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Behavioral health and therapeutic services at Kings Mountain Hospital: The science of compassion

Dean Jenks, Ph.D.
Carolinas HealthCare System
Public Information and Marketing

Behavioral health treatment traditionally carries a social stigma. Although addition illnesses are much the same as physical ones, they are still seen differently. Kings Mountain Hospital operates a comprehensive Behavioral Health unit that utilizes a holistic approach to diagnosis and treatment. They view the patient as individuals and treat their illness and/or additions with profound respect and compassion.

It is difficult to completely separate the treatments within Behavioral Health. Kings Mountain Hospital was recently certified to meet patient needs related to medical detoxification, acute substance abuse and mental health. And, because many patients come needing treatment in more than one of these areas at the same time, a genuine team approach is utilized with amazing effectiveness.

Sharon Anderson is the Director of Therapeutic Services at Kings Mountain Hospital. Kathy Woodard is the Clinical Manager for the Behavioral Health Unit. These two manage the clinical and therapy functions of all behavioral health services at the hospital. Neither of these women look like traditional behavioral health specialists. They are very outgoing and friendly. They seemed to have had a calming affect on me and both were very articulate. Upon interviewing them, however, I discovered a fire inside both of them. Their passion for truly helping those they serve became evident within the first few minutes of our conversation. Although different in their approaches and responsibilities, they compliment each other in ways that are visible to both their staffs and their patients. I asked them about their services.

"Medical detoxification is a crisis situation. We have to quickly assess the patient and use medical techniques to safely cleanse their system of the alcohol or substances in a manner that is both safe and effective," Woodard said. "Detox is a short process," Anderson added. "After the patient is safe to treat with other options, the process is basically finished," she said. Other

options play a major role within the behavioral health unit. Whether the treatment plan is for medical detoxification, substance abuse or other related mental health issues, education and structure are the keys.

"We begin the educational process as soon as possible. Because detox patients stay only 3-5 days, we strive to get them involved with planning their lives after they leave here," Woodard said. While patients are undergoing the detoxification process, they are required to attend two meetings per day. "We try to facilitate their understanding that their addiction to alcohol or other substances is a chronic illness. And, although chronic, it is treatable," Anderson said. The education does not stop with the required meetings. As soon as patients are able to interact with others, they are offered several daily sessions in addition to their required meetings. "We want them to begin planning for their life outside of the facility and we let them know there will probably be set backs," Woodard noted.

Because detoxification can be a repeated treatment, Kings Mountain Hospital sees some of its patients return for the process multiple times. "It is easy to judge people and their circumstances, however, we don't. Our staff is trained not to judge others, but to help them. We want the patients to know that is their responsibility to take charge of their lives, but we also want them to know that we are here for them," Anderson explained. In order for a person to be discharged for the treatment service, they must have no unscheduled medication for 24-hours. After discharge, they are encouraged to adhere to their educational options and seek ongoing counseling. For some, the process is enough. For others, however, it is part of a vicious cycle that seemingly has no end. In fact, patients may go through medical detoxification 5 times before realizing their need for ongoing treatment.

Acute substance abuse treatment, although different than medical detoxification, is approached in a similar fashion. Patients seeking this treatment participate in a very structured environment that is filled with educational opportunities and practical daily programs. "Addiction is an illness," Anderson said. "And,

often the most difficult part of the treatment is helping an individual realize they have a substance abuse problem," Woodard added. At Kings Mountain Hospital, the acute substance treatment process lasts from 5 to 7 days. During that time, patients interact with the treatment team as well as with each other. "It is rewarding to see our patients talking to each other in informal groups or in one-on-one situations. Sometimes that is where the real breakthroughs occur," Woodard said. Although there are plenty of chances within the program for patients to talk and learn about their illness, sustained abstinence is much more likely if there is an active support group in their lives after the treatment program is over. For some, the acute phase of the substance abuse treatment is only the beginning. There are centers that provide long term treatments that can last up to 30 days. Kings Mountain Hospital, however, only treats the acute substance abuser and helps with long-term placement if warranted.

Substance abusers have no stereotype. Abusers come from all walks of life. They are white-collar executives, physicians, factory workers and any other type person that one can think of. Often, the key to recovery is a complete change in environment. Many substance abusers that participate in acute and ongoing treatment move to another city. They adopt new friends and they eliminate contact with their old ones. "Patients that are undergoing treatment here are usually hungry. They have huge appetites and crave proteins and carbohydrates," Anderson said. Patients can be dehydrated and lacking proper nutrition when they arrive for treatment. "We have plenty of food, juice and sweets for them throughout their stay here," Woodard said. "We have to get their bodies back on track before we can successfully work on their addictions," she added.

