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Come Join Us

Next OTPG  
Meeting

DeSoto Hotel  
Savannah, GA  
Beginning at 11am  
July 19th, 2019

Board Members:

Brook Etherington President	Leslie Sitkoff Secretary
Ali McCorkle Vice President	Stacey Pearce AATOD Delegate
Chip Fuller Treasurer	Zac Talbott Parliamentarian



real help = real hope

OTPG QUARTERLY JULY 15, 2019



Upcoming Trainings:

- The Anxiety and Stress Management Institute has several CEU offerings. Please visit their website to learn more: <https://www.stressmgt.net/workshops/>

- Ridgeview Institute in both Smyrna and Monroe has CEU opportunities. Visit their website for details: [https://ridgeviewinstitute.com/hosp\\_info\\_calendar\\_prof-hm/](https://ridgeviewinstitute.com/hosp_info_calendar_prof-hm/)

- CEU Creations offers multiple, affordable CEU events per year: <https://www.ceucreationsinc.com/>

- CEU Attachment Theory and Addiction – Podcast by Atlanta LCSW Alyce Wellons: <https://www.alycewellons.com/store/ceu-podcast-attachment-theory>

- TrueYou Southeast Offering CE Offerings: <https://trueyousoutheast.com/ceu-classes/>

- Emory is offering therapy group for females ages 18-25 with problematic substance use interested parties can contact Emory at 404-727-7090 or [addictionservices@emory.edu](mailto:addictionservices@emory.edu)

- Psychopharmacology, Merrill Norton, Pharm. D. Friday 08/09/2019 at Summit Wellness Group 6 Core Hours.

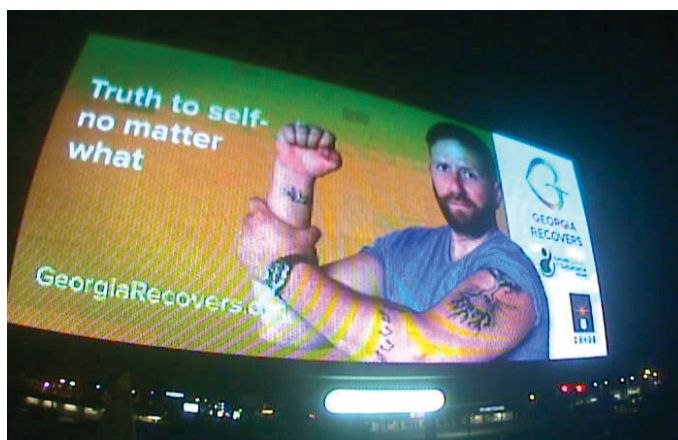
- Exploring Ethical Dilemmas and Crisis Interventions with Dr. Lucy Cannon, LCSW, CCDP-D, MATS. Saturday, September 28th, 2019, 2 core and 3 ethics: <https://ceuandbeyond.com/products/chase-your-dreams-phase-1>

- Chambered Nautilus: A Model of Ethical Therapist Development, Center of Love & Lights, 10/25/2019, 6 Ethics CEUs

GA Recovers

By: OTPG

Check it out! The Georgia Council on Substance Abuse launched “GA Recovers” in Atlanta this June, in an effort to promote all forms of recovery. The aim of the campaign is to spread the message that “Recovery is real and achievable”.



This included a new billboard project showcasing different individuals in recovery, including Riley Kirkpatrick as a representative for medication-assisted treatment! Go Riley!

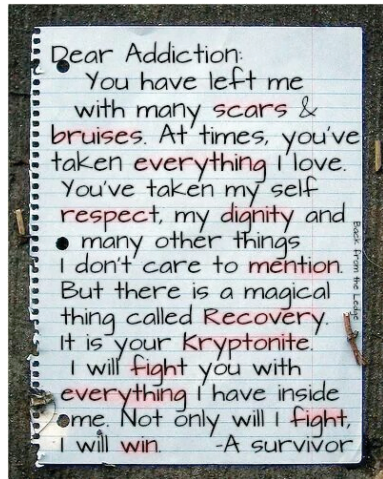
Riley is a CARES and Peer Support Specialist serving Alliance Recovery Center. [Learn more at https://www.gasubstanceabuse.org/](https://www.gasubstanceabuse.org/)

SAVE THE DATE

The annual Opioid Treatment Providers of Georgia Conference is scheduled for November 22nd, 2019 at the Evergreen Marriott in Stone Mountain.

## Regular Weekly Groups: By Remi Stewart

### Moving from Treatment to Recovery-based Treatment



My name is Remi Stewart and for many many years, I was abstinent. Drug addiction was the very last thing I ever thought I would experience for myself. However, as with many other addicts, it all started with a legitimate prescription for pain. Over several years, one thing snowballed into another. I went from legal pills to illegal pills to snorting then injecting heroin. I tried an abstinence-based program

and remained sober six (agonizing) months. Finally, I came to methadone assisted treatment. Even then, I struggled to surrender. I was using, stopping, using, stopping, staying on a low dose of methadone. An adjustment to my medication helped. Discussions with my counselor about mindfulness and accountability helped. But I was still missing something.

