RENFREW ONNECTIONS

HOPE, HELP & HEALING



Growth and change

ARE NATURAL AND INEVITABLE PARTS OF

life and recovery.

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6 Voices of Recovery

The past year and a half has shown us to expect the unexpected, as well as the importance of adapting to change. We have all had the collective experience of leaning in to tolerate different environments and experiences over the course of the pandemic, as there has been no other option. At this point, the transitions that once seemed so difficult may feel like our new normal, and we each have undoubtedly grown as a result.

During these difficult times, we have been able to focus more on what truly matters to us and hopefully be more in line with our values. We have stayed connected even when we cannot be together in-person and found new ways to interact. We have learned to celebrate moments, not with huge fanfare, but instead with meaningful gestures and messages. We have been able to get back

in touch with nature and some of us have even found a new appreciation for the outdoors. With less outside distractions, we have noticed more people feeling motivated and ready to work on themselves. Most importantly, treatment has been prioritized for many who have had a moment to slow down and address their mental health.

While we have all been faced with several challenges and hardships throughout the pandemic, it has also provided us with the incredible tool of awareness; the ability to view situations from different perspectives, ultimately resulting in personal growth. This skill can be applied to recovery as we learn to be flexible in our thinking patterns and disrupt previous habits that are harmful to our healing. I hope that we can acknowledge the changes we have gone through, no matter how big or small, and celebrate what they have brought about for each of us. Embracing these experiences will help us gain the confidence and resilience to battle future hurdles that may arise along the journey of recovery or in various seasons of life.

RENFREW CONNECTIONS STAFF

Erin Birely, LCPC
Alumni Services
Coordinator

Melissa Falzarano, MA Senior Marketing Coordinator



Erin Birely, LCPC

is the Alumni Services Coordinator for The Renfrew Center and the Team Leader at the Baltimore, MD site. Prior to joining Renfrew in 2016, her previous experience spanned across private practice, inpatient, partial, and intensive outpatient levels of care. Erin has worked in the field of eating disorder treatment since receiving her Master's degree in 2012. She enjoys working with people to make positive and long-lasting changes in life through therapy and building their emotional tolerance.

Our Collective Voice:

Letter from Renfrew's Founder and President, Samuel E. Menaged, JD

As 2021 begins to draw to its end, it brings with it a time for reflection. Many of us may find it astounding at how much our lives have changed as we let ourselves focus on this past year. So many new adjustments to our typical routines for work, school and yes, even recovery, have taken place quickly – often challenging our ability to "keep-up" and adapt. While our daily lives might look decidedly different than they did a few years ago, as recovery often teaches, change may be unavoidable and may, in the end, turn out, unexpectedly, to be for the better. Change can give us a fresh perspective on how we can better treat ourselves and serve our ever-changing needs.

And so in this issue of *Connections*, we are celebrating the new normal and the opportunities for positive change it has brought to The Renfrew Center's alumni community! Our new normal provides more online access than ever before and, of course, the ease of virtual connection eliminates barriers

such as lack of time for travel. In addition, a greater number of our alumni community members are now able to find support in these trying times, right from the comfort of home.

In 2021, we launched Renfrew@Home,Virtual Day and Intensive Outpatient Programming, available Nationwide, for eating disorder treatment. We're proud to share with you that 95% of our patients recommend Renfrew's virtual programming to a friend or loved one! Our Residential, BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ alumni continue to be provided with ongoing care through Virtual support groups as they continue their recovery journey.

We hope you'll continue to join us for our monthly Instagram Live series as well as other events and support opportunities.

While what we consider normal will surely continue to shift over the years, one thing is for certain: Renfrew and Alumni Services will be here to help you welcome—and celebrate—the wonderful opportunities for change it can bring.

James & Trumps

Samuel E. Menaged, JD is the Founder and President of The Renfrew Centers and The Renfrew Center Foundation. Mr. Menaged founded The Renfrew Center more than 35 years ago as the country's first residential treatment facility specializing in eating disorders. He is the past-President of the Board of the Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy and Action, an advocacy group based in Washington, DC and a board member of the Residential Eating Disorders Consortium. Mr. Menaged is a former healthcare attorney.

A New Norm for Everyone

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March 2020, it was disruptive to everyone in that the fear and uncertainties it instills in people's lives gave everyone a sense of uneasiness, restlessness and overwhelming sense of anxiety. I can still remember no one knew how long the social distancing policies were going to last, the travel bans, the masking, the work from home life...etc. The uncertainty of it all really created a looming cloud over our lives. At the time, being the only person in my friends and family group that had to leave my house and go to work every day was also difficult to sit with. "My new norm is quite different from others" — was a realization that hit me quite hard, as did my fellow coworkers at Residential sites.

