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## Four Winds Partial Programs: Acknowledging the Value of Addiction Education

Addiction education is a key component of treatment in the adult and adolescent partial programs at Four Winds. It is not uncommon for adults and adolescents struggling with mental health issues to battle with addiction as well. While addiction can take many forms (self-injurious behavior, gambling, etc.) the comorbidity of drug and alcohol addiction and mental health issues is high for both populations. The adult and adolescent partial programs offer addiction education to all program participants. A DBT approach has proven particularly successful in helping program participants develop skills to manage addictive behaviors.

Under the leadership of the new Program Director, Matt Phillips, LCSW, the partial programs have placed an emphasis on providing programming for patients with co-occurring disorders. Many people who have mental health issues also struggle with addiction at the same time.

A focus of treatment with patients is to help them understand the difference between self-medicating with drugs and/or alcohol, versus being appropriately evaluated for medication to help alleviate psychiatric symptoms. For many participants it is the first time they have allowed prescription medication to help them; this helps them recognize that there is a big difference between using medicines and not taking substances.

Assistant Program Medical Director, Donna Draper, NPP, advises program participants to abstain from using substances upon entering the partial program. She additionally recommends that patients commit to abstain for at least six

months so that they can give the psychiatric medication a chance to work in their brains and bodies. Most patients take this advice to heart and make a commitment to be substance free, as reflected in the results of random urine samples collected over the course of the patients' attendance. Feedback from both adults and adolescents



regarding addiction education has been quite positive. Patients report that it has helped them better understand addiction and substance use. The instances in which the program might not be appropriate for a particular patient is when an individual using substances daily and to excess. That patient would be better served going to a substance rehabilitation program.