



When mental health and substance use disorders occur together

By **THOMAS A. HULSLANDER**
For The Telegraph

Mental health disorders and substance use disorders are difficult singularly, but when an individual experiences both simultaneously life can become a struggle. Dual Diagnosis Treatment can tackle the complexity of these difficulties.

According to the Surgeon General, 1 in 4 adults will experience a mental health disorder at some point in his or her lifetime. Most of us are familiar with some of these challenges, such as depression, anxiety, PTSD and other mental health disorders. In addition, many people are aware of the existence of substance use disorders, especially with the opioid crisis that is affecting not only New Hampshire, but also the entire nation. What may not be as obvious is that it is possible for a person to experience both a mental health and a substance use disorder at

the same time. When this is the case, we consider the individual as having a “co-occurring” mental health disorder or a “dual diagnosis.” The good news is that there is a treatment available called Integrated Dual Diagnosis Treatment or IDDT. Focused on assisting people who have both a mental health and a substance use disorder, the IDDT model has been well researched and proven to be a very effective approach to helping people manage these co-occurring challenges. So, what makes IDDT unique in the field of mental health and substance use disorders? There are several characteristics that distinguish this ap-

proach from other more outdated ways of thinking about mental health and substance use. IDDT relies on a team approach. The IDDT team is comprised of staff members trained in various areas of expertise, including psychotherapy, medication, case management, community support and supportive employment. Clients participating in the IDDT program have access to as many of these services as they need or desire. IDDT clients also have the benefit of a team of experts consulting on a regular basis regarding the best way to be helpful. These consultations are focused on the client’s well-being. We have found

that the creative power of a group of experts consulting far exceeds what an individual therapist, or case manager, for example, is able to generate. We collaborate with our clients. Many of our clients may have an awareness or even a concern about their substance use but may not want to address their substance use in treatment. The IDDT approach says that’s okay. We understand that recovery from substance use disorders cannot occur until the individual is ready for change. Our staff will work to understand what is important to the individual clients and will work with them

HEALTH | PAGE A-5



Health

CONTINUED FROM | PAGE A-3

accordingly, while helping to manage challenges associated with their mental health diagnosis.

Abstinence is not required. While effective therapy is not possible at the time that a client is under the influence of a substance, we do not require complete abstinence or even sobriety to be an IDDT team client. We know how difficult managing a substance use disorder can be and we understand that relapse is real. Our goal is to meet individuals where they are on their own unique road to recovery.

Hope is at the heart of recovery. The IDDT team members of Greater Nashua Mental Health Center are compassionate about the work we do and the clients we work with. We maintain a hopeful stance and assist our clients in identifying natural resources within their lives. We believe in the work we do, in the ongoing training we receive, and most importantly, we believe in the possibilities within each and every one of our clients. Recovery is a challenging endeavor, but with the help of our caring professionals on the IDDT team, recovery is a very real outcome.

The IDDT team for Greater Nashua Mental Health Center is located with our other Substance Use Disorder programs (e.g., Drug Court, Intensive Out-patient Program [IOP], Individual and Group SUD services, etc.) at 440 Amherst Street in Nashua NH.

If you or a loved one are struggling with both a mental health and substance use disorder, please give us a call. Our compassionate and expert staff are ready and eager to work with you.

We offer a wide array of behavioral health pro-



Mental health issues can be compounded by substance abuse disorder, when the two simultaneously occur – they affect many facets of life. Treatment is possible.

grams, including treatment for substance use disorders, and for individuals challenged with both mental health and substance misuse simultaneously. Our services are available for all ages from children to older adults, and no one is ever turned away due to the inability to pay. In addition, we are the statewide providers of behavioral health services for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Don't go it alone. We're

here to help. Contact Greater Nashua Mental Health Center today. For an appointment call our intake line at (603) 402-1574. For general information call our main number at (603) 889-6147. Our videophone number is (603) 821-0073. To speak to someone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week if you are in crisis, call 1-800-762-8191.

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Greater Nashua Mental Health Center

at *Community Council*

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