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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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Ever Grateful

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

A grateful heart is a beginning of greatness. It is an expression of humility. It is a foundation for the development of such virtues as prayer, faith, courage, contentment, happiness, love, and well-being. ~ James E. Faust

Positive and optimistic people are often grateful for what they have and spend little time reviewing what they've lost. The power of a grateful attitude has been common knowledge for centuries. Today we know that an attitude of gratitude has many benefits, including improving psychological health and sleep, reducing toxic emotions, increasing happiness, reducing depression, and raising self-esteem.

What else can gratitude do?

Our groups at the treatment center begin each day by reviewing several things for which we are grateful. It's easy to hit the low-hanging fruit, such as being thankful for socks, coffee, and ice cream, but it is more meaningful to acknowledge people who have helped your recovery. Many of our clients appreciate this practice and take it with them after treatment

ends. It has value far beyond what most people would ever imagine.

It's a mood-booster. Social scientist Robert Emmons developed a 21-day program for increasing thankfulness in his book, *Gratitude Works! A 21-Day Program for Creating Emotional Prosperity*. It involves keeping a gratitude journal, writing letters of gratitude to kind people, and sharing those letters in a face-to-face meeting to express thanks. People who went through the program said they felt more optimistic, more connected to others, and described better moods. Taking note of everyday thoughtfulness boosts relationships.

It's a relationship-strengthener. When couples kept gratitude journals, chronicling things their partner did that they appreciated, there was a measurable positive change in their perception of their partner. It was a change that lasted in part because it translated to a greater willingness to talk through concerns. Couples said "It really transforms your perception of

Meet Jaclyn Amys, MS, LPCC



Jaclyn Amys is a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor (LPCC). She has a master's degree from Winona State University and specializes in trauma-focused counseling, Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT), and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). Her areas of clinical interest include: trauma, depression, anxiety, bi-polar, and co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders.

Jaclyn uses humor to build a positive relationship with her clients and believes it is crucial for the client to be an active participant in the healing process. She also specializes in psychoeducation to increase awareness and decrease stigma.

Jaclyn sees clients for individual mental health counseling at our office at Two Twelve Medical Center, 111 Hundertmark Rd, Suite 450, Chaska, Minnesota, 952-368-0450.

Bridges Aftercare at NorthStar Regional

Everyone who has completed the Bridges at Stone Creek mental health intensive outpatient program is welcome and encouraged to join us for Aftercare.



In the Bridges Aftercare Program, clients will review skills taught in the Bridges program, learn new skills, see some familiar faces from their recovery journey here at NorthStar Regional, and make new connections.

The Bridges Aftercare Program meets Mondays, from 5:00-6:30 p.m. For more information, please call 952-474-0803 or email kristi.riddle@northstarregional.com.

The Bridges Aftercare Program is located at 7945 Stone Creek Drive, Suite 10, Chanhassen, Minnesota.

What to Expect from Psychotherapy



by Jamie Cox, MSW, LICSW

Psychotherapy, also known as "talk therapy" or "therapy," is more than just talking to get things off your chest. It is speaking with a trained mental health provider – or "therapist" – in a safe and confidential environment. Having learned about and treated people in similar situations to yours, therapists can understand your particular circumstances.

Therapists are familiar with the symptoms you're experiencing and how they are disrupting your life. They know what questions to ask and might pose questions that you've never heard before. Your NorthStar Regional therapist will partner with you to develop a treatment plan to meet your specific needs and life circumstances.

Consider therapy if an issue is causing distress or interferes with some part of your life. Ask yourself a few questions:

- Does thinking about or coping with the issue take up at least an hour each day?
- Does the issue cause embarrassment or make you want to avoid others?
- Has the issue caused your quality of life to decrease?

- Do you find yourself turning to drugs or alcohol as a way to deal with what's going on in your life?
- Have your relationships, work or school been negatively affected?
- Have you made changes in your life or developed habits to cope with the issue that have not helped or even made things worse?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, therapy may be a helpful option for you. In therapy you will learn more about yourself and find untapped motivation that can lead to improvement in all areas of life. Therapy can help you:

- Clarify your goals and set realistic steps to achieve them.
- Empower you to take action on your own.
- Improve your self-confidence.
- Establish more fulfilling relationships.
- Develop healthy coping skills.
- Improve your communication skills.
- Learn skills to manage future situations.
- Make sense of past events.

When you call NorthStar Regional, our friendly front desk staff will walk you



through the process of setting up an initial appointment. They will ask you some general questions to help match you with a therapist that is a good fit for you. All of our intake paperwork is done electronically, and the front desk team can email the paperwork to you ahead of time, allowing you to complete it in the comfort of your own home prior to coming in for your appointment.

