

Recovering Out Loud

The newsletter of Turning Point Bennington

Issue No. 4 - October 2024 - Hope Starts Here

Welcome to Recovering Out Loud, the newsletter of Turning Point Bennington. We bring you news and views from our recovery community in every issue. Enjoy!



A Passionate Voice for Turning Point's New Recovery House

Ralph Bennett leans gently back in his chair. With his flannel shirt and red down vest he is every bit the backwoods Vermonter. But the image quickly fades as he begins talking, passionately explaining the complexities of tackling substance use disorder (SUD).

Continuum of care, he says is the cornerstone of recovery. For hundreds of Vermonters battling the co-occurring conditions of mental health issues and addiction, a recovery program focused on sequential steps is critical. It's one of the reasons Ralph sees sober housing as essential. In a perfect world, he argues, people coping with SUD would move from a 21-day rehab facility into step-down quarters, or supervised sober living, and finally to a sober-living residence for anywhere from 90 days to 1 year.

"There's a difference in my mind between getting clean and sober and staying clean and sober," Ralph says. "The key to long-term sobriety is being around those who have learned how to stay sober ...You need to have people around you who have been through the experience of getting sober, people who have learned how to successfully change their lives."

The new Coordinator for Turning Point's Recovery House, Ralph is excited at the prospect of offering this kind of care to Vermonters. The Recovery House currently being renovated and remodeled, is on Gage Street in downtown Bennington. The cost of the project, entirely funded by grants, is \$1.3 million and is expected to be complete and ready for residents in January 2025.

The house is divided into two units, one for newer intakes, and the other for men who have been in recovery somewhat longer. Up to 8 men will be housed in the residence with a manager living on site. Regardless of whatever stage of recovery the men find themselves, the aim is that they all learn from each other and help one another carve out new sober lives, Ralph explains.

"The biggest part of recovery in sober living is learning from your peers," he adds.

Ralph is no rookie to the process, having experienced first-hand what life is like as an alcoholic and the steadfast struggle it takes to get clean.

After graduating from Mount Anthony High School in Bennington in 1974 he headed to

Florida with a group of friends where he found seasonal work on commercial fishing trawlers.

"In my 20s I lived life in a way they call in the program 'self will run riot,' I did whatever I wanted to do, whenever I wanted to do it," Ralph says. "I had to find jobs where I could make enough money to live and buy the amount of alcohol I wanted. Commercial fishing and various construction jobs let me do that."

A few hospitalizations for SUD slowed Ralph down for a bit, but he quickly returned to his routine. A decent insurance policy, as he puts it, let him try a number of stints in rehab facilities. Most times, he'd leave before his 28 days were up.

"I figured I was in there for a tune up and quickly got back out and doing what I wanted to do ... I call that time my club rehab years," he chuckles.

At 36, Ralph ended up in an Albany hospital detoxing once again from alcohol. As he puts it, physically he was done. When he returned to Bennington he found a recovery group that helped him face down the disease. "I was physically beat and lucky enough to fall in with a group of men in recovery who were amazing. They surrounded me [with support] and were there for me until I could get my feet on the ground."

Ralph has spent much of past 30 years paying that kindness forward, first at the Bennington School where for 26 years he worked with at risk children and then at Turning Point Center in Bennington. From volunteer to working as a certified emergency department recovery coach to counseling families of loved ones with substance use disorder, Ralph's work at TPC has been varied. Now he is taking on a new role coordinating TPC's recovery house — another step in a dedicated life. Or as Ralph sees it: "I continue my own path of recovery by being kind and helping others."



"When you no longer have that kneejerk to numb yourself out, yes, life can be a little edgy, but now I know I can go into a room, a gathering, and if I'm uncomfortable, I don't need to try to take the edge off it."

- Demi Moore, Actress



In the News



SoberFest 2024

Turning Point's Soberfest celebration got good plenty of press this, and it more than deserved it. Check out the Bennington Banner's article by clicking the button below.

[Check It Out Here](#)



Rethinking Addiction as a Brain Disease

A recent article in the New York Times reminds us of a sign emblazoned on a walkway window in Burlington's airport. "Addiction is not a choice. It's a disease that can happen to anyone."

The article goes well beyond the message and delves into the science of drug addiction as a brain disease, rather than a moral failing that for so long as been gospel.

Check out the story, *Rethinking Addiction as a Chronic Brain Disease*, by clicking the button below.

