



deep healing without meds

Seeker Handbook

WELCOME

You are engaging in a proactive, healing experience combining inner transformative work with outer practical activities which will serve you in many ways. The Day Program experience will be part of your healing process or one could say, your rebalancing on a deeper soul level. You will be part of a small, intentional community focused around a specific program aimed at nurturing your soul and empowering you. The work program and specific proactive therapies will help you to reconnect with who you really are becoming. Essentially, proactivity leads to empowerment which in turn leads to a renewed enthusiasm for life. At the same time, we would like to acknowledge that to inwardly shift from the experience of victim to that of creator can be both frightening and exciting.

As a community, we are committed through insight and understanding, love and patience, and perseverance to facilitate the beginning of your healing process. You have come to Inner Fire, Inc. because either you want to avoid medications or you would like the support to come off your medication while participating in the detox program with the oversight of the very supportive psychiatrist, therapists and guides. We take very seriously the withdrawal of your medications and timing is essential. Once you have settled into the program at Inner Fire, Inc. and engaged in the rhythm, then, with the support of Dr. Nels Kloster and the Inner Fire, Inc. guides, a tapering plan will be created and you may begin to come off your medications. All medications will be kept at Grace Brook Farm ("GBF") and will be taken when a designated guide is present.

After reading the following material, we urge you to discuss any questions, thoughts and comments you may have with us. We strongly believe in an open communication consistent with policies and decisions on confidentiality.

ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook is shares our policies and procedures for you to better understand how we work together. The information contained in this Handbook applies to all Seekers of Inner Fire uniformly and supersedes all prior policies and procedures. All Seekers are subject to the policies outlined in this Handbook. Inner Fire reserves the right to suspend, modify, or amend any policy or procedure at any time.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Inner Fire
Grace Brook Farm
26 Parker Road
Brookline, VT 05345

Telephone:

Grace Brook Farm 802-221-8051
Red House 802-221-8045

Email info@innerfire.us

Website www.innerfire.us

Co-Founder / Director Beatrice Birch beatrice@innerfire.us 802-221-8051
Office Manager Laura Young laura.innerfire@gmail.com 802-221-8051

Main Office - Seekers are welcome to visit us between 11:30 and 12:00 as long as Beatrice, Laura, or another a guide is present.

Staff

Eurythmist:

Guide:	Ajay Bhatt
Guide:	Jeremy Mich
Guide:	Kimberley Olmstead
Guide:	Mary Stowe
Guide and Forester:	Zach Holmes
Guide and Hauschka Artistic Therapist:	Beatrice Birch
Guide and Nutritional Chef:	Audrie Brown
Guide, Gardener and Speech Therapist:	Michael Steinrueck
Relief Guide:	Raven Van Nostrand
Relief Guide:	Zach Young
Transition Guide:	Joyce St. Jean
Homeopath and Naturopath:	Tamara Potselueva
Liver Compress:	Teresa Savel and Laura Young
Psychotherapist:	

ABOUT INNER FIRE

INNER FIRE MISSION

Inner Fire is a proactive healing community offering a choice for people to recover from debilitating and traumatic life challenges without the use of psychotropic medications. We seek deep and lasting healing through an intensive program that first stabilizes a person in crisis, gradually replacing medication with holistic healing practices, addressing the core issues precipitating emotional pain, and then developing skills for growing beyond these issues and becoming an enthusiastic and vital member of their community.

WHO WE ARE

Inspired by initiatives in Europe, Inner Fire is a new therapeutic community in Vermont specializing in responsible medication withdrawal support and deep healing from life's challenges using complementary and holistic healing practices. Inner Fire offers an alternative to the pharmaceutical-intensive treatment protocols that are now the norm. Widely-dispensed psychotropic medications can be as debilitating as the illnesses they purport to heal. The harmful side-effects of these addictive and powerful drugs can be severe and even fatal if administered without proper supervision.

