

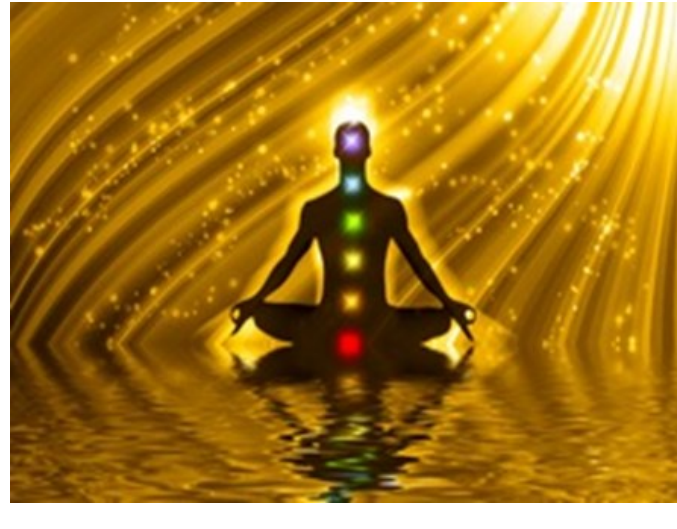


WELCOME BACK, COMMUNITY MEMBERS!

Thank you for your continued support of the UMass Psychotic Disorders Clinical and Research Program. The Central Massachusetts Psychosis Network was developed to create a more inclusive community among patients, family members, mental health advocates, local organizations, and providers within the Greater Worcester Area. Over the past year, we have shared groundbreaking research, local services, various events, and connected over 300 community members. We hope that this network will continue to serve as a catalyst to promote collaboration among all of the Central Massachusetts community.

RESOURCES

Mindfulness Meditation and Neurofeedback for Schizophrenia contributed by Kelly Hathaway



The Center for Mindfulness at the University of Massachusetts aims to use methods of meditation to treat patients of various illnesses. Meditation has been proven to have many beneficial effects that can help promote quality of life, decrease stress, and even decrease negative symptoms of patients with schizophrenia. We had the opportunity to interview Remko Van Lutterveld and Alexandra Roy from the Therapeutic Neuroscience Lab at the Center for Mindfulness.

When asked about meditation, Remko replied, "Learning to meditate is not as straight-forward as learning a sport or such would be. I started meditating about 10 years ago and I was very surprised by the positive results". The Therapeutic Neuroscience Lab uses methods of neurofeedback to drive their current research. Please see the information below about their current research study regarding mindfulness meditation and real-time brain activity in patients with schizophrenia.

"The goal of our research is to see if brain activity corresponds to your experience of mindfulness meditation. You will receive a brief training in mindfulness meditation and you will be in the study for two days. You will receive compensation for your travel and your time to complete the assessments."

For more information regarding their program and current studies, you can call (508)-202-1079 or email alexandra.roy@umassmed.edu. You can also find more information on their website <https://www.umassmed.edu/cfm/research/> or Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/ummsresearch/>.

"Each Ending Brings About a New Beginning" contributed by Sherri Mecum

New Beginnings Wellness Center is a Joint Commission accredited multidisciplinary Behavioral Health Care Clinic that offers a variety of services for both patients and their families.



With branches located in both Worcester and Leicester, this program aims to provide quality behavioral health and substance abuse support for patients in Worcester County. New Beginnings cares for over 400 clients between the two locations. Their enlightening motto is "Each ending brings about a new beginning". To learn more about the services provided at New Beginnings, we interviewed the Executive Director, Sherri Mecum.

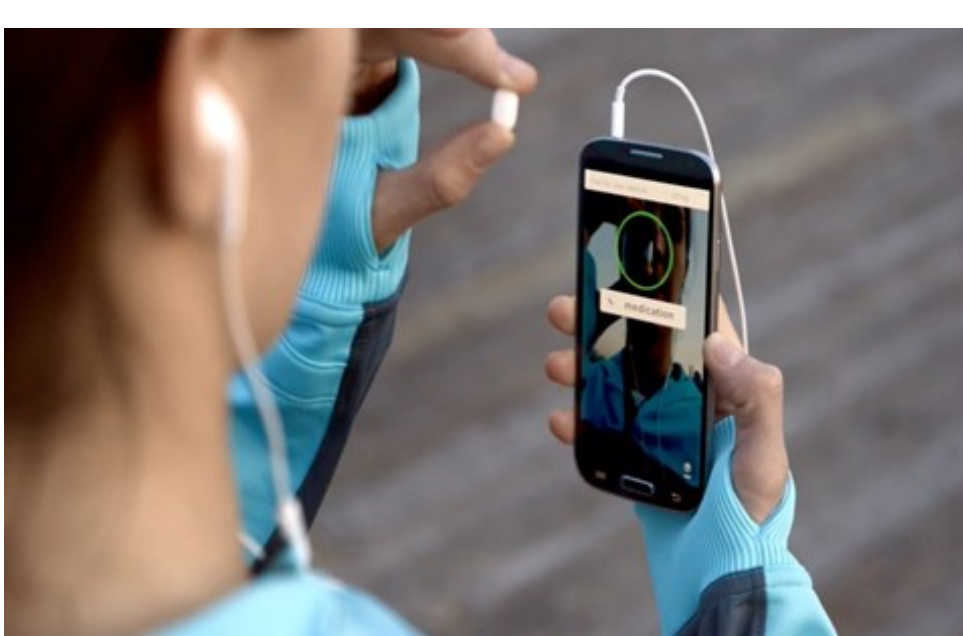
At New Beginnings, clients can find a variety of services including outpatient therapies, group therapies, medication management, in-home therapy, therapeutic mentoring, and substance abuse groups. New Beginnings emphasized the importance of individualized treatment. "Each client has an individual treatment plan and our program works hard to provide a variety of services that can help each client in some way," said Sherri. For example, not only does New Beginnings provide multi-modal clinical interventions, but they also provide family oriented and community based services that aim to develop support systems for these clients. New Beginnings recently opened their second location in Leicester about a year ago. This location specializes in substance abuse treatment. Some of the services provided at this location include groups for relapse prevention, chronic pain, psycho-education, post-partum, 12-step philosophy, and recovery.

