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Program Overview

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Dear Friends,

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Edward A. Walker, MD, MHA
Chair, WPHP Board of Directors

For more information visit wphp.org or call (206) 583-0127
Laura Moss MD first met James during a return to work planning meeting with other WPHP staff. She was interested in his story because he appeared to be doing very well. He presented looking relaxed, introspective with a kind sense of humor, and even peaceful about his process. She spoke with him about his journey into recovery.

L: How did you first become involved with WPHP?
J: While living in a different state for residency training, I received a DUI. When I applied for a Washington state medical license I reported my previous DUI. I was referred to the WPHP for an evaluation. WPHP monitored me for 6 months and then released me as I was not demonstrating behaviors suggestive of a drinking problem.

Many years later I was slowly burning out in my career and my burnout was exacerbated when my wife became very ill. I felt I could no longer ignore the stress, the burnout, and the worry about my wife. I became obsessed with thoughts that things were not going to go well for us. I felt I couldn’t share what was going on with my colleagues because I feared they would think I couldn’t handle it. I didn’t address my own needs. I ended up more irrationally fearful and then I realized that whatever I don’t want to do, that is what I need to do because that is what is most raw. I need to address those raw things, the things with the loudest volume or the strongest fears. I try to bring my best self into situations which has resulted in improvements in all of my relationships…family, friends, and work. I feel very present and a lot more happy, relationships…family, friends, and work.

J: I believe that participants have to be willing to do the work and be willing to look at things. When I became honest I was able to understand that my wife and my doctors were there to help. I also have realized that whatever I don’t want to do, that is what I need to do because that is what is most raw. I need to address those raw things, the things with the loudest volume or the strongest fears. For me, the first year of recovery has required willingness to accept guidance from others and find people who know what they are doing. Part of that includes trusting the WPHP. It takes effort and time, so I recommend that clients be patient. I realized that it would not get me any good to yell at my fractured arm in an effort to get it to heal faster.

J: I am surprised that once I was able to be honest about my use I have been able to be honest about many things. I am not sure if I expected the WPHP to be more punitive, but what they proposed seemed reasonable and logical. They provided me a recommendation for a treatment plan and executed it. I am surprised that I have been out of work this long, but with each passing month I have gained new insights and acceptance about recovery. I realize now that I was not ready to go back to work. I may have said that I was ready, but I think that I would have had more difficulties if I had gone back sooner. I feel like this has been a therapeutic medical leave and I remind myself that it’s a time to heal and learn. I had broken my hip I would have to apply myself to rehabilitation. I have been able to find meaning in the time off so I could tolerate it and even thrive. I have some thoughts about my former employer’s handling of my situation. It felt unjust, but I had time to process my feelings and put my recovery into action. I think it will provide me strength for dealing with situations in the future.

L: What advice do you have for others?
J: While living in a different state for residency training, I received a DUI. When I applied for a Washington state medical license I reported my previous DUI.

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Many years later I was slowly burning out in my career and my burnout was exacerbated when my wife became inconsistent with my moral compass. The process of coming into recovery re-ordered my priorities. I was able to focus on aspects of my own health and development. I made sure that I was cleaning house, gaining understanding, and seeing my own humanity. I began to forgive myself and move forward. As I spend more time in recovery my focus is to forgive myself and move forward. As I spend more time in recovery my focus allows one to avoid disappointment in oneself for not living up to unrealistic or false expectations. I try to bring my best self into situations which has resulted in improvements in all of my relationships…family, friends, and work. I feel very present and a lot more happy, hopeful and excited about the future, even under multiple stressors, without a promise for future employment. I wouldn’t have been able to handle this sort of stress several years ago.

L: What has surprised you about being involved with WPHP?

J: I am surprised that once I was able to be honest about my use I have been able to be honest about many things. I am not sure if I expected the WPHP to be more punitive, but what they proposed seemed reasonable and logical. They provided me a recommendation for a treatment plan and executed it. I am surprised that I have been out of work this long, but with each passing month I have gained new insights and acceptance about recovery. I realize now that I was not ready to go back to work. I may have said that I was ready, but I think that I would have had more difficulties if I had gone back sooner. I feel this like has been a therapeutic medical leave and I remind myself that it’s a time to heal and learn. If I had broken my hip I would have to apply myself to rehabilitation. I have been able to find meaning in the time off so I could tolerate it and even thrive. I have some thoughts about my former employer’s handling of my situation. I may not have had time to process my feelings and put my recovery into action. I think it will provide me strength for dealing with situations in the future.

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Who We Serve
WPHP serves allopathic, podiatric and osteopathic physicians, dentists, veterinarians, physician assistants, residents and the students and families of these disciplines.

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WPHP Mission
To facilitate the rehabilitation of healthcare professionals who have physical or mental conditions that could compromise patient safety and to monitor their recovery.

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