During this challenging time, I've also learned so much about the individuals we treat and the population we serve. People came through our doors this past year because recovery has been put at risk, mental wellbeing has been at stake and the eating disorder has thrived in loneliness. I've learned about the incredibly tough times people have had to endure in isolation and the amplified emotional distress in recovery. Yet, we also see individuals who fight to stay connected to

themselves and to others. I see individuals who fight their way out of the isolation and feelings of loneliness. The profound truth that I am still in awe by is people's ability to build tolerance for the emotional distress that we are all in and shape our new norm during tumultuous change.

To all the individuals fighting their recovery every day and really to all of us, stay connected to yourself and to others. Take time to check in with yourself, practice mindfulness, create routines that allow you to stay grounded and feasible in the pandemic. Incorporate your routines into your new norm.



Wen-Jui (Maggie) Hsu LPC

is currently the interim
Team Leader at The Renfrew
Center of Philadelphia at
Spring Lane. She started
as a Primary Therapist, and
currently oversees Gray Team
therapist and monitors
treatment team collaboration
and patient care. Outside of
work, she enjoys traveling
(pre-pandemic), reading,
cooking, and playing with
her cats.



COLLEGE PROGRAMMIN

at The Renfrew Center of Coconut Creek, Florida

7700 Renfrew Lane Coconut Creek, FL 33073

Residential Eating Disorder Treatment

- Designated study time
- Individual work stations & group collaboration area
- Young adult and college life groups
- Access to educational resources
- Specialized staff member who serves as a ligison between treatment and your school

ENROLL TODAY!

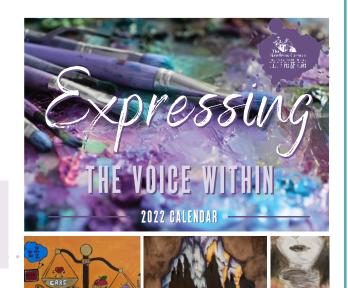
RENFREW'S 2022 ART CALENDAR - AVAILABLE SOON!

Each piece of artwork in this calendar was selected because it contains a deep truth that is illuminated in beauty through the visual language.

The pieces were chosen from thousands of compelling works of art that have been created in art therapy groups at The Renfrew Center.

Like all of our items for sale, the 2022 Art Calendar supports The Renfrew Center Foundation's mission of advancing eating disorders education, prevention, research, advocacy, and treatment.

MORE INFORMATION: WWW.RENFREWCENTER.COM



Shanté B.

Skyler S.

Beck L.

FROM THE RENFREW BLOG... PREAD THE FULL ARTICLE



4 Ways to Support a Loved One Who Has an Eating Disorder

Supporting a loved one who has an eating disorder is a difficult task. You want to help but may be scared of saying the wrong thing, which could create unnecessary stress and make the eating disorder even worse. Family, friends and partners, who are closest to those struggling with an eating disorder, can be powerful supports. So, it's important not to ignore, deny or minimize what's happening.

Although eating disorders often require professional, medical and psychological intervention, you can support the recovery process through the following steps.

- 1. Educate Yourself About Eating Disorders
- 2. Communicate Your Concerns
- 3. Examine Your Own Beliefs About Food, Weight and Shape
- 4. Encourage Professional Help

Written by: Samantha DeCaro, PsyD Director of Clinical Outreach and Education

Dr. DeCaro received her Bachelor's degree in Psychology at LaSalle University, and her Doctoral degree in Clinical Psychology at the California



School of Professional Psychology in San Diego CA. She has been with Renfrew since 2012, completing her post-doctoral residency at The Renfrew Center Philadelphia - Spring Lane. then holding the position of Primary Therapist. and most recently serving as Assistant Clinical Director. As Renfrew's national spokesperson. Dr. DeCaro has been featured in the media as an eating disorder expert on various television shows, radio programs, podcasts, and online magazines. She is a frequent lecturer and serves as the Alumni Representative for The Renfrew Center of Philadelphia.

NEW RENFREW PATIENT VIRTUAL SUPPORT GROUPS

BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color)

- Lived experiences
- Marginalization
- Prejudices
- Racism & racial inequality
- Microaggressions
- Trauma

SAGE (Sexuality and Gender Equality)

- Societal pressures
- Fluidity in identity
- Intersectionalities
- Gender expression
- Relationships
- Exploration & questioning

These groups are offered weekly and are for **CURRENT** Renfrew patients only.