Then my counselor required me to regularly attend one of the weekly groups. Little did I know that would change my life. Every week, I grumbled to myself, but I kept coming back. I reminded myself of the saying: 'the time you most need a meeting is when you think you don't.' I bought a notebook and started jotting down ideas and phrases that struck me as important during the hourly sessions. I read the N.A. Big Book and started exploring articles online. I did my best to have a new article to read at group each week. Since I read a lot, I started seeing how even works of fiction that I enjoyed would contain gems of wisdom pertaining to recovery. My world started making sense again. It is said that you must expend at least as much energy pursuing your recovery as you did pursuing your habit. That can seem daunting. But before I realized it, I had been attending the group for five years and moved from mere treatment to recovery-based treatment.

By regularly attending my Wednesday morning group, I learned the very important difference between treatment and recovery. Treatment is coming to get your medication every day. Period. Recovery is working to improve your life in five important areas: physical health, emotional health, mental health, social health, and spiritual health. In addition to individual counseling, the group has helped my recovery by serving as inspiration and providing valuable peer role models. It has given me the confidence to set goals, reduce my dependency on the medication, improve my relationship with my partner, and re-establish my spiritual connections. I have developed gratitude and attitude: gratitude for every day I am sober and attitude about using. It is so much easier to stay sober when you value the life you are living and are no longer willing to throw it away in relapsing. I encourage more clients in treatment to take advantage of the wonderful experiences offered to them in groups.

## An anonymous patient

January will mark three years since I've entered recovery here at ARC. From the day I started until now, I've grown into a person I never thought I could be. Three years ago when I admitted myself, I was unsure of the recovery process and whether this was what I even wanted. I thought to myself, "at least methadone will allow me to save up money to be able to use again", which makes me sick to my stomach now, but at the time all I worried about was not detoxing. For about the first six months upon coming to the clinic, I would still continue to use just about everyday even though I couldn't feel the effects of it anymore.

These daily habits open my eyes to just how sick I truly was. I was not only addicted to opiates, I was addicted to the lifestyle, to constantly being broke and the hustle to make money and to the idea that I could never amount to anything. Getting high gave me an excuse to not have to succeed in life and at the time that was good enough for me. I continued to dabble after the first six months when times got hard and I whenever I was faced with a negative emotion, each time leaving me with a heavier feeling of guilt than the time before.

I can't say exactly when but at some point along the way I decided to shed a different light on the way I viewed this whole recovery thing. I started attending groups on a weekly basis. I started opening up and listening in my counseling sessions, and actually started to apply the advice that was being given to me in my life. I realized the change had to start within myself; I wasn't going to play the victim anymore.

I would be lying if I said it didn't take work. Every time the temptations would arise, I would fight the battle within to not give in



to a dead end decision. I chose the higher path. The path that at least gave me the opportunity to do better by myself. The path I deserved all along. Every time I got faced with challenges, the

easier it became for me to make the right decisions, so much to the point where they weren't hardly decisions at all, they were my morals instead.

Now when I look in the mirror, I see someone who never forgets her past, but doesn't let it define her anymore either. Someone who has broken free from the shackles of addiction and has regained control of her life. I've learned so much about myself throughout this process that I'm actually grateful that I was forced to expound on the things that turned me to addiction in the first place. I know I'll be an addict in recovery for the rest of my life, and I'll always remember that, but I don't have to be the victim to my addiction. I choose sobriety. I choose life. I choose to have a greater purpose. And with that I will continue to grow and succeed and love the way I was meant to all along, gaining more hope with every passing day sober.



By Stacey Pearce | OTPG AATOD Board Delegate

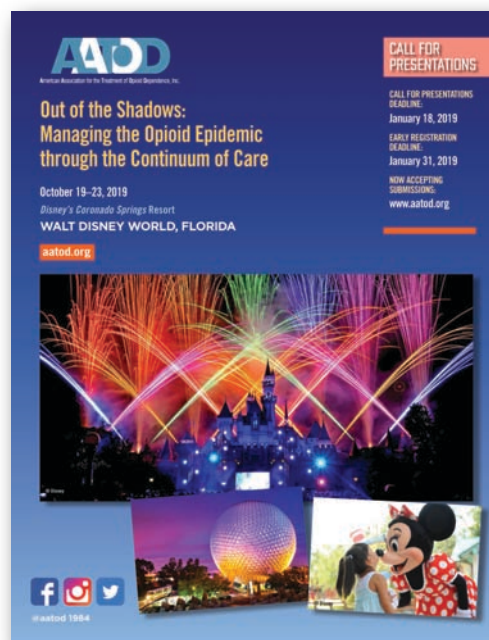
Happy Summer everyone! Hope this AATOD update finds you well and enjoying some summertime fun. As part of my late Spring activities, I attended the second AATOD Board Meeting of 2019 in Washington, DC. Since we were in DC, it was another round of visiting congress people and talking about MAT. The focus for this round of education was to discuss a bill introduced (HR 2482) by Representative Tonko of New York. This bill would essentially remove all restrictions for OBOT physicians by removing the patient cap and the required eight-hour training requirement. We also continued to discuss the importance of incorporating MAT into jails and prisons. The message of the potential dangers and repercussions of the Tonko bill and importance of expanded access to care while incarcerated, was shared with as many offices as we could get appointments. Another important way to communicate this message more broadly is for you to schedule in-state visits with your federal Representatives and Senator's offices or extend an invitation for them to come to your clinic. I can provide you with the information we use during our meetings and discuss with you the most important information to relay during your appointments.

