

# KeyNotes — News of the KeyStone Center Extended Care Unit

Second Quarter, 2022

## A Message from the Director,

### David Pellack PhD, LPC, CSAT

Having celebrated another Pride month, I recall an experience from an addiction and trauma group that I facilitated several years ago. The group was discussing what constitutes addictive behavior. During the discussion, a new member who identified as gay expressed a concern about a criterion of sex addiction. He shared that he felt the conditions mandated that he conform to heteronormative sexual behavior in order to maintain long-term sobriety. As the discussion continued, the questions on the Sexual Addiction Screening Test-R Core Scale were shared and the group used the questions to explore personal experiences and develop a much better understanding of the difference between addictive sexual behavior and healthy sexuality. The group was reminded that the roots of sexual addiction are often trauma and intimacy or attachment issues, regardless of how an individual identifies or defines their sexuality. Our clinical staff focus on shame reduction as one of the more significant goals of treatment and we individualize the steps to reduce shame based on a client's history. Our goal as practitioners is to support all clients including gay, bisexual, questioning, etc. clients, to overcome the shame associated with their trauma and addictive behavior. By learning and practicing new skills learned during treatment and being comfortable being Honest, Open-minded, and Willing (H.O.W.), clients subsequently develop greater peace with themselves and are able to develop and maintain healthy, safe relationships.

I remain grateful for the client who initiated such frank discussion that day. His peers and I thanked him for sharing openly and facilitating this important discussion. During the course of treatment, the client made significant progress. At discharge, he expressed his gratitude for the progress he made at the KeyStone Center ECU, especially in terms of the self-respect he regained and the pride he discovered for his whole self, not just as a gay male.

Continuing to share the message of hope -  
David

## Key Team Member: Deb MacDonald

Deborah MacDonald is a graduate of Kutztown University with a Bachelor's of Science in Psychology. She joined the KeyStone Business Development team in October of 2021, having worked here previously from 2003-2007. She is the Community Relations Liaison for the Extended Care Unit and has significant experience in the fields of behavioral health & addictions, including roles as Case Manager and Case Management Supervisor for the local county Drug & Alcohol Divisions. She has worked in Business Development and Marketing for several facilities and realized she found her professional niche. She has a passion for helping people find the right treatment program and does this through building strong, honest and professional relationships. She loves working in close collaboration with clinical providers, referral sources and clients with the goal of improving quality of patient care. Over her years of working in the field of addictions, she has developed an understanding of the importance of treating the root cause of one's addiction rather than the symptoms - something that she knows the ECU staff believe in also. She is also a firm believer that helping someone explore their trauma in an empathic, patient manner is key to helping one on their way to a successful long-term recovery. Deb loves spending time with her two children and also enjoys the beach, traveling, gardening, waterskiing, and playing piano.

## ECU MileStones

\* **Staff Psychiatrist Sherry Nykiel, MD**, was awarded the designation of Distinguished Fellow at the Annual Meeting of the American Psychiatric Association on May 23, 2022 in New Orleans, LA. Distinguished Fellows are nationally recognized for their skill in administrative, educational and clinical settings. They are also noted for volunteering in mental health and medical activities of social significance and involvement in community activities. Excellence, not mere competence, is the hallmark of an APA Distinguished Fellow.

\* **Director David Pellack, PhD, LPC, CSAT, and Ms. Deborah MacDonald** were pleased to host the ECU's quarterly Zoom alumni meeting on June 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:30pm. Another good time had by all.