INNER FIRE'S HOLISTIC THERAPIES, PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Psychotherapy	Once weekly
Eurythmy	In blocks throughout year three times weekly
Hauschka Artistic Therapy	Three times weekly
Music Therapy	Thursday evenings
Rhythmical Massage	In blocks throughout year three times weekly
Spacial Dynamics Therapy	In blocks throughout year three times weekly
Speech Arts & Drama	Three times weekly
Liver Compress	Two to three times weekly
Detoxification and Medication Withdrawal - Ongoing	
Work Therapy Program (garden, forest, house and kitchen)	Monday to Friday
Complementary and Holistic Therapy Program	
Peer-to-peer, cultural activities and Therapeutic Lifestyle Changes Program	
Family education and support	Throughout the year
Organic food and nutrition program	Daily
Mentoring, life skills and life coaching	Weekly

Continuum of Care:

Therapeutic community
Creative living community
Community integration program

SCHEDULE

Weekdays

7:00 am	Breakfast, all Seekers present
7:30 am	Washing up
8:00 am	Morning Walk or Group Arts
8:30 am	Morning Circle
9:00 am	Morning practical work – kitchen and outdoor and cleaning
12:00 pm	Lunch
12:30 pm	Washing up
12:45 pm	Liver Compresses and Rest
2:00 pm	Afternoon therapies – Eurythmy, Spacial Dynamics, Speech, Artistic Therapies, Outdoor work
5:00 pm	Supper Preparation
6:00 pm	Dinner and clean up
7:15 pm	Evening program
	Monday appreciation
	Tuesday - crafts/games
	Wednesday's - self and personal space care
	Thursday's - Singing, drumming
	Friday's - Sharing a Question
	Miscellaneous - conversation, group building, biographical story reading, knitting
8:30 pm	Seekers head for home
10:00 pm	Lights out

Weekends - Weekends are a time of digesting, still with structure. Afternoons are spent hiking, swimming and outdoors. Saturday mornings are a time for cleaning rooms and houses. Evenings are spontaneous, occasionally with a community cultural event. Meals are cooked by the Seekers (offering an opportunity to practice what they have learned during the week) and weekend guides.

Retreat Days - Guides and therapists will participate three days out of the year at a staff Retreat to nourish themselves, build community and bring clarity to important issues. Seekers will enjoy hikes and other activities during these retreat days led by other IF friends in the community.

WHAT TO BRING

The seasons here in Vermont bring different needs, and most suggestions are perhaps obvious. Work clothes will be worn more than any dress clothes.

For Autumn and Winter

- Microspikes*
- Long johns
- Mittens
- Scarf
- Snow boots
- Snowshoes*
- Warm clothes
- Warm hat
- Warm work gloves

For Spring and Summer

- Crocs
- Light clothing to layer
- Rain boots
- Rain hat
- Rain jacket
- Sandals
- Sun hat
- Sunscreen
- Swim suit
- Umbrella
- Water shoes
- Work gloves

Additionally, please bring the following:

- Alarm clock (without radio)
- An up-to-date photo of yourself that includes your name and birthdate
- Any transportable instrument you have and can play
- Bed linens for twin size bed (sheets, blankets, comforter)
- Books, songs and poems to share
- Enough wool yarn for knitting a scarf
- Flashlight
- Head lamp
- Hot water bottle for liver compresses
- Journal
- Laundry basket
- Laundry detergent, biodegradable
 - Personal toiletries (natural & fragrance free)
- Pillowcase
- The book, *Why on Earth* by Signe Schaeffer
- Tick remover / key
- Towels
- Writing and art materials: crayons and colored pencils, paper etc.

*As winter sets in, these are essential and enable us to get into the snowy woods which are so silent, beautiful and interlaced with wildlife tracks.

GUIDELINES

WALKING

For the first three months at Inner Fire, if a seeker is going for a walk in their free time, it is required that they find a walking partner, tell a guide and sign out on the board. To allow time to get to know you and you us, Seekers must walk with someone else in the first three months. After these first three months, if all has gone well, a seeker may walk alone in their free time so long as they tell a guide where they are walking, when they plan to return and sign out on the board.

WATER SAFETY

If Seekers swim alone, then they are explicitly carrying full responsibility for the risk they put themselves in. A seeker must always notify a guide when they are swimming and we strongly encourage Seekers to never swim alone.

TICKS AND LYME DISEASE PREVENTION POLICY

Ticks, especially as carriers of Lyme disease, have increasingly become a concern. It is important to do daily tick checks after morning outdoor work, after afternoon outdoor work and at showertime in the evening with soap, your hand and a full length mirror. We encourage Seekers to find a guide (men for men and women for women) or another seeker (men for men and women for women) to assist with checks as needed.

If a tick is found and unattached, secure it in tape and throw it away.

