



Emotional Pain...How Do We Cope?

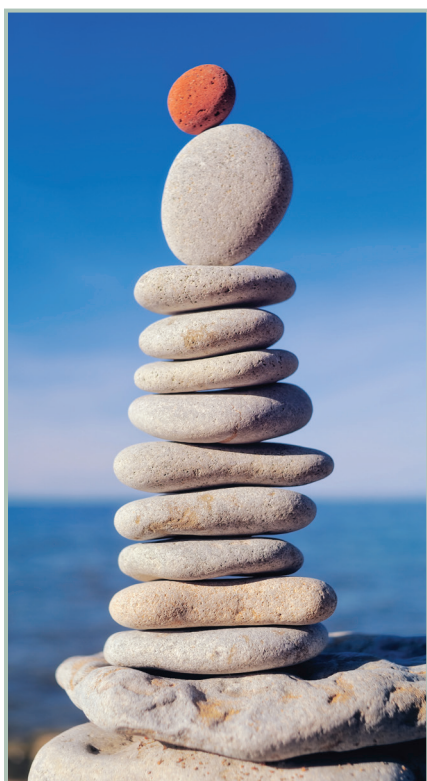
All of us will face significant challenges throughout our lives. The various stressors we encounter can take on many forms, and will affect us in different ways throughout our development. As we grow older, we develop skills to manage these challenges and the difficult emotions that can arise when we are under stress. Pre-teens and adolescents are at a particularly vulnerable time in their lives because they have begun to face more complex situations, but have not yet learned the many coping skills they will acquire as they grow into adulthood. This is normal, and all young people will make mistakes as they learn to better control their needs. To ensure they do not manage their emotions in harmful ways, a great deal of caregiver attention and guidance is required.

One of the risky behaviors that is used as a coping tool is known as self-harm. The most common form is cutting, when a person uses a sharp object to scratch or cut one's own skin to escape from internal pain and negative thoughts. It is most prevalent in pre-teens and adolescents, who have not yet learned how to express and process emotional issues and stressors in a healthy way. Cutting is often done in secrecy, and although it can be seen as a cry for help, most who cut do not show any indication of their habit. Therefore, this particular behavior can be difficult to detect, unlike other unhealthy coping skills like drinking and drugs.

What can we do to help? Knowing that a person is engaging in self-harm, and understanding what self-harm is, is the first step in helping that person get better. Before healing can begin, we need to address barriers to a person's physical and emotional safety. What risk factors exist in this person's life that need immediate attention? Next, we must be very careful to express love and concern, rather than shame, when addressing this issue. Trust, empathy, validation, security and consistency are key elements to maintaining a healthy and positive relationship.

Connections with caretakers, as well as involvement in expanding social networks, is the antidote to emotional pain and the primary way to feel valued, reduce shame and fill time in positive ways.

It is also important to help the person you care about engage in positive activities. This includes simple coping skills like mindfulness, journaling, listening to music, drawing, exercise, time outdoors, healthy eating and sleeping habits, consistent routines, and simple conversations with family and friends. It also includes more complex activities such as being part of clubs, sports teams, taking family outings, and committing to a meaningful organization.



Cutting can be difficult to detect, but is often paired with symptoms of depression, isolation, and feeling overwhelmed. If you are concerned about the emotional needs of someone you care about, it is important that you assist them in getting help. Addressing these issues with a therapist will help identify and develop specific skills necessary to cope in healthy ways. Our compassionate team of therapists are here to help you and your loved ones navigate life's challenges and build fulfilling lives.



As we celebrate our 50th Anniversary this year and reflect on what has been accomplished, it is with gratitude. We are grateful to the people who saw and responded to the needs of our troubled youth in 1969. They set a strong foundation on which we have grown and evolved.

Five decades later, the Bridge is still supported by people who want to improve the lives of the children and families in our community. We appreciate each of you and the many ways you demonstrate your commitment to our mission. We are able to realize our vision of *Every child, every family, every time* because of your generous gifts of time, talent and treasure. Thank you for making a defining difference in the lives of those touched by the Bridge.

Visit our website to read past editions of Every Family, as well as our Every Family School Edition.