For more information, call 1-800-RENFREW (736-3739).



UPCOMING RECOVERY WEBINARS

The Renfrew Center is pleased to offer interactive webinars for those struggling with disordered eating or who are in need of additional support.

Wednesday, November 17th

Embodied Exercise Practices in Recovery

Wednesday, December 8th

Thriving in Recovery: A Story of Hope

Webinars are moderated by Erin Birely, LCPC, The Renfrew Center's Alumni Services Coordinator

All webinars are held at 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm (ET).

For more information or to register, please visit: www.renfrewcenter.com.



Visit our new, mobile-friendly website with content specifically for Renfrew Alumni!









WEBINARS

BI-ANNUAL NEWSLETTER



Save the Date • December 2021

This event is **FREE** and will be held VIRTUALLY through our Renfrew sites. More information coming soon.

To stay up to date on event announcements, please visit www.renfrewcenter.com or call 1-800-RENFREW (736-3739).

Celebrating the New Normal: Embracing Congruence

For the last year and a half, we have had to adjust to many changes that came along with the COVID-19 pandemic. In a way the pandemic has brought up the need to adapt and develop a "new normal" at a pretty steady pace. But outside of the pandemic, we face this task regularly and every change calls for integrating the new with the old. In your recovery journey, you are continuously exploring what works for you and what does not and how to respond to commonly occurring challenges. Just think about it, if eating disorder behaviors served as a way of indirectly communicating your needs, provided an escape from your emotions, and gave a sense of comfort/ structure/control - recovery requires you to "unlearn" all these behaviors and expand your behavioral repertoire.

This exploration is a continuous search for a "new normal" that you evaluate and reshape as you navigate the demands of recovery. As much as this process of paving your path in recovery can be difficult, it can bring some beneficial changes not only to you but also to your relationships. When we think of ourselves as interconnected with others, we can see how change in one person can trickle down to relationships we are in.

While it may be difficult to bring some of these new changes into existing relationships, this has the potential to create closer connections. Recovery thrives in connection and congruence. To be congruent means to be emotionally honest with yourself and others, and open to embracing intimacy that accompanies such a communication stance.

Some of the techniques you can incorporate to start mastering congruence are:

- Pay attention to your primary emotion:
 - "If I were to be honest with myself, what am I feeling right now?" "What needs and values is this emotion directing my attention to?"
- Practice being aware of how you interpret your experiences:
 - "How am I making sense of this situation?"
 - "What story am I constructing about myself/others/this situation?" "How is this story helping/damaging me?"
- Be aware of your patterns in relationships with others:
 - "How do I tend to respond in these situations and is it in line with my values?"
 - "What would be the most appropriate way to respond to this situation while accounting for what I am feeling?'
- Remember vulnerability is a strength not a weakness:
 - "What would happen if I were more vulnerable with this person or in this situation?"

Tetiana Sukach. PhD is a Post-Doctoral Therapist at The Renfrew Center of Coconut Creek. Dr. Sukach received her Bachelor's degree in Psychology and Master's degree in Marriage and Family Therapy at the University of Louisiana at Monroe, and her Doctorate degree in Couple, Marriage, and Family Therapy at Texas Tech University. She is currently pursuing licensure and is a Registered Marriage and Family Therapist Intern. She is passionate about a systemic approach to therapy and assisting clients and their families in developing meaningful relationships.

VOICES!

<u>O</u>F

By: Adrian B.

Y RECOVERY JOURNEY STARTED WITH SOBRIETY.

I no longer wanted to be stuck in a place of turmoil. While getting sober,
I learned that I had an eating disorder. Honestly, I didn't believe it when I was told
this. Oh, but how wrong I was. Once I started my journey with The Renfrew
Center, it all became clear. Come 2007, I met a friend in college and shared my
struggles with her. She taught me about nutrition and living a healthy lifestyle.
Still my eating disorder took over. I would allow those around me to dictate how
I should live, eat, and be. With the help from my treatment team, I found out about
The Renfrew Center. I decided to give them a call. I was afraid of taking off of work
and losing my job—the way that I live and survive—was through my employment.
I knew I had to put my mental health first, so I decided that I would give it a try.
I was scared of what my experience would be like. All that I knew about

rehabilitation was from movies that I've seen in the past.

What I didn't know, but found out, was that I was exactly where I was supposed to be. I learned how to feel my emotions and talk about them. I was expecting to talk about only food, but it was much more than that. The Renfrew Center helped me see a future where I can hold my head up high and actually see my

wildest dreams come true. I got back into creating art while being there. Art therapy was my favorite. I had my very first art show in June and sold all of my pieces. The Renfrew Center gave me my love for art back. Life can be difficult for most people and that makes it hard to ask for help. Because I was willing to ask for help, I was able to save my life from pain and suffering. I'm forever thankful for The Renfrew Center—not only did they give me my recovery, they gave me my life

back. A life I've never known.