For more information about New Beginnings Wellness Center, you may visit their website [here](#) or contact them via phone at (508)754-1141.

IN THE NEWS

Utilizing Artificial Intelligence to Increase Medication Adherence contributed by Kelly Hathaway

Founded in 2010, AiCure is a company that builds and deploys clinically-validated artificial intelligence technologies to optimize patient behavior and medication adherence. The company's goal in developing this new technology for the health care field is to reduce hospitalizations and extend life expectancy. This new form of artificial intelligence visually confirms medication ingestion. The clinically-validated platform also conveniently works on smartphones for patients to access regularly. AiCure is funded by the National Institutes of Health.



Not only is this new technology beneficial for general healthcare, but it benefits clinical research as well, as 20%-30% of all clinical trials fail due to non-adherence. The convenient AiCure app allows patients to track their treatment progress, get notifications about clinic visits, and receive reminders when to take their medication.

One of our upcoming research studies at the Psychotic Disorder Research Program will be using this technology!

To find out more information about AiCure, you can visit their website at <https://aicure.com/>.

FEATURED MEMBER

Dr. Richard M. Berlin is a psychiatrist and poet who has won numerous poetry awards over the course of his career. Dr. Berlin started off writing bedtime stories with his daughter, and was recommended to join a group for writers. He began writing poetry in his early 40's after he joined a local group for poetry writers. "I write mostly about my experience as a physician. There is a writer's tip that says you should always write what you know about," says Dr. Berlin. He went on to write numerous poetry publications. From writing poems for the *Psychiatric Times*, to writing his own poetry books, Dr. Berlin has made one of his newly discovered passions into a second career.



Dr. Berlin has a well-rounded background in the field of psychiatry. He has worked with multiple patient populations in different settings. Through his poetry, Dr. Berlin reflects on the demanding pressure and rewarding outcomes of being a physician. Both physicians and patients can relate to his poetry. Dr. Berlin currently practices psychiatry in a small town in the Berkshire Hills of Western Massachusetts. Not only has Dr. Berlin displayed a passion for the arts through poetry, but he has dived into his musical abilities as well. When asked what inspired him to start playing music Dr. Berlin replied, "My goal was to start playing guitar in a band. I wanted to be able to play a song for my 50th birthday and I did it". Dr. Berlin's determination and perseverance to engage himself in the arts has made a positive impact on himself and those who follow his work.

After winning the Pearl Poetry Prize for some of his poetry, Dr. Berlin used the money to establish a creative writing contest for medical students, nursing students, resident physicians, and doctoral students at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. The Gerald F. Berlin Creative Writing Award is meant to encourage creative writing by health professionals in training and to honor his father who struggled with a severe chronic illness. To find out more information about Dr. Berlin and his poetry, you may visit his website at <http://www.richardmberlin.com/>.

RESEARCH PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES

The UMass Psychotic Disorders Research Program aims to elucidate the etiology of each facet of the triple jeopardy of psychosis: devastating mental illness, medical co-morbidity, and substance use. The goal of our research is to develop innovative intervention strategies combining pharmacological and psychosocial approaches to treat these conditions. We have multiple ongoing research studies focusing on various aspects of schizophrenia. Our studies explore areas such as refractory schizophrenia symptoms, cognition and memory deficits, comorbid obesity and metabolic problems, as well as co-occurring use of marijuana or other substances. It is our patients and their stories that inspire the research that we do and drive us to apply the findings to patient care.

The listings below are for our research studies that are currently open for recruitment. If you or someone you know may be interested, please contact us by phone at **508-856-MIND (6463)** or by e-mail at MIND@umassmed.edu. Those who participate in our studies will be compensated for their time.



Have you or someone you know been diagnosed with Schizophrenia or Schizoaffective Disorder? Do you or that person also use alcohol, marijuana, or any other drugs?

If so, you or someone you know may be eligible to participate in a research study conducted at UMass Medical School. The purpose of this study is to see whether brexpiprazole, an investigational drug, can help reduce substance use in individuals diagnosed with schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorders. Your participation in the study will last 12 weeks. You will be compensated for your time.



The Treatment Resistant Study

Are you over the age of 18, and diagnosed with schizophrenia? If so, you may be eligible to participate in a research study conducted at UMass Medical School. The purpose of this study is to see whether Lu AF35700, an experimental drug, is safe and effective for the possible treatment of treatment-resistant schizophrenia. You will be compensated for your time.

The Memory Study



Researchers from UMass Medical School, Psychiatry Department seek men and women ages 18-65 who have a diagnosis of schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder and are treated with any antipsychotic medications. The goal of this 24-week research study is to see if exenatide (an investigational drug when used in people with schizophrenia) can improve symptoms of schizophrenia. Some studies suggest that exenatide can reduce inflammation, which may protect the brain and improve memory and thinking. Participants will be compensated, and all information will be kept private.