The day after Hill visits, the Board met for our quarterly meeting. One of the visitors was Keith Brown, Deputy Assistant Administrator for the Diversion Control Division of the DEA. We had a very informative conversation with him and look forward to the things he discussed becoming reality. Mr. Brown advised that the NTP Best Practice Guidelines have finally been cleared by lawyers and should be available by the end of the summer. We have been told on many previous occasions that this document was going to be released, but this time I think it will really happen! The DEA is also hoping to provide trainings and guidance to the field and DEA inspectors so that areas of concern and question can be discussed, they hope to hold multiple conferences for this purpose. Another topic that we have been hearing about for years is mobile vans and our ability to use them to deliver services and medication. This is a priority for Mr. Brown and he advised that he hopes a public comment notice will be published by the end of the summer that would allow mobile van activities. In relation to the transport of medications to jails, Mr. Brown advised that there is the ability to request exemptions from DEA regulations that would allow us to treat incarcerated individuals. He said the most important aspect for the DEA is how the medication will be kept secure once it arrives at the jail and developing a plan for security and access of the medication is imperative. If you're interested in setting up an agreement with a local jail or prison and want to discuss this option further, please call or email me and I'll give you more details on the information Mr. Brown relayed. Everyone should also plan to attend the open AATOD Board Meeting at the AATOD conference in October 2019 because there will be DEA representatives for a questions and answers session.

If your staff is in need of Hepatitis C training and education, the Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network (ATTC) has a couple options available for free. Go to <https://attcnetwork.org/centers/global-attc/hcv-current-initiative-0> for more information. The two free options are an online, ninety-minute course for continuing education credits, or a six-hour face-to-face training that you can arrange for your entire staff. You could even coordinate with a neighboring clinic for staff at multiple clinics to receive the training! New for Hepatitis B is a vaccine that also treats the disease. Once I receive further information on this vaccine, I will share it by email with members.

**Finally, I'd like to strongly encourage you to register your staff and book your hotel rooms for the 2019 AATOD Conference in Walt Disney World.**

I'm pretty sure that rooms at the conference hotel for some of the conference nights have already been fully booked, so you need to try to get your rooms sooner rather than later. Also, if you reserved too many rooms please go ahead and cancel them so others will have the ability to book at the conference hotel. If you don't get a room at the conference hotel, AATOD has a room block at the Disney All Star Sports Resort with a room price of \$129/night. The hotel is only a 15- minute walk away, or you can take the free buses that go everywhere on Disney property. Hurry and book those rooms too though, because that room block may book up too and after that it will be a third property option that may be further away. We're lucky to be staying on a Disney property, because they make life very easy to get between properties, theme parks, and anywhere else you want to go on property. Hope to see you at the Mouse's House in October!



## Letters from the Editors

Our next Newsletter release is going to coincide with the Annual OTPG Conference! We would love to have submissions from all over the state to share with all the OTPG attendees. Please email any submissions to [otpgnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:otpgnewsletter@gmail.com). We look forward to hearing from you!

Shannon and Erica

## Come Join Us! become an OTPG member

The annual membership dues are listed below and are based on the current patient census of your facility.

- 0-149 patients: \$250
- 150-299 patients: \$500
- 300-499 patients: \$1,000
- 500+ patients: \$1,500

Please visit our web site for more information on membership.

[www.otpggeorgia.org](http://www.otpggeorgia.org)



Get to know the OTPG board members visit [www.otpggeorgia.org](http://www.otpggeorgia.org)

### The benefits available to members of OTPG:

- Four free one CEC trainings during 2017
- Access to free hotline maintained by Jackson-Lewis PC, labor and employment law specialists
- Membership with the American Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence (AATOD)
- Discounted education opportunities
- Affiliation with community organizations
- Updated state and federal information to include statistics, changes to regulations, available funds, etc.
- Chance to network within our industry
- Ability to purchase discounted copies of "Exploring the World of Opioid Addiction"