The difficult part of managing a successful program like the one at Kings Mountain Hospital is that separating patients into appropriate treatment tracks can be difficult. "Many of our patients need medical detoxification services and they are substance abusers and they need mental health services," Woodard said. "Although we do have tracks that patients follow, sometimes we

provide mixed treatment services for those that need them," she added. A major associated factor in patient treatment stems from depression. For some, substance abuse is the only effective method they know to numb the depression. Many have never sought help and do not realize that they have a treatable disease. "They do what they can and sometimes, it is not enough. And, because of their situation, some people must make choice between purchasing their medications or their groceries," Anderson said.

Even with all of the complexity, Kings Mountain Hospital operates a very successful program. "Our patients have a 70 percent compliance rate for follow-up care. Most of that success is due to the true multidisciplinary treatment team. The team consists of registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, certified nursing assistants, occupational therapists, activity specialists, social workers, mental health counselors, substance abuse counselors, a physician and other medical consultants. "We try to be very flexible and meet as many patient needs as we can," Anderson noted. "And, as difficult as treatment is for the patient, it is very difficult for the family too," Woodard added.

Sharon Anderson, the Director of Therapeutic Services at Kings Mountain Hospital is a veteran of 9 years at KMH. She is a Registered Occupational Therapist and holds a BA from Indiana University. In her leisure time, she enjoys quilting, making various types of crafts and spending time with her family. Kathy Woodard, Clinical Manager of the Behavioral Health Unit, has a BSN degree from New York Regents. She is active in training and showing Tennessee Walking Horses.

The people of this community are fortunate to have such a strong program in place at their local hospital. Although not much publicity or marketing efforts are used to promote behavioral health, it is indeed a busy area. Much of the program's success is attributable to Sharon and Kathy. Their dedication to others and their abilities to teach and treat are hard to put a value on. We congratulate all that are connected to the program and are confident of its future success.

Make plans now for diabetes-healthy holiday gatherings and winter parties

Holiday gatherings and parties pose a special challenge to people with diabetes. The key to a diabetes-healthy gathering is enjoying a variety of healthy food selections.

If you have diabetes, follow these tips to help keep your blood sugar level in the normal range throughout the holidays and the winter months ahead:

- Eat a low-calorie, healthy snack before you leave home. That way you won't overeat when you get to the party.

- Have a plan for what, when and how much you will eat. Check out the buffet table and then select the healthy foods that fit your meal plan.

- Contribute your favorite healthy dish to the holiday buffet.

- Eat slowly and enjoy every bite. Eating slowly reduces your chances of eating too much.

- Drink water. Water is the healthy, no-calorie beverage. If you are hosting a holiday gathering, here are just a few ideas of what you can do to help your guests with

diabetes:

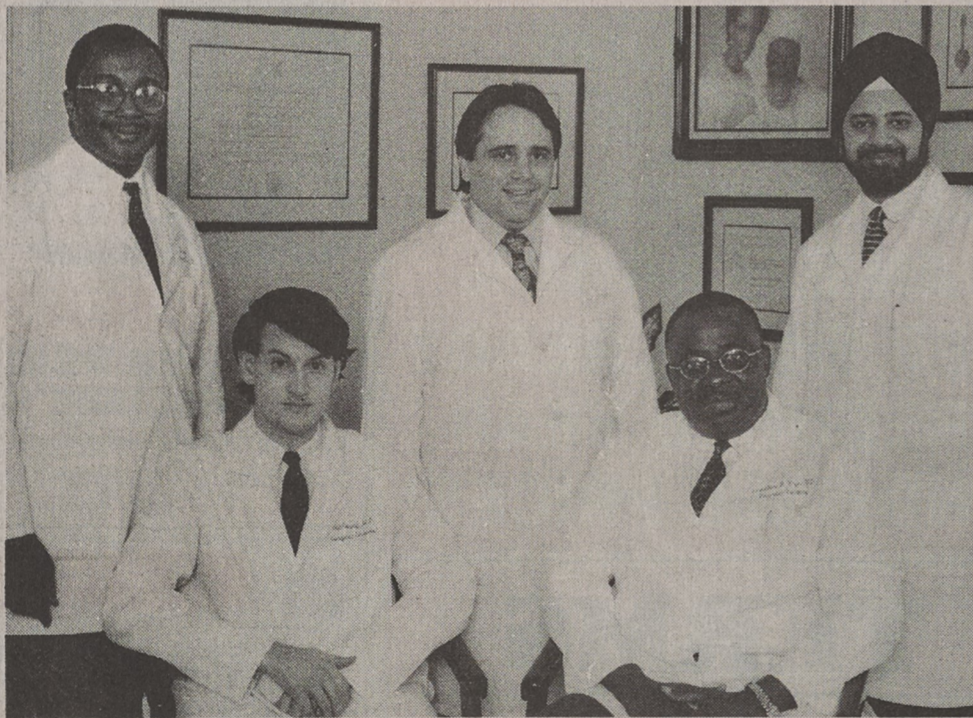
- Offer a variety of low-fat, high-fiber foods. That means fresh fruits and vegetables, grilled or broiled lean meats, fish, and turkey and chicken without the skin. Cut down on mayonnaise, oil and butter, and increase fiber with whole grain breads, peas and beans.
- Transform traditionally high-fat and high-calorie foods into low-fat, healthier versions. For example, use nonfat or 1 percent milk instead of whole milk or cream. Try low-fat cottage cheese and plain yogurt

