



Family Newsletter  
Fall 2018

## A MESSAGE OF GRATITUDE



Dear Ms. Simon,

*My son has had many ups and downs over the course of his young adult years. During this time he has met and had to deal with many people who were both supportive and non-supportive. When he was discharged from Trenton State Psychiatric Hospital in January 2018, he was fortunate to be assigned to Silvester Oluokun on RIST 5. Through Silvester's guidance and insight he has helped my son through rough times and big decisions. When a person invests so much time in his clients, both during work and non-working hours, recognition is in order to express my sincere appreciation for his time and care.*

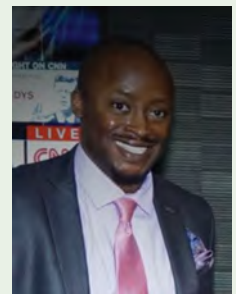
*I have developed a strong respect for the conscientious work that Silvester has performed with my son and the strong influence his work has positively had on influencing my son. I know that my son is not an easy client but Silvester has worked diligently with my family and with him to support him completely,*

*It always warms my heart when I speak to Silvester knowing how much he likes, cares, and supports my son. I have called him with concerns early in the morning, on his off days, work days, holidays and he has always returned my calls or spoken to me immediately. Silvester is one of a kind and you are fortunate to have him on your team.*

*I would like to express my gratitude for his constant, steady, support and advise. I am so extremely thankful to him and I know his continued guidance will make my son a stronger, well-adjusted young man.*

*Sincerely,  
A grateful mother*

Silvester Oluokun has been a member of the Bridgeway family since 2012, when he was hired as a part time Recovery Coach for the PACT 1 Team in Elizabeth. Shortly thereafter, he was promoted to the position of full time Wellness Specialist for PACT. In 2016, Silvester earned a Masters in Professional Mental Health Counseling degree from William Paterson University, as well as becoming an LAC (Licensed Associate Counselor). After serving as Wellness Clinician position at PACT 1 for two years, Silvester became the Team Leader for RIST 5 in February 2018.



## ADVOCATING FOR A LOVED ONE IN CRISIS

Contributed by Allison MacFadyen, MS, NCC, LPC, CPRP  
PESS Director - Psychiatric Emergency Screening Services - Somerville - 908-526-4100

Experiencing a psychiatric crisis can be one of the scariest moments of a person's life. There can be feelings of insecurity, fear, anger and disempowerment. These feelings also occur for family members watching their loved one go through a psychiatric crisis. At PESS we encounter many family members trying to help their loved ones through this difficult time and feeling lost with how to support them. Sometimes, simply being physically present with the person in crisis and assuring their basic needs are met can be very comforting. During moments of crisis, persons served can be subconsciously neglecting basic needs of food and water due to being preoccupied with their psychiatric symptoms. It would be helpful for family members to encourage and remind their loved ones to drink and eat during a crisis. Beyond basic needs, family members can provide reassurance of supports they can provide if their loved ones need inpatient care. Whether its assistance with paying bills, pet care, or even making sure they have personal care items once they arrive at the inpatient facility, all of these things can help a person in crisis focus on the next step in their treatment. Most importantly family members can be their loved one's voice when they feel like they have none. Family members are some of the strongest advocates a person served can have. They know their loved one's symptoms, hospitals of choice, preferences with treatment and what has and what has not worked in the past. Advocating for a loved one's care is the most powerful tool a family member has to ensure successful treatment linkage. Through the work at Bridgeway PESS we see repeatedly that family members feel that they are not doing enough and they need to do more but in reality they are the most dedicated member of the person's served support system and pivotal in a person's recovery.



### November Walkathon



## Pie Walk for Wellness

### Join Us!



*Club Teams, Family Teams, and Corporate Teams Welcome!*

*Pie lunch served to all registered walkers.*

*Enjoy pizza pies, apple pies, shepherds's pies, and more!*

*Proceeds benefit the programs and services of Bridgeway.*

## Saturday, November 17th

Please visit [www.bridgewayrehab.org/Events](http://www.bridgewayrehab.org/Events) to download information  
or call 908-469-6517 ext.1004



Join our online community!  
[www.bridgewayrehab.org](http://www.bridgewayrehab.org)

# EMOTIONAL SUPPORT PETS

Contributed by Mark Firth, MA, MSW, LSW  
Senior Counselor, Supportive Housing - Hunterdon

Most every pet owner knows that sharing your time with a furry friend can bring joy, love and purpose to your life. Recent research points out the many benefits pets have for their human counterparts. One report in Mother Nature Network suggested that pets may boost our oxytocin levels, those are the chemicals responsible for human bonding. Release of oxytocin hormone helps to enhance social skills, decrease blood pressure and heart rate, boosts our immune function and raises tolerance for pain. It also lowers stress, anger and depression.