Adrian is a 32 year old Nashville, TN native. She enjoys creating art, writing poetry, photography, and hanging with friends. Adrian is a member of Gamma Sigma Sigma National Service Sorority Inc. She has worked in the healthcare field as a member service representative going on three years. Her plans for the future are to become an entrepreneur and give back to her community.



By: Elizabeth C.

Y EATING DISORDER RECOVERY BEGAN with a strange raisin and made possible the publication of a mindfulness workbook for college students. Let me explain a bit of what happened in between! While I had struggled with an eating disorder for many years, my therapist finally refused to continue seeing me if I did not seek eating disorder treatment. I was, at the time, teaching at a private school with an excellent mission, but spending too much time "overhelping" my students as a way to feel fulfilled

and to numb emotional pain. I was also using eating disorder symptoms for the same reasons.

Enter the raisin. On one of my first days of treatment at Renfrew, a therapist led us in a raisin mindfulness meditation. She passed out a raisin and asked us to feel it, to look at it, to smell

it, and finally, to eat it. I was (and still am!) a pretty "high-key" person, and the idea of slowing down to engage with this raisin seemed strange. After the raisin activity, the therapist talked about the concept of mindfulness or slowing down to experience the here and now (including any difficult emotions that might come up). I'd spent most of my life moving quickly to avoid negative emotions, so I felt mindfulness wasn't for me. I did not know then that mindfulness practice would help me sustain recovery for ten years and counting and that it would help my students, as well.

Renfrew helped me realize what I needed to do was stop running away from myself, to actually "sit with" challenging emotions, find coping strategies, and learn to slow down enough to really experience my life. More important than giving a raisin attention, was giving myself attention through mindfulness.

Join us for a free, interactive webinar on Wednesday,
December 8, 2021 at 12:00 pm (ET) where we will be joined
by Elizabeth to learn more about her recovery journey.
Elizabeth will lead attendees in a mindfulness activity from
her workbook, with an opportunity for Q&A at the end.

For more information or to register: www.renfrewcenter.com/events

Elizabeth is a writer and artist who holds degrees from Bryn Mawr College & Middlebury College. Her poetry has most recently appeared in *The Night Heron Barks*, *Calyx*, and *The Pittsburgh Poetry Review*. She is the author of the children's book series *Mt. Olympus Theme Park* and the college resource, *The College Mindfulness Workbook*. She enjoys bringing mindfulness practice to her students in her role as an associate professor of English at Community College of Philadelphia. She can be followed @singlemomtwins and @singlemomtwinsaffirmations on Instagram.

RECQVERY

By: Logan A.

LOVING YOUR BODY AND YOURSELF IS A REVOLUTIONARY ACT.

Revolutions don't happen overnight, and the successful ones require an ongoing commitment to enforcing our values. History shows revolutions are messy, but these fights can be won and long-lasting change can be enacted. It starts with making the decision to fight. Then we tear down the structures of oppression from the bottom up to enact change on the highest levels. To win, we must arm ourselves with the right tools, skills, knowledge, and strategies for this fight. We must acknowledge all the pain and suffering we'd previously ignored, decide that we can and should do better, and then craft a new framework, with compassion and equity at the center. This is how I learned to love myself—as an act of revolution.

Making the decision to fight back against my disorder sparked a long, hard battle. I needed the right weapons—tools, like the ARC; skills, like mindfulness and opposite-to-emotion action, knowledge of how my disorder

worked; and strategies of defense against relapse and isolation—to tear down the oppressive system I'd built within my own mind and body. I also needed a supportive community to fight alongside me, because revolutions are never won alone.

Renfrew gave me the arsenal and the army I needed to fight for my future.

It wasn't something I expected. I was first diagnosed at 15 (though I suffered long before that), hospitalized at 16, attended two treatment programs before I turned 20, and still couldn't find the strength to recover. By the time I got to Renfrew, I was 25 and extremely skeptical of the program, and of "recovery" as a concept. And though my eating disorder had cost me so much—I'd lost my job, retreated from my friendships, avoided romantic relationships, and strained my relationship with my family—I didn't want to let it go. At my core, I thought I was incapable of functioning like a normal person. Something in me felt fundamentally broken.

But I was wrong: I'm not broken. I am whole, I am worthy, and I love myself.