instead of cream cheese.

- Be supportive of your family members and friends with diabetes. Encourage loved ones to stay in control of their disease. If you see them slipping, don't scold them-keep encouraging them.

To find out more about controlling diabetes, call the National Diabetes Education program at 1-800-438-5383 or visit the program's website at <http://ndep.nih.gov>.

These Surgeons Could Practice Anywhere,



Our new physicians left to right: Obinna N. Eruchalu, MD, FACS, FICS - Eric S. Young, MD
Paul A. Armstrong, DO - Augustine R. Eze, MD - Inderjeet Singh, MD

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When it comes to surgery, you want to be selective about the surgeon you choose. And because you want the most skilled surgeons, we've expanded our surgical staff to include the highly qualified surgeons of **Metrolina Surgery**. Located at 120-118 S. Railroad Avenue, these surgeons are on staff at Kings Mountain Hospital and offer a diverse range of surgical services - from minor procedures to more complex surgical

procedures including: **Vascular Surgery, Laparoscopic Surgery, Hernia Repair, Breast Biopsies, Abdominal Surgery, Gallbladder Surgery and Varicose Vein Surgery.**

You can rest easy knowing that these physicians utilize the latest technology and surgical expertise to help you recover safely. So, if you need surgery, depend on the surgeons right here at home. To learn more about the services of Metrolina Surgery call 730-9131.



Kings Mountain Hospital
Carolinas HealthCare System

706 West King Street - Kings Mountain, NC 28086 - 739-3601

Keeping fit and staying stress free during the holidays

Home for the holidays. In this era of blended and extended families it is increasingly common for many people to spend that trip home not in a guest room but in a hotel room.

Travel, particularly during the holidays, can cause added stress, which can translate to added pounds and inches.

A recent survey by Hilton Hotels and the National Sleep Foundation showed that people eat and drink more when traveling, even without the added holiday cheer.

Ironically, it's harder to stick to a fitness routine while traveling during the holidays-but more important than ever to do it.

A growing number of hotels understand this and have made some very creative changes to keep travelers fit and comfortable. Here are some tips on making your next holiday visit healthier and happier from the experts at Hilton Travel Lifestyle Centers:

Holiday Fitness and Stress Reduction

- Consider exercising in the morning. Exercise helps jump start you mentally and physically. (Studies also show people are more likely to benefit from early-morning routines.)

- Arrange special airline meals when possible. On long flights, call the airline and arrange a healthier meal. On short trips, grab a healthy snack before and after the flight.

- Drink lots of water. Even while sitting the body loses water.

- Keep your circulation strong. A strong circulation can help prevent muscle cramps and keep you alert. When on a plane, walk down the aisles or periodically stand up and stretch.

- Take work-out clothes on your trip. This will serve as an incentive and help to motivate you to exercise.

- Don't make exercise a chore. Do what you can, when you can. Even a few minutes a day can help.

- Avoid eating and going right to sleep. It's tough when there are so many business meals but it's also tough on the body to digest foods that way.

Although there's no silver bullet for reducing stress when traveling, there are some simple ways you can minimize it.

- Have confidence in your colleagues back at the office. Empower them to make decisions while you're out.

- Don't get caught in a jam; avoid peak travel times. Try to avoid traveling on Mondays and Fridays or during rush hour.

- Think positively about your trip. If it's a city you haven't been to before, is there a new restaurant you can try while you're there? Free Booklet

A free booklet called *Staying Fit and Stressing Less While Traveling* is available by writing to Hilton TLC, c/o Douglas, Cohn & Wolfe, 8730 Sunset Blvd., 5th Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90069. For information about Hilton Hotels' Health-Fit and Stress-Less Rooms, visit the Hilton Web site at www.hilton.com or call 1-800-HILTONS.