

Rediscovering Life with Purpose

How a Young Adult with a Debilitating Psychotic Disorder Regained Promise and Hope.



Patient Background – Getting to Know Wyatt*

Wyatt* was part of a thriving family living in the northeastern United States. His dad was a successful businessman, his mom was supportive and involved, and his adult siblings were successful in their own enterprises. Growing up, Wyatt was a gifted writer who also played music and enjoyed sports.

But in his late teens, he began hearing voices and having paranoid thoughts. Although he and his family didn't realize it at the time, he was experiencing early symptoms, of schizophrenia. Wyatt was briefly hospitalized and was in and out of outpatient treatment with various medications in the following years. He never connected with a therapist and continued to deny any problems existed. He attended college, but didn't do well and began deteriorating.

When Wyatt came to Sibcy House at Lindner Center of HOPE, he was in his mid-20s, living in an apartment on his own, but relying on his parents to pay his rent and bills. His parents were concerned that he was barely functioning and his behaviors and thoughts were becoming more paranoid.

Effective Treatment and Therapy

"After years of non-adherent treatment, Wyatt was disorganized in his thought process," explained Todd Palumbo, MD, MBA, psychiatrist and Medical Director of Sibcy House. "He was responding to voices no one else heard. He was guarded and not sure what was going on. He was actively psychotic."

Wyatt went through a Comprehensive Diagnostic Assessment, where clinicians confirmed that Wyatt's schizophrenia, evident only five years earlier, had progressed significantly. The Sibcy House program provided the intense structure that Wyatt needed for stabilization.

Because each Sibcy House treatment is individualized to the patient's unique needs, "We provided treatment at a pace that was right for him and comfortable for the family," said Dr. Palumbo.

Promising Outcomes: A Way of Hope

As a result of his treatment with Sibcy House, Wyatt was able to accept his diagnosis and what it meant to his life. He recognized his symptoms of schizophrenia, such as hearing voices, and those subsided. He became more in-tune with reality and connected to his parents.

"We were able to transfer Wyatt to a residential program that offered more freedom, where he continues to do well. He has independence in a monitored complex where he continues therapy sessions with a psychiatrist and training in life skills," said Dr. Palumbo.

Wyatt's parents have shared many positives with Sibcy House staff. "Wyatt has demonstrated a clear grasp of the last eight years of his life. His thoughts are organized and well expressed. We are confident that he is on the right road. We know there are rough spots ahead, but we are hopeful that we will make progress and are very grateful for your good work."

* Patient's name changed for confidentiality.

Rediscovering Values and Reconnecting with Her True Self

How a young woman got back in touch with her own value system and personal worth to overcome addictions

Patient Background – Getting to Know Brianna*

Brianna was a good student in high school, despite a somewhat troubling home life. Brianna lived with her mother, sister and younger brother in the Midwest. Her father, although not legally separated or divorced from her mother, lived elsewhere for business, led a separate life, and was open with Brianna about relationships outside his marriage. As a result, Brianna found herself in more of a “confidant or friend” role with her dad, rather than a father-daughter relationship.

While still in high school, Brianna began “sexting.” Explicit pictures of her quickly spread throughout school. After graduation, Brianna moved to San Francisco to begin college, but she dropped out before the end of her first quarter, without either of her parents’ knowledge.

She began using marijuana heavily. She tried an entry-level job as a waitress, but unable to support her lifestyle, she began working as an escort.

A series of legal events caught the attention of Brianna’s father and he intervened. After bailing his daughter out and bringing her home, he demanded she pursue treatment. Help came at Sibcy House.

Accurately Identifying the Problem

When Brianna arrived at Sibcy House at Lindner Center of HOPE, her response was a common one. She was resistant to treatment and outspoken about the fact that she was only in the program because her parents were forcing her.

“We had to engage her in the idea that her role as an escort represented an addiction,” explained Todd Palumbo, MD, MBA, psychiatrist and Medical Director of Sibcy House. “It wasn’t just a job. She didn’t do it simply because it was a way to make quick cash. There was something else feeding into it.” It took therapy for Brianna to eventually see this truth herself.



Brianna’s ten-day stay included a Comprehensive Diagnostic Assessment, which revealed several challenges. “Brianna had an underlying sexual addiction, underlying substance addiction with marijuana, underlying anxiety. Depression further fueled the anxiety and self-destructive behaviors,” according to Dr. Palumbo.

“We had to determine how to best treat this intertwined group of addictions which were resulting in horrible consequences,” explained Dr. Palumbo.