If a tick is found attached, follow these steps:

1. Remove with the tick key you brought with you to Inner Fire.
2. Use a piece of tape to secure tick and throw away
3. Have a guide complete a tick incident form right away and notify Laura or Beatrice in the Main Office.
4. Treat the bite
5. Take the tick tincture hourly 3 times daily for the first three days, then 3 times daily for three week.
6. Monitor your skin and general health over the following weeks. If any symptoms of Lyme's are present (bull's-eye, drastic drop in energy, flu, rash), please notify Laura or Beatrice immediately.

See Appendix 1 - Lyme Tick Prevention and Care for more information

USE OF VEHICLES FOR TRANSPORTATION

There is no need for Seekers to have transportation while engaged in the year long program at Inner Fire. However, due to unusual circumstances, Seekers must have the explicit permission and prior approval from Beatrice in order to have a vehicle at Inner Fire and to have the use of their vehicle. In such a case, a seeker's car keys will be kept in Beatrice's or Laura's possession.

PERSONAL DRESS AND APPEARANCE

Inner Fire Inc. expects all Seekers to dress and groom themselves in accordance with accepted social standards. A neat, modest appearance contributes to one's self-respect and, of course, one's self-care affects people around you. Ensure you have proper attire and gear for the various activities during your day at Inner Fire Inc.

Personal hygiene and washing of hands is of utmost importance. Because we bless our meals by joining hands at the beginning and end of sharing food together, out of respect for each other, ensure your hands are clean. Washing hands after using the toilet is expected as we're in such close contact and often are preparing meals.

COMPUTER, EMAIL AND INTERNET USE

Inner Fire, Inc. is a media-free environment with no internet, cell phone, television and/or radio use. In case of emergency or special circumstances Seekers may use the internet with a guide present.

Photocopying is an exception; if there is no other means, a seeker can see Laura in the main office. It is the seeker's responsibility to provide their own copy paper and there is a cost of \$.10 a copy.

Snail mail (remember this?) is the best means of communication. You may write and send letters after your first three months of being here at Inner Fire.

TELEPHONE USE

For up to the first 3 months, Seekers are not allowed to phone family or friends, thereby turning to their new community for the support and encouragement they seek.

After the first 3 months, we strongly encourage any phone calls to be made on weekends so as not to distract from the rhythm of the weekday. Every effort will be made to keep to the rhythm of the weekend days, so that there is time for Seekers to make their phone call. Telephone calls on the weekend, totaling 15 minutes, can be

made when there is time in the weekend schedule, being mindful that phone calls are not made when an activity will soon begin.

We strongly encourage Seekers to approach Beatrice or another guide to share their concerns before turning to a helpline.

No cell phones are allowed.

VISITORS

After 3 months, each seeker can then welcome not only telephone calls but Sunday visits from 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm, once a month; arrangements can be made through Laura or Beatrice. Please recognize that such visits and outings with loved ones aren't considered "time out" from the program but rather an opportunity to practice self-control and saying "no" to what one might otherwise say "yes" to. The GAPS diet is an intentional part of the detox process and sugar, starches, as well as any processed foods, are strongly discouraged. A cup of coffee is fine but more are not necessary. Of course, cigarettes and alcohol are totally out of the question. No food or drinks of any kind are allowed to be brought back to bedrooms or Inner Fire.

NEIGHBORLY RELATIONS

We are very fortunate to have wonderful neighbors who support Inner Fire. In order to maintain these relationships, boundaries are very important. Certainly be friendly in passing however, their homes and property are not part of the Inner Fire program and therefore please do not trespass or visit with them for any reason, even if invited. Breaking this rule could lead to your withdrawal from the program.

EXPECTED BEHAVIOR

The seeker agrees that he or she will refrain from any and all disruptive or inappropriate acts or behaviors, including but not limited to: physical violence and/or threats toward themselves or others, any inappropriate sexual acts, or sexual advances, use of alcohol, cigarettes, illegal drugs or other harmful or mood-altering substances, including stimulants such as coffee, except as appropriately prescribed by a physician, while enrolled and participating in the Inner Fire, Inc. programs. Seekers may not bring candy, cigarettes or alcohol to, or use/consume them on the premises of Inner Fire, Inc., or during any Inner Fire, Inc.-sponsored activity, regardless of its location. Seekers are to maintain abstinence from cigarettes, alcohol and other drugs, except as appropriately prescribed by a physician, during the entire time of their stay, including visits away from Inner Fire, Inc. There are many reasons for this abstinence, which include but are not limited to: interference with appropriately prescribed medications, sensitivity to other Seekers who struggle with addiction issues, and the possibility of any resulting disruptive or offensive behavior. Seekers agree to be 30 days free of any substance (for example: heroin, alcohol, etc.), with the exception of nicotine. (beginning when?)