It wasn't easy to get here. Recovery is a choice I have to enforce every single day. But when you love yourself, committing to messy, revolutionary change is easy. Because you know you're worth fighting for. Choose to fight.

Logan Anderson is a Houston-native writer and digital content strategist. After graduating from LSU with a degree in Broadcast Journalism, she worked as a Digital Content & Creative Strategist for Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign, a Digital Content Producer for the Airbnb Citizen team, and Senior Writer on Tim Kaine's 2018 Senate re-election campaign in Virginia. Logan returned home to Houston in 2018 to focus on her recovery and her health, and is now working as a freelance writer and consultant. You can find her on Twitter, Instagram and Medium @MsLoganAnderson, and check out her website at *logananderson.co*.

By: Catherine M.

WAS A KID THAT TURNED INTO AN ADULT that wouldn't let anything get in the way of school. Though I began struggling with my eating disorder in adolescence, I kept on moving to become the president of my junior class, and an honors student involved in almost every extracurricular activity. During college I would spend many meals, socialization and sleeping times in the science building and chemistry lab. There was no such thing as slowing down or taking time to focus on my mental or physical health, at least in my mind.

It turned out that this level of activity was also a form of coping with long

term trauma that was co-occurring during that time in my life. Overextending myself was the glue that kept me from falling apart entirely. I moved to Colorado to attend a Ph.D. program which involved teaching undergraduates, taking my own courses and conducting medicinal chemistry research. The pressure was on and at this point; I'd also reached new lows in my eating disorder and depression.

A true friend helped me find a support group to attend and this step helped me to gain the courage to make that call to my insurance company about treatment. Before I knew it, I was flying back across the country to enter residential care at The Renfrew Center of Philadelphia.

That was in February of 2018. The journey since then has not been easy, including a trip back to Philadelphia the following September and an extensive outpatient treatment journey lasting almost three years at The Renfrew Center of New York City. The point where I started to put my skills to use was when I realized that I was using my eating disorder to cope with large emotions that I felt I could not express with words. The biggest lesson I've learned in recovery is that I can SAY that I'm in pain or angry, I can SAY that I feel unworthy and I can SPEAK with vulnerability and authenticity instead of trying to communicate to myself or others with my eating disorder. I have the power to do that. And when I won the hard fight against shame for the first time and spoke my truth, the care that I'd been seeking was there for me.

I'm still working every day to fight against the eating disorder. I now have my own apartment in New Jersey and I'm working in the pharmaceutical industry—things I didn't think I could ever accomplish in some dark times. I am thankful to the Renfrew teams in Philadelphia and New York City for helping me to believe that I am worthy of time, space, validation, love, and healing. It's not just that recovery isn't linear, I'd take it off the graph altogether. Recovery for me is the strength it takes to pick myself up every time I fall, and the willpower and determination to never stop fighting in the hopes that one day the clouds will part faster than they had in the past. Keep on fighting because I promise you, it is possible. Keep on growing toward the sun.

Catherine received her Bachelor's degree in Chemistry from Saint Anselm College. After treatment at The Renfrew Centers of Philadelphia and New York City, Catherine graduated with her Master's degree from Boston College in the Spring of 2020. She now works in the pharmaceutical industry and hopes to work on treatments for psychiatric illnesses in the future.



The Renfrew Center Foundation 475 Spring Lane Philadelphia, PA 19128



Residential & Outpatient Programs for Anorexia, Bulimia, Binge Fating & Body Image Issues

LOCATIONS:

RESIDENTIAL

Philadelphia, PA Coconut Creek, FL

ALL LOCATIONS Atlanta, GA Baltimore, MD Bethesda, MD Boston, MA Charlotte, NC Chicago, IL Coconut Creek, FL Los Angeles, CA Mount Laurel, NJ Nashville, TN New York, NY Orlando, FL Paramus, NJ

Philadelphia, PA (Center City & Spring Lane) Pittsburgh, PA Radnor, PA

West Palm Beach, FL

White Plains, NY

1-800-RENFREW

Support The Renfrew Center Foundation

The Renfrew Center Foundation is a nonprofit organization that helps to advance eating disorders education, research, advocacy, and treatment. Please help us to continue these efforts by making a tax-deductible donation to the Foundation.

Donations can be submitted online at www.renfrewcenter.com/foundation/how-to-help or by mailing this form to: The Renfrew Center Foundation, 475 Spring Lane, Philadelphia, PA 19128

Your donation, or that of a family member, may help someone receive the crucial care they require. In addition, we can continue to educate the public about eating disorders and provide necessary training for professionals in the field.

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