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Thinking Well is the program name for a group of activities conducted at Laurel House that focus on improved cognition and healthy living.

Based on the Neuropsychological and Educational Approach to Cognitive Remediation (NEAR), this activity allows people to practice and improve their thinking skills, and discuss with peers how these skills apply to real life situations at home, school and in the workplace. Thinking Well incorporates daily computer drills and bridging groups.

Thinking Well focuses on the following areas of thought or cognition:

- attention
- memory
- verbal learning
- visual learning
- processing speed
- reasoning and problem solving



The program was created to address the long-term cognitive impairment that interferes with the daily lives of people with serious mental illness. Dr. Leonard M. Miller of the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine has likened this impairment to a bad guest: “It shows up early... and it sticks around over the lifespan.”

Many of the adverse outcomes associated with serious mental illness – social isolation, homelessness and the inability to hold a job – can be traced to cognitive impairment that continues, even after symptoms have been treated and controlled.

Cognitive Remediation – uses individualized drills and group bridging sessions to improve functioning in targeted areas of cognition, such as attention, memory and problem solving.

Social Rehabilitation Workshops – focus on practical application to teach people real-world living skills and strategies. **Supported Employment** and **Supported Education** – evidence-based programs capitalize on increased cognitive skills and confidence of Thinking Well participants.



Goals of Thinking Well

- Create a supportive environment for participants to learn, engage and enjoy their interaction with others
- Stimulate learning or relearning of cognitive tasks and by extension, living skills
- Develop skills in the areas of attention, memory, verbal and visual learning, processing speed, reasoning and problem solving to improve engagement in daily living
- Prepare program participants for the challenges of the workplace, school and independent living

Thinking Well at Laurel House

Laurel House offers daily sessions in cognitive remediation, consisting of computer-based drills and exercises, followed by group discussion. Sessions are led by skilled clinicians trained and certified by Dr. Alice Medalia, Director of Psychiatric Rehabilitation at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons and founder of the NEAR model of cognitive remediation.

The basic cognitive techniques of Thinking Well are integrated into the daily practice of Laurel House's recovery-oriented Supported Employment, Supported Education, Supportive Housing programs and Social Rehabilitation Workshops.



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Frequently Asked Questions

Who can benefit from Thinking Well?

Thinking Well is intended for adults and young adults who have experienced problems with memory, attention, and problem-solving as a result of mental illness.

When does Thinking Well take place?

The Thinking Well program includes a range of activities that occur throughout the day at Laurel House's Resource Center on Washington Blvd. in Stamford, CT. Thinking Well training sessions are offered 5 days a week and participants typically take 2 sessions per week.

Where does Thinking Well take place?

Most of the activities of Thinking Well occur in the Harrison Hoffman Thinking Well Center at 1616 Washington Blvd., a fully equipped resource room with current technology. Program activities can take place in any quiet space with Internet access, and our Thinking Well Counselors also provide this service off-site in group or private settings.

How long does Thinking Well treatment last?

A typical cycle of computer-based cognitive remediation will last up to approximately 4 months (30 sessions). Many participants in the Thinking Well program start with cognitive remediation and then move on to Supported Education and/or Supported Employment programs and Social Rehabilitation Workshops. Some participants may continue Thinking Well sessions or re-enroll in the program to reinforce their learning.

Is there a fee for Thinking Well?

Those who qualify for publicly funded mental health services are eligible to participate in Thinking Well at no charge.

About Laurel House and Resources to Recover



Laurel House, Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization located in Stamford, Connecticut, provides resources and opportunities for individuals and families to achieve and sustain mental health.

The core purpose of Resources to Recover is: early intervention, social inclusion and recovery. The family of services and programs includes: Laurel House's evidence-based programs; www.rtor.org; Thinking Well (Cognitive Remediation); and Treasure Hunters Thrift Store.