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At NorthStar Regional, our purpose is to help those struggling with mental health or substance use disorders move forward in hope.

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## Recovery is Not The Goal

by Hal Baumchen, PsyD, LP, LADC - President of NorthStar Regional

I've spent the better part of my 30+ year career helping people recover from substance use and mental health disorders, so my saying that recovery is not the goal likely comes as a bit of a surprise. The goal for people is as varied and different as the people themselves.

For some people, the goal might be to live without shame, become an electrical engineer, go back to school, raise their own children, get their license back, be honest, like themselves again, restore trust in a relationship, get a good job or get married.

Recovery is not the goal, it is the avenue to reach the goal. For most of my clients, sobriety and long-term stable mental health recovery is the only road that makes their goal attainable.

### Finding What's Important

You might ask which is of these is the most important, the goal or the avenue that will take me there? We need them both. They are inseparable. Without the goal, we work diligently to go toward an unsure and unclear destination.

Unclear goals quickly evaporate and we often lack commitment and motivation to do the necessary hard work. If the goal is vague or confusing or ever-moving, we will give in and give up. But even the clearest goal requires the road to get there. Both are important and necessary.

### Making the Most of Every Recovery Opportunity

Mental health treatment and recovery might be the avenues that makes your goal possible. And treatment just might make recovery possible. Don't regret it or fight it. Use it to your advantage. Every part of recovery can be leveraged to enable you to reach your goal, to become the person you're destined to become.

Get your treatment to work and get it to work for you. This is the avenue to get you where you want to go. Don't fuss about others who are also on the avenue with you. Maybe they are ahead of you, or behind you. Reach back to help someone move forward and reach forward to gain guidance and support.

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## Meet Mark Johnson, LADC



Mark B. Johnson Sr., BS, LADC, is a graduate of Metropolitan State University and a student at Adler Graduate School in the Master of Arts, Marriage and Family Therapy program.

Mark has worked in various substance use disorder treatment facilities in the Twin Cities area that serve a diverse group of populations and modalities. He is a consultant for Native American Curriculum Training for Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Programs in Minnesota in association with DHS. He is also a trainer, presenting curriculum to various treatment programs, facilitates groups and discussions and provides individuals with a support network.

Mark entered the field of substance disorder treatment to give back to his Native American community and provide best practices in cultural competency to this unique population. He works in the NorthStar Regional Co-Occurring Intensive Outpatient Program in Chanhassen.

### NSR News Snippets

- The new **Women's Residential Treatment Center** featured in last month's *NSR Beacon* is nearly full and is helping women on the road to recovery. "We're thrilled to be able to provide this much-needed service in Carver County," said James "JJ" Johnson, NSR's Residential Program Director.
- Construction on the **Shakopee Men's Residential Treatment Center** is on schedule, with a planned opening mid-June or early July.
- Dr. Baumchen will be a **presenter at the MARRCH 2019 Spring Retreat** held May 16-17 in Nisswa, MN. His topic is "Implementing Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Strategies for the Treatment of Anxiety and Depression."



## Stop the Stigma of Mental Illness



Mental illnesses are treatable health conditions very common in the world today.

They can affect anyone, regardless of age, race, religion, or income. But people are still afraid to talk about them due to shame, misunderstanding, negative attitudes, and fear of discrimination.

One in four Americans experience a mental illness each year. Most people live with the symptoms of a mental illness for 10 years before seeking treatment, largely due to the stigma. The sooner people get treatment, the greater their chances of recovery.

Mental illnesses are biological conditions that can be treated, just like cancer and diabetes. They cannot be overcome through "will power" and are not related to a person's character or intelligence.

The best treatments for serious mental illnesses are highly effective. In fact, more than 70 percent of symptoms are reduced and people feel better when following their treatment plans.

#### A Mental Illness Is:

- **A medical condition** disrupting a person's thinking, feeling, mood, ability to relate to others, and daily functioning.
- **Common.** One in four people will develop a mental illness in their lifetime.
- **Treatable.** Most mental illnesses can be treated effectively with medication, therapy, diet, exercise, and support. Recovery is possible.

#### A Mental Illness Is Not:

- **Imaginary.** Mental illnesses are very real and very common.
- **Something to "get over."** Mental illnesses cannot be willed away.

- **A character flaw.** Mental illnesses are medical conditions that do not define us.

#### An Illness Can Be Caused By:

- **Trauma.** Sometimes traumatic events can play a role in triggering a mental illness.
- **Chemical imbalance.** Chemical or biochemical changes in the brain can be factors.
- **Genetics.** Some mental illnesses get passed along from one generation to the next.
- **Environment.** Exposure to toxins, illnesses, drugs, or alcohol can affect the developing brain in utero.

## **Recovery is Not the Goal, continued from page 1**

### **Taking the First Step**

Nobel Prize winning author Saul Bellow said, "Whoever wants to reach a distant goal must take small steps." The long hard work of recovery makes your goal possible and of course is accomplished like a journey on any road — one small step at a time. As counselors at NorthStar Regional, we applaud the persistent effort it takes to make consistent progress and offer encouragement for each step along the way.

### **Clarify Your Goal**

As you start treatment, be careful and deliberate in planning out your reasons for doing the hard work of recovery. Take some time to think through your long-term purpose and priorities. Creating a goal enables you to plan your route

and envision the avenue you'll use to arrive at your destination. Additionally, use the importance of your own goals as motivation to stay on task.