[Check It Out Here](#)



Podcasts



NPR's Back from Broken Series

Sometimes it feels like we're swimming in a sea of podcasts from true crime to true love. If you're searching for poignant recovery stories check out NPR's Back from Broken series. *Matthew and Steven Fisher* tells the story of a father and son who found recovery and healed their rocky relationship.

There are others as well, check it out by clicking the button below.

[Check It Out Here](#)



What We're Listening To

Winning Streak from Jelly Roll

Winning Streak from Jelly Roll's latest album, *Beautifully Broken*, will touch the heart of anyone struggling to stay sober



or anyone who knows someone fighting the battle. Check it out by clicking the button below.

[Check It Out Here](#)

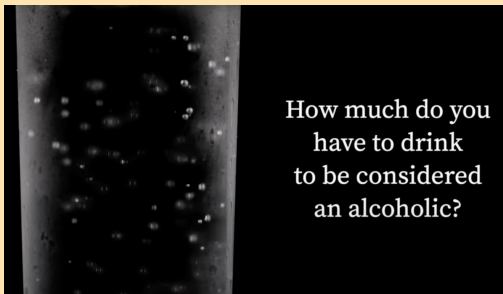


“The windshield is bigger than the rearview mirror for a reason”

- Jelly Roll, Singer



What We're Watching



How much do you have to drink to be considered an alcoholic?

Alcohol Use: What Does It Mean to Be Addicted?

Last but not least, Dr. Anna Lembke, Chief of the Addiction Medicine Dual Diagnosis Clinic at Stanford University, answers some questions about alcoholism. Worth a listen by clicking the button below.

[Check It Out Here](#)

TPC Bennington Groups at a Glance

“We Stood at the Turning Point” Group: An open AA meeting that any member of the community may attend.

[Meets at Turning Point Center, Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from Noon to 1:00 pm]

Recovery Dharma Group: Learn how to use Buddhist principles and meditation to guide your path to recovery from addictions, including alcohol and drugs. You don't have to be a Buddhist to participate. All are welcome!

[Meets at Turning Point Center, Monday 6:00-7:00 pm]

Women's All-Recovery Group: You are in charge of your life, and you get to decide how

to live it. All recovery paths are respected and welcome.

[Meets at Turning Point Center, Tuesday 4:00-5:00 pm]

Writing Recovery Workshop: Discover the power of the written word to process trauma, build self-esteem, and support healthy, sustained recovery.

[Meets at Turning Point Center. Tuesday 5:00-6:30 pm]

Zen Family Wellness: If you're in recovery, you are invited to enjoy quality family time with mindfulness games, crafts, and activities for people of all ages.

[Meets at Turning Point Center. Tuesday 5:00-6:00 pm]

Breathwork and Focus for Anxiety Control: Learn breathing techniques that let your body slow down and find the balance between what your feeling, thinking, and actually experiencing.

[Meets at Turning Point Center, Wednesday 3:30-4:00 pm]

Exploring Yoga Styles: Explore the subtleties of each style, and learn how regular practice can help improve your strength, flexibility, balance and overall well-being.

[Meets at Turning Point Center, Wednesday 4:00-5:00 pm]

ACoA-The Body, Mind and Spirit Group: Share in a safe, nonjudgmental environment to identify and heal core trauma, experience freedom from shame and abandonment, and become your own loving parent.

[Meets at Turning Point Center, Wednesday 6:30-7:30 pm]

Emotional Sobriety-Reading/Open Discussion Men's Group: In this reading/open discussion group we explore the book "Emotional Sobriety: The Next Frontier."

[Meets at Turning Point Center, Thursday 5:00-6:00 pm]

Recovery Community Dinner: An expertly prepared dinner, free to all members of the community.

[Held at First Baptist Church, 601 Main Street, every 3rd Thursday of the month, 5:00-6:30pm]

Soul Collage: Discover your inner wisdom and allies. Soul Collage is a creative collage process that deepens your relationship with yourself and increases self-knowledge and self-confidence.

[Meets at Turning Point Center, Friday 1:30-2:30 pm]

Adventures in Sobriety: Come share the exciting adventures sobriety has to offer. Feel the joy of trying new things with peers in a safe environment.

[Meets Saturday mornings. For time and meeting location call (802) 442-9700, M-F between 9 and 4]

Turning Point Center of Bennington
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