During your first appointment, the therapist will ask a series of questions to gather information about your life in the past, what is currently going on and where you would like things to be. Appointments are either 45 or 60 minutes and typically occur once per week. Length of treatment depends heavily on your particular situation. Talk to your therapist about your estimated length of treatment.

To schedule your first appointment with a therapist who is kind, compassionate and effective, call NorthStar Regional at **952-974-3999** today.

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that person,” and “We naturally have this scarcity mentality. When we write a gratitude journal or express gratitude, we transform our perception of reality from one of scarcity to one of abundance.”

It enables you to bounce back from life’s setbacks. Studies of women undergoing treatment for breast cancer and veterans who have suffered post-traumatic stress show that keeping gratitude journals helped them get through difficult times more quickly. Psychologists call this resilience and it means the ability to bounce back. Resilient people take the worst life has to throw at them without allowing themselves to be defined by their setback. Optimism, forgiveness, and gratitude are all useful tools for building resilience.

It’s a depression fighter. One study found that the simple act of writing down three things participants were grateful for was as effective at increasing a sense of well-being as spending an hour in therapy. Another study found that suicidal patients assigned gratitude exercises showed clinically significant therapeutic improvement.

It helps you achieve your goals. Study participants who kept gratitude lists over two months were more likely to report completion of key goals. Grateful people report higher levels of

positive emotion, life satisfaction, vitality, optimism, and lower levels of depression and stress.

It is one of the fastest ways to achieve a good mood and one of the best ways to sustain it.

Practice Being Grateful

Like any lifestyle change, being grateful must be practiced. Begin by noticing what you have around you. In particular, notice who you have around you and how they have helped, encouraged, or supported you. Practice verbalizing your appreciation regularly.

Gratitude in Recovery

Remain humble and accepting. Be grateful for another chance to get your life back. Review what you are thankful for and be aware of how others have been kind to you. Living with a humble outlook and a healthy view of what you have and who you are helps your recovery go beyond behavior and into deep life change. It affects your mood positively and offers encouragement along the journey.

Taken from the book Reflections, which is available for purchase at JourneyToRecovery.com.



Dr. Hal Baumchen is the president and clinical director of NorthStar Regional. A licensed psychologist and licensed alcohol and drug counselor with over 30 years of counseling experience, he is the author of the Journey to Recovery curriculum series.

Sober Homes Help Extend Recovery



by Jason Vanderscoff, LADC, Chief Executive Officer

NorthStar Regional provides a continuum of care for co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders. Some of our clients spend their first 30 days in residential treatment followed by 3-5 months in an intensive outpatient program with housing. After completing IOP, many clients are eligible to live in one of our sober homes.



What is a Sober Home?

In the NorthStar Regional system, sober homes are residential houses with 4-5 bedrooms housing 6 adults and are available for clients who have completed phase 2 of our IOP program. While living in the home, clients continue with phase 3 of our program. Sober homes provide a transition from treatment to independent living in the community. These homes create a respectful place to practice new sober lifestyle habits and patterns. Because transitional housing is difficult to find and afford, and homelessness is a huge factor in relapse, these homes play a significant role in an ongoing recovery program.

How Does a Sober Home Help?

Sober homes make it easier to begin leading an ordinary life without falling back into addictive patterns. Our homes provide structure, accountability, and added recovery support. This helps residents improve daily living skills including strong work habits, increased responsibility, and positive relational interactions.

Regaining Independence

Living in a sober home equips residents to find work, manage legal problems, develop supportive recovery connections within the community, and restore damaged relationships. While living in the home, clients attend abstinence-based support groups. The residents buy and cook their own food, learn time management, and responsibly begin jobs or careers. These real-world skills increase independence and self confidence and make a solid recovery program even stronger.



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Insight for the JOURNEY
A daily inspiration for your recovery
Dr. Hal Baumchen

Insight for the JOURNEY is a daily email meditation designed to inspire and encourage. Whether you are a clinician or a client, you'll find recovery support on a wide variety of relevant topics. *Insight for the JOURNEY* is written by Dr. Hal Baumchen, a psychologist, a licensed clinical and drug counselor, a co-founder of the Recovery Connection, and author of the *Recovery Connection* and *Recovery Series*. Each new daily reading is filled with inspiration and information you need for the recovery journey.

A True View of You
How you are perceived can be important to your recovery. There may have been many people around you who did not believe in you. Many beliefs you hold about yourself are based on reflected messages received from people in the recovery journey.

Daily Insight for the Journey

This daily meditation by Dr. Hal is delivered by email or available on his blog at Journeyto-Recovery.com or on the NorthStar Regional Facebook page.

To receive Dr. Hal's Daily Insight in your inbox, visit northstarregional.com and go to Resources/Journey to Recovery and complete the subscription form.