*On the emotional side of the equation, researchers have found that: contact with pets even for 10-15 minute intervals help to lower the stress hormone cortisol which is associated with exposure to chronic daily stress thereby lowering anxiety, fear levels and elevates feelings of calmness.* The mood boosting connection between pets and human health is helping many individuals deal more effectively with such conditions as PTSD, chronic pain, depression and other mood disorders and as a result emotional support animals are finding their way out of the home and accompanying their owners into our communities and everywhere. With little legislation yet to guide this growing trend, what are the latest developments?

**TRAVEL:** Airlines for America, an airline trade association, estimates that from 2016 to 2017 the number of emotional support animals aboard U.S. commercial flights grew from 481,000 to 751,000. Airlines have now instituted much stronger policies to eliminate fraud. Passengers are required to download and submit a form to the airline 48 hours in advance of the flight providing information such as: proof of license, assurance that you have a psychological need for the animal signed by a physician, contact information, and a signature. Additionally, many airlines have a policy to evaluate your pet at the gate to verify it has been trained to behave in a public setting and takes direction upon command.

**REGISTRATION:** Fraud exists on the internet as well. Here is what you need to know - in the state of New Jersey all that is needed is a letter from your physician on letterhead with contact information that you have a diagnosable condition improved by an emotional support animal.

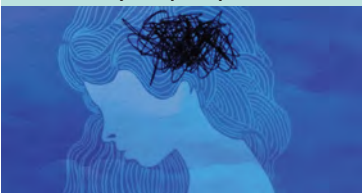
**HOUSING:** Public housing that falls under the definition of the Fair Housing Act (FHA) allows certain benefits to owners of emotional support animals. Even if a lease says "no pets" or restricts pets, landlords are required to make what is called a "reasonable accommodation" to allow pets who serve as assistance animals, which includes animals who provide emotional support. Additionally, landlords cannot require a "pet fee" for emotional support animals in the dwelling as they do with non-registered pets so long as the animal is not destructive and are not a nuisance to other tenants. Finally, those individuals in housing under HUD or Section 8 can now offset their annual rent by submitting proof of at the annual housing recertification of costs of care to the emotional support animal. Receipts for annual veterinary care, food and grooming can be used to offset income and figure into the annual rent calculation as a medical expense.

## 15 Things People Who Deal With Suicidal Thoughts Want You To Know

Dealing with suicidal ideation isn't uncommon, but because it's so difficult to talk about, a lot of people have misconceptions about what it's like, and what it is and isn't.

1. Suicidal ideation isn't always about wanting to die — it's a lot more complicated than that.
2. Not everyone who deals with suicidal thoughts is an active suicide risk.
3. Plenty of people function day-to-day despite having suicidal ideation, so never assume you can tell what someone is going through.
4. But that doesn't mean it's not exhausting, scary, or intense to deal with.
5. You don't always "get over" dealing with suicidal ideation — plenty of people have developed ways to manage it.

Continued ... Please go to: [www.buzzfeed.com/annaborges/suicidal-ideation?](http://www.buzzfeed.com/annaborges/suicidal-ideation?)



# PRIVACY MATTERS

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) is a federal law that helps protect the privacy of individual health information. For individuals living with mental illness, this law is important, because it helps protect confidential mental health treatment records.

Over the years, however, there have been many misunderstandings about the type and range of information that mental health treatment providers are allowed to share with others. This often resulted in situations where family and friends of a person living with mental illness were unable to communicate with healthcare providers, often to the detriment of a loved one.

The federal Office of Civil Rights (OCR) at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has enforcement authority over HIPAA. On Feb. 21, 2014, OCR released guidance clarifying how and when healthcare providers may share an individual's mental health treatment information with others. Open communication between a mental health provider and family members or friends of a person living with mental illness can help make sure that the individual receives the best treatment and care possible.

The preceeding is an excerpt from an article published by NAMI.

The entire article is available online:

<https://www.nami.org/About-NAMI/MI-News/Understanding-What-HIPAA-Means-for-Mental-Illness>



At Bridgeway, we are very respectful of the private health information of the people we serve. If you would like to be taken off our direct mailing list, please email: [feedback@bridgewayrehab.org](mailto:feedback@bridgewayrehab.org), or call 908-469-6517 ext. 1004



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