Effective Treatment and Therapy

Brianna’s treatment included therapy with Robin Arthur, PsyD, Lindner Center of HOPE Chief of Psychology, to treat her anxiety and depression and address family relationship issues. Brianna also met with Chris Tuell, EdD, LPCC-S, LICDC, Lindner Center of HOPE Coordinator of Addiction Services. She opened up and responded to treatment quickly. “She created a very strong therapeutic alliance with her treatment team, especially Dr. Arthur,” explained Dr. Palumbo, “That speaks volumes to Brianna’s progress and where she is today.”

At Sibcy House, Brianna used behavior modification to change her behaviors...and her life.

Promising Outcomes: Restoring Relationships, Rediscovering Self-worth

Six months after her initial diagnosis and treatment, Brianna continues to make progress in regular outpatient therapy with a Lindner Center of HOPE therapist and psychiatrist. She is making plans to return to post-secondary school in the Midwest, where she lives with her mother and works at a retail store.

* Patient’s name changed for confidentiality.

Restoring Relationships, Regaining a Functional Life

How an Accurate Diagnosis and Safe Structure Helped a Young Adult with Type II Bipolar Disorder Move Forward

Patient Profile -- Getting to Know Brett

Brett* lived at home with both parents and an older brother who was attending college. While in high school, Brett had limited social contacts or friends. He worked briefly at various jobs, such as bagging groceries and mowing grass, but had no social engagement beyond his family. After graduating from high school with some struggle, Brett tried attending community college, but was not successful. At 19, he faced several significant emotional and mental problems.

Brett's Challenges

Brett had relationship problems with his family. His mother, who was dealing with intense anxiety herself, struggled with consistent discipline, while his father, who was constantly working, was a strict disciplinarian.

Brett was extremely attached to his mother and would not leave her side, to the point that it was debilitating for both of them. Brett was stagnant in a development stage much younger than his physical age. Although he was 19 years old, he wanted to lie on his mother's lap or cuddle as a young child would. When his mother tried to set appropriate limits or would not give him what he wanted, the situation would escalate to violence and even suicidal ideation. Most often, his aggression was self-directed, such as banging his head repeatedly on the floor or threatening self-harm using scissors or a knife to cut himself.

Brett also faced challenges with his medicine regimen. He had been through multiple treatments with various clinicians who had prescribed medicines to manage symptoms. But Brett's diagnosis was never clear, according to Todd Palumbo, MD, MBA, psychiatrist and Medical Director of Sibcy House. As a result, his medication therapy was convoluted and actually stifling his ability to recover.

The core of Brett's issues was low self-worth, according to Dr. Palumbo. Brett never learned to identify himself as anything other than a developmentally delayed individual with a mental illness.

A New Beginning with an Accurate Diagnosis at Sibcy House

Brett began his 28-day stay at Sibcy House with a week-long



Comprehensive Diagnostic Assessment. "We evaluated issues literally from all angles in this 360-degree evaluation," said Dr. Palumbo.

Ultimately, Brett was diagnosed with Type 2 Bipolar Disorder with some hypomanic and more depressive phases. Moderate depression had led to self-harm in reactions to specific situations.

Therapy and testing also revealed Brett had Personality Disorder NOS. Treatment at Sibcy House helped Brett find ways to refocus, according to Dr. Palumbo. "Something as simple as creating daily structure and what he does every hour, gave Brett the purpose and focus he needed," said Dr. Palumbo.

Effective Treatment and Therapy

In Brett's case, Sibcy House's multidisciplinary approach offered significant benefits. "Having the interaction of a group of people with all areas of expertise was critical, according to Dr. Palumbo. The patient's behavior is often only the tip of the iceberg. We were able to tackle Brett's issues in depth because we had the experience, the diversity of professionals and the time."

Positive Outcomes: Moving Forward

The team at Sibcy House helped Brett achieve numerous target goals. "We were able to find the least amount of medications that were most effective for him," said Dr. Palumbo. "We were also able to create an internal structure and daily schedule to help Brett understand what he needed to do after leaving Sibcy House."

Brett chose to continue outpatient care with Lindner Center of HOPE after his 28-day program. "Brett has moved on the continuum very drastically," said Dr. Palumbo. "He's more developmentally age-appropriate and his relationship with his family has significantly improved."

Brett is now attending college and is looking for a part-time job. Brett has been out of residential therapy for a year now and is still progressing. He lives in a converted apartment at his parents' home with a goal of moving on his own when he's financially able.

* Patient's name changed for confidentiality.