



“We say, ‘The only thing you have to change is everything.’ But we can help you see the need and end up grateful.”

— Michael Dinneen, addiction program manager

Recovery Road

ADDICTS WITH COMPLEX ISSUES FIND HOPE AND HELP AT CeDAR.

by Melissa Taylor

Just off East Colfax on the Anschutz Medical Campus, you'll find the warm, hushed oasis that is the Center for Dependency, Addiction and Rehabilitation (CeDAR), a five-year-old, 30-bed residential treatment center. The center's one-story lodges of dark wood surround ample open spaces with winding paved paths. Inside, exposed beams give way to soft, peach-colored walls. Ed, a gray-haired man in his 60s with prominent gold jewelry, relaxes in a visiting room. He looks toward his wife, Carol, who sits, very erect, beside him. Her short, red hair is attractively styled, and her well-manicured hands glitter with bracelets and rings. She's a recovering addict and former CeDAR patient.

The couple, like others, chose CeDAR for its high-quality staff and its unique partnership with the University of Colorado Hospital. Because of its medical access and staff, CeDAR handles patients with co-occurring disorders. In other words, CeDAR can treat issues such as depression, anxiety, or post-traumatic stress disorder along with addictions in a holistic manner that addresses mind, body, and spirit.

While grounded in the 12-step program, CeDAR adds individual therapy, exercise, and spiritual guidance. For this level of care, the 30-day treatment program costs \$22,500. After the first 30 days, patients usually stay another 60 days in nearby duplexes for continued recovery, counseling, and support, which costs an additional \$12,000. Most patients stay at CeDAR for the full 90 days, the gold standard of recovery. “We give you a lot of attention. It sets us apart from other treatment centers. Our counselor-to-patient ratio is 5:1,” says Michael Dinneen, addiction program manager.

“Here, a person is given the gift of desperation,” adds Dinneen. “You get to rebuild your life. We say, ‘The only thing you have to change is everything.’ But we can help you see the need and end up grateful.”

Carol is grateful. “I’m glad to be alive,” she says. Over the past seven years, Carol became dependent on Valium and wine, taking upwards of 60 to 90 mg of Valium a day plus a lot of alcohol.

“I turned a blind eye,” says Ed, “thinking that she’s a strong lady and will get through this.” She didn’t. Tragedy struck in spring of 2010 when Carol rolled her car three times. She

spent eight days in a hospital in Mexico before returning in a chartered air ambulance to Porter Hospital and ultimately to CeDAR.

Carol stayed at CeDAR for 30 days of residential treatment. Her days were filled with spiritual, physical, and emotional learning opportunities, including meditation, group time, lectures, personal sessions, fitness, 12-step meetings, and reflection.

Ed visited the allotted one hour each week. “God bless this group here and having her closer to home, so I could come see her,” Ed says patting her hand. “The key was to get her here.”

Carol, who counts the staff among her friends, has returned twice to visit. This is a result of the staff’s authenticity, says Rollie Fisher, CeDAR’s business development supervisor. He says 90 percent of CeDAR’s 24-hour, seven-day-a-week staff are recovering addicts. “They can relate. They walk the walk.”

The staff includes registered nurses, physicians assistants, board-certified addiction psychiatrists, and CAC3 (the highest level of certification) counselors with master’s degrees.

While Carol was in treatment, Ed attended one of CeDAR’s weeklong family education

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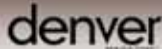
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programs. "For me, the family program was enlightening," Ed says. "The things you learn about this disease are amazing. Like you can't control it, you didn't cause it, you can't cure it."



CeDAR treats issues such as depression, anxiety, or post-traumatic stress disorder, along with addictions, in a holistic manner that addresses mind, body, and spirit.

Fortunately for Carol, with CeDAR's specialization in co-occurring disorders, she could get help with the cognitive damage caused by her drug and alcohol use. "Looking at her MRI, there were lesions and damage you could literally see," says Ed. "When I think about where she is today, it's so dramatic."

The center emphasizes continuing care, so

patients, including Carol, leave with everything in place for continued successful recovery — accountability, outpatient services, counseling, meetings, and online support.

At inception, Dr. Robert (Bob) Harmon, wanted a world-class addiction treatment center in Colorado that would address related disorders and would be part of a hospital system. With Philip Anschutz and others' financial support and the University of Colorado Hospital on board, CeDAR became a reality five years ago.

As CeDAR continues to grow from 30 beds to its full capacity of 50, Dinneen says, "We want you to feel loved and cared for." Executive Director Frank Lisnow adds, "We are passionate about helping patients and families find and stay on the road to recovery." □

Melissa Taylor is an award-winning blogger, educator, freelance writer, and mom.