



CARON RENAISSANCE FAMILY RESTRUCTURING PROGRAM

*An interview with Robert Johnson, MC, CAP, MAC,
Clinical Director at Caron Renaissance*

Caron has always been devoted to treating addiction as a “family disease,” providing treatment for the patient and educating their families on ways to cope, understand the disease process and begin stabilizing the family system. The Family Restructuring Program at Caron Renaissance takes this idea a step further: families not only learn about addiction as a family disease, but are immersed in an intensive, live-in treatment experience to help the entire family system begin the recovery process.

The following interview with Robert Johnson, Clinical Director at Caron Renaissance, explains the roots of this innovative program and how it continues to help families whose lives have been impacted by addiction.

1. How did the need for this program arise?

The idea of families entering residential treatment was hatched by Sid Goodman, the Executive Director of Caron Renaissance, close to twenty years ago. As our clinical philosophy outlines, we see the family system as “the patient.” The family plays an essential role in recovery, and changes in the family can increase the chance of a successful outcome for the primary patient.

2. When did the program officially begin and how many families have participated so far?

The official kickoff was in spring 2008, though we have employed family interventions like this before then. Since the program began, about 40 families have participated.

3. Is this program unique to Caron Renaissance?

Based on reports from other clinicians and referrals, the Residential Family Restructuring Program is the only one of its kind and has not been used at other treatment facilities.

4. What makes a family eligible to participate in this program?

We clinically assess the family in all areas because we seek to identify, defeat and reverse generational patterns of dysfunction. Whoever we believe is clinically necessary will be asked to take part in the program, which may include immediate and extended family members.

5. Is it exclusively for patients of Caron?

The individual does not need to be a patient at Caron. He or she can be in treatment here or elsewhere, or in private therapy. The great thing about the Residential Family Restructuring Program is that we can admit a family directly into the program regardless of where their loved one has received treatment.

6. Do families and patients share the same living quarters during their stay?

Patients and families do share the same living quarters, which are located a little over a mile from the Caron Renaissance clinical offices. They begin an intensive, live-in family treatment experience and are immersed in the day to day treatment process.

7. What types of therapy are used?

We use both group and individual sessions. Different therapeutic modalities are used, including but not limited to, psychodynamic psychotherapy, Alderian, Gestalt, Transactional Analysis, and Cognitive-Behavioral. Each family member is given an individualized schedule upon admission.

8. What are some of the most commonly-addressed issues during treatment?

Addressing day to day relationship dynamics, exploring generational patterns of dysfunction, identifying family roles, “parental inversion,” and raising awareness of family system beliefs and behaviors are common topics in treatment. The benefit of challenging a patient’s over-reliance on parental figures, rebellion, and defiance to individuation presents a clinical opportunity to address and resolve these issues.

9. What determines a family’s length of stay?

This varies based on the family’s needs. It can last anywhere from one week to one month. This is clinically determined at the onset, but there have been circumstances in which the initial recommendation will change.

10. Is there any kind of aftercare program in place once the family leaves treatment?

Each family member is given a continuing care/aftercare recommendation. Also, the referent is part of the treatment process and will be involved in the aftercare recommendation.

For more information on the Caron Renaissance Family Restructuring Program, visit

www.CaronRenaissance.org/family-restructuring-program or call 866-915-0290.