioralhealth.com or call Peninsula Outpatient Centers at 865-970-9800.



Recovery is key

In August 2010, leaders in the behavioral health field, consisting of people in recovery from mental health and substance use problems along with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), met to explore the development of a common, unified working definition of recovery. Ten guiding principles of recovery were identified.*

- Hope
- Person driven
- Many pathways
- Holistic
- Peer support
- Relational
- Culture
- Addresses trauma
- Strengths/Responsibility
- Respect

*Recovery is cited, within Transforming Mental Health Care in America, Federal Action Agenda: First Steps, as the "single most important goal" for the mental health service delivery system.

Recovery Education Center

If you struggle with ongoing effects of mental illness, it helps to have a plan of action. Peninsula's Recovery Education Center (REC) helps participants discover what triggers negative and harmful feelings, then zeroes in on specific coping mechanisms to use when those triggers arise.

REC makes use of a Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP), an evidence-based program that gives participants the tools they need to take on life. The process starts with helping participants find hope, and a vision for the future.

Mary Nelle Osborne, PhD, Peninsula's recovery services manager, says REC is for those who have TennCare, or are enrolled in the Safety Net program, and are in various stages of recovery.

"Some are just beginning, and some are

well into addressing long-term habits or recovering from trauma," Osborne says. "Individuals are taught the key concepts of recovery in a culture of safety and respect."

Osborne says staff members repeatedly hear how the program is changing lives for the better. Some participants go back to complete their GEDs, go to college, get jobs, learn how to live sober lives, or volunteer in the community. "It is an honor to facilitate a program where the table is set, and the participants are eager to learn and change in front of your eyes," Osborne says.

The services of REC are available to the general public, and you don't have to be a Peninsula patient to enroll. For more information, visit peninsulabehavioralhealth.org, and click on Outpatient Services.

RECOVERY is a JOURNEY

Peninsula Recovery Education Center has a strong history of helping people with serious mental illness and substance abuse move their lives forward into recovery. Dozens of classes provide support on the journey. See the complete class catalog at www.peninsulabehavioralhealth.com, or call (865) 970-9800 for more information.