### **Build Your Road**

In one sense, to reach your goals in life and relationships, you'll need to create your own road. Your recovery program is the avenue that is needed to accomplish your desire. Dream big, then do the work to make the dream happen.

### **Keep Your Motivation High**

Along the way you'll encounter difficulties, naysayers, missed opportunities, and bad breaks. Brush these off. Stay focused on where you want to end up, not just where you are now. Wayne Gretzky, the famous hockey player said, "I skate to where the puck is going to be, not where it's been." Look forward with your future goal firmly etched in your mind and keep moving toward it.

### **Get Back Up**

If you slip, relapse, or fall, get up. Try it again. Get help, buy better shoes, or borrow a cane — but get up! The fall may be the most painful part, but it's the failure to get up that does the most damage.

### **Celebrate Progress**

With the approaching goal of a better life crystalizing in your focus, congratulate yourself for progress made. There will likely be no thunderous applause coming from the crowd. This may be a service you'll need to supply for yourself. Your last positive step is both encouragement and proof to yourself that you can take another.

### ***Recovery is a Journey. Enjoy the Ride!***

*Dr. Hal Baumchen is the president of NorthStar Regional. A licensed psychologist and licensed alcohol and drug counselor, he has over 30 years of counseling experience.*



## **NorthStar Regional Provides Individual and Group Mental Health Counseling**

Depression and anxiety are among the most common mental health issues troubling many people today. NorthStar Regional provides kind, compassionate solutions, in both individual and group settings, for individuals, marriages and families, teens/adolescents, and children.

The NorthStar Regional counseling team of therapists includes Psychologists, Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists, Licensed Independent Clinical Social Workers, and Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselors. One of our therapists can provide the help you need with encouragement and understanding.



Here are some of the areas we address and the types of counseling we provide:

- Addictions & Substance Abuse
- Adjustment Disorders
- Anger Management
- Anxiety
- Attachment Disorders
- Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD/ADHD)
- Childhood Behavioral Issues
- Christian Counseling
- Depression
- Developmental Issues
- Divorce/Separation Issues
- Eating Disorders
- Emotional Regulation
- Family Therapy
- Grief
- Learning Disorders
- Mood Disorders
- Parenting Skills
- Physical/Sexual Abuse
- Play Therapy
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Relationship Conflicts
- Sleep Disorders
- Stress Management
- Workplace Conflicts

Our staff can help you, a friend or family member find a counselor that meets your needs. To make an appointment for individual counseling, call 952-974-3999.

NorthStar Regional's mental health group programs provide a safe environment for those needing either intensive mental health therapy or as a follow-up to another group program. To learn more about our mental health group programs, call Kristi, the mental health group program patient care coordinator, at (952) 474-0803.



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## Resources Available Online - NorthStar Compass and Inspiration

The *NorthStar Compass* and *NorthStar Inspiration* educational publications are written by Dr. Hal Baumchen, NorthStar Regional's president and clinical director.

The *NorthStar Compass* addresses mental health topics from a clinical perspective, and The *NorthStar Inspiration* does so from a Christian faith-based perspective.

The *NorthStar Compass* series includes topics such as:

- Overcoming Depression
- Overcoming Worry
- Rebuilding Trust
- Improving the Quality of Your Marriage
- Managing Perfectionism

*NorthStar Inspiration* series includes topics such as:

- The Power of Forgiveness
- Establishing Your Identity
- Guarding Against Bitterness
- Building One Another Up
- Leaving a Godly Legacy

PDF versions of both publications are available on our website, [www.northstarregional.com](http://www.northstarregional.com), under Resources/Publications.

**OVERCOMING DEPRESSION**  
by Hal Baumchen, PsyD, LP, LADC

**WHAT IS DEPRESSION?**  
Depression is a disturbance or disorder of one's mood and emotional state. It is characterized by persistent sadness, heaviness, despair, or feelings of emptiness. Depression can be brought on by events of life, both inside and sometimes outside. The depressed often believe life is bad and will not improve. Their thoughts are colored by negative, pessimistic views of themselves, their future, and the circumstances surrounding them.

**WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER**  
There should be no shame in feeling depressed. It is an inevitable part of our maturing process. Approximately 15 percent of the United States (about 10 percent of all adults) will suffer from depression in any given year, according to the National Institute of Health. Only a third will seek treatment for their condition. Pride keeps many people from seeking help when they need it, and the consequences are often predictable and tragic.

**SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS**  
Depression can start very slowly. Others may notice changes in the depressed person before they see or feel them. Eating or sleeping habits, weight, or energy levels may change.

**NORTHSTAR COMPASS**  
Navigating Toward Better Emotional Health

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**THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS**  
by Hal Baumchen, PsyD, LP, LADC

**WHAT IS FORGIVENESS?**  
Forgiveness is a wonderful concept. If I owe a man \$1000 and he forgives me the debt, I no longer owe him any money. In true and complete forgiveness, we now have a restored relationship with him. It is not that he chooses to give me more time to pay off, or that he chooses to forgive me the debt, but that he forgives the debt. It is as if I never owed him money.

I need forgiveness and I need to extend it to others. It is the single most curative healing agent in any relationship. When you choose to not forgive someone, you are choosing to hold on to your resentment and allowing bitterness a foothold in your life.

**THE NEED TO FORGIVE OTHERS**  
Because we were all born to experience love and have made mistakes ourselves, we all need forgiveness. "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23) Many of those around us, even those with close relationships, have offended and hurt us. Our relationships are damaged by this breach of trust and need healing and restoration.

**THE OFFER TO US**  
We have failed God's expectation of us. Yet He has