Annual Meeting & Bridge Business Award



(left to right) Tanya D'Addio, Elizabeth DeBassio, Kathleen Christensen, Jarrett Solomon, Michael Tedone, Megan Trask, Emily Wood.

On June 4, 2019, the Bridge held its Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors at the Pond House in West Hartford. Margaret Hann, Executive Director of the Bridge, honored Connecticut Wealth Management with the Bridge Business Award. Given annually, the award celebrates the positive impact Connecticut Wealth Management has made on the lives of those who turn to the Bridge for hope and healing.

Connecticut Wealth Management has invested over \$31,000 in the mission of the Bridge through sponsorship of the Children's Charity Ball and a multi-year pledge commitment. In addition, Kathy Christensen, a Director at Connecticut Wealth Management, serves on the Bridge's Board of Directors. Many thanks to Connecticut Wealth Management's leadership, employees, and clients for their incredible generosity and giving spirit.

Upcoming Events

- 9/11/19 BREAKFAST ON THE BRIDGE
- 9/18/19 VIEW OF THE BRIDGE
- 1/18/20 CHILDREN'S CHARITY BALL



This year, we will return to the Hartford Golf Club as we celebrate the 21st Children's Charity Ball.

The generous support of our sponsors, donors, attendees, and committee members is what makes this event such a success each year, and we are grateful for your contributions.

We hope you will join us as together we raise important funds to enhance the vital programs and services the Bridge offers to children, adults and families.



George C. Hastings Award Presented to Brian Smith

Fifty years ago, George Hastings was among a group of bold individuals who saw a need in the community and founded the Bridge. We were fortunate to have his leadership, guidance and support for over 40 years. George was a voice for the voiceless who was driven to overcome challenges and achieve justice.

The inaugural George C. Hastings Award was presented to Brian Smith at the Annual Meeting. Smith, a partner at Robinson + Cole and member of the Bridge's Board of Directors, has been a strong supporter of the Bridge for more than two decades and has served as Chair of the Governance Committee for most of his tenure. His legal counsel has been a tremendous asset to the organization, particularly as it opened residential programs throughout the state.

In selecting Brian as the first recipient of this award, we have chosen someone who mirrors George's values, ethics, and desire to create positive change. We are pleased and proud to recognize both George and Brian for their exceptional dedication to our mission. (Pictured at left are Margaret Hann, Executive Director, and Brian Smith.)



MAKE A LASTING DIFFERENCE. *LEAVE A LEGACY*



Martha Rennie (l), Director of Development, recognizes **Builders for the Future**, Ava and Mark Torello, Margaret Hann, Benjamin Kehl and Robert Burke.

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

Did you know there's a simple way you can make the gift of a lifetime and leave a legacy in the community for generations to come? It is never too early to think, dream, and plan for the impact and legacy you want to make with your life. After providing for your loved ones, you can:

- Include the Bridge Family Center in your Will
- Name the Bridge Family Center as a beneficiary of your life insurance policy, IRA, or other retirement plan
- Remember loved ones with a charitable bequest in their honor

When you make a gift to support our future, you will become a member of **Builders for the Future**, our planned giving society. No gift is too small. And the impact will be deep and long-lasting. You can also make an online gift today to our Endowment Fund at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving at hfpg.org/donate and search "The Bridge."

To learn how you can make a difference for children and families far into the future, contact Martha Rennie, Director of Development, at 860.521.8035 ext. 1105 or martha@bridgefamilycenter.org. For more information, visit www.bridgefamilycenter.org

PLEASE INCLUDE US IN YOUR GIVING BY MAILING A GIFT IN THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE, OR BE IN TOUCH TO LEARN ABOUT THE ADDITIONAL GIVING AND ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES THAT FEEL RIGHT FOR YOU.

EVERY FAMILY is a newsletter of the Bridge Family Center | 1022 Farmington Avenue, West Hartford, CT 06107-2105 | 860.521.8035
info@bridgefamilycenter.org | www.bridgefamilycenter.org | facebook.com/BridgeFamilyCenter | Executive Director: Margaret A. Hann | Editor: Doreen Tarascio.
The Bridge is a private, nonprofit youth and family service agency offering a broad range of services to children, youth, families, and adults. Our counseling centers are in West Hartford, Avon, and Rockville, and our Family Resource Center is located within the Charter Oak International Academy in West Hartford.