

## 2 16 17 Taos News Article: Continuum of Care

*The Taos News has committed to implement a weekly column to help educate our community about emotional healing through grief. People may write questions to Golden Willow Retreat and they will be answered privately to you and possibly as a future article for others. Please list a first name that grants permission for printing.*

Dear Ted:

A couple of months ago, I returned from a treatment center for addiction and while I was there, the staff talked about continuum of care. I didn't listen very closely as my life seemed to have taken a turn for the better and I thought I had all I needed for my quality of life. Well, I did within the safety of the treatment center walls! When I left and the demands of life came crashing in, I was amazed at how I just wanted to run back to the center stay cocooned away. Luckily, today, I am still sober and I'm wondering if you can write about the necessity of continuum of care in recovery. Thanks, Now I Listen

Dear Listen:

I am always grateful for any questions asked pertaining to recovery, because it gives me the opportunity to remind myself and others that recovery is a lifelong process and does not only apply to addiction.

Recovery can include addiction and as well as many different benchmarks in one's life. And a big part of recovery is grief which is the natural and normal healing process from loss. Loss can happen in many ways not only from death. Loss of control, dreams, hope, Self, home, partnership, pets, time, children leaving home, community, innocence, youth, hair, health, and the list continues. All are losses, and grief is the natural and normal healing/recovery process from loss.

In all growth, there is a need for what I call scaffolding, where we heal and grow step-by-step, inch-by-inch. Our brains and bodies are not set up to just blast through to new levels of recovery in one big swoop. Our entire system needs to adapt to changes incrementally. In your particular case, you went from a high level of care (treatment) and you are now scaffolding down into new levels of care. It sounds like you quickly felt the environmental demands, as you reintegrated with the world, you had the opportunity to step out for a while and still be supported in a contained and safe environment.

Often, people may have a scaffolding effect where their support is moving towards decreasing the level of care in steps, such as: entering treatment, then sober-living, to intensive-out-patient, individual and family therapy, these are levels of check-ins within this formal support system.

Support such as recovery groups, the 12-Steps, self-care (spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional), and other needs may be sought out through the entire healing process. An interesting part of this is, as you grow, you change, and that growth leads to new losses of self in which new needs and supports arise. As you continue to grow and change, different levels of support will be needed to insure healthy growth. Remembering that support and healing are a life-long process, and connection and support, formally and informally, can build the resilience for a higher quality of life. Thank you for the question. I wish you well. Until next week, take care.

**Golden Willow Retreat is a nonprofit organization focused on emotional healing and recovery from any type of loss. Direct any questions to Ted Wiard, LPCC, CGC, Founder of Golden Willow Retreat at (575) 776-2024 or [GWR@newmex.com](mailto:GWR@newmex.com)**