No seeker is allowed to have in his or her possession any item which could be considered a weapon. This includes knives of any size. Upon arrival, each seeker will be designated a guide / mentor who will search the Seekers belongings (in the presence of the seeker) to ensure they have no alcohol, cigarettes, drugs, candy or weapon-like objects. If such items are found, the guide will discuss this with the seeker. Those item(s) will be removed, held in the office and possibly returned to the seeker upon completion of their time at Inner Fire. The guide will be the judge of whether or not questionable objects are weapon-like.

Violation of these or any other rules or regulations of Inner Fire, Inc. can result in immediate or other termination from Inner Fire, Inc. and/or any of its programs. The seeker agrees that he or she will follow any and all posted notices, warnings, advice, and/or cautionary or other instructions, and to obey all rules and regulations as may be amended from time to time. The seeker and the seeker's family understand and agree that decisions or definitions as to what constitutes disruptive or inappropriate acts or behaviors shall be made by Inner Fire, Inc. in its sole discretion.

TOBACCO USE - Inner Fire, Inc. is a non-smoking environment. No smoking is allowed at Inner Fire, Inc.

EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT - If a seeker has extra needs, there is a possibility that Audrie or Beatrice can shop for these additional needs. In such cases, a seeker would be expected to give their credit card or a check for these purchases. Inner Fire, Inc. will not buy on behalf of Seekers, even with reimbursement.

IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY - please notify a guide.

ASSISTANCE WITH MEDICATION DISPENSING - Each seeker handles their own medication with a guide's oversight.

LIGHTS OUT / QUIET TIME - As the days are so full and digestion is essential, we strongly encourage Seekers to turn their lights out by 10:00 pm in order to be ready to rise by 6:30 am to have breakfast promptly by 7:00 am.

BEING ON TIME - It is expected that Seekers will be at Grace Brook Farm from 6:45 am to 8:15 pm, Mondays through Fridays. Seekers are not allowed to leave the Grace Brook Farm premises without prior permission. If you are not feeling well, we expect you to come to Grace Brook Farm to rest and we will look after you. The effort to be on time is a way of guiding and strengthening our individual will, which is compromised through the use of medication, alcohol and drugs. One can see this discipline as part of our healing process. Therefore, we expect the effort of Seekers to be sitting down and ready to eat and to be at their sessions during the day on time.

We have breakfast at 7:00 am, lunch at 12:00 pm, and supper at 6:00 pm.

MEALS

Breakfast is for eating like a king, lunch is for a prince and supper is for a pauper; Inner Fire follows a GAPS-inspired diet which is high in fats and protein with very little sugar and no bread. Breakfast is large with lunch offering a vegetarian or meat option, and lots of vegetables. Supper is a lighter meal to help us digest made up of soup and salad.

We can cater for non-dairy and vegetarian and beyond that we are limited as to how we can respond to other particular dietary needs.

FEES

Financial matters are personal and we strongly discourage Seekers inquiring or discussing into other people's financial situation. When Inner Fire, Inc. is able to offer financial aid, it will be done so trusting that the seeker will keep this information confidential. This is another opportunity to practice respecting each other's boundaries.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Insurance must be in place BEFORE arriving, including disability insurance.

INCIDENT REPORTING

Once again, communication is so important. As striving individuals begin to taper off their medication, there are going to be side effects. Some of these side effects can trigger atypical responses which the guides at Inner Fire, Inc. are prepared to work with. It is our policy to avoid calling the appropriate authorities, 911 or the hospital, however, we will not hesitate to do so if we feel anyone's wellbeing is in danger.

For example:

- o If a seeker is missing.
- o If a seeker has an accident or other event that requires immediate medical treatment.
- o We have zero tolerance for any physical abuse.

SAFETY

It is important for Seekers to feel safe at Inner Fire, Inc., and to not be distracted from the work on themselves they are intending to do by coming to Inner Fire, Inc., and as a result it is imperative that there are no sexual relationships of any kind between Seekers, or between a seeker and a guide, volunteer, or staff, even if initiated by

seeker. If you observe anything that might be violating this, you should contact either Beatrice or Laura confidentially. If a seeker attempts to initiate anything that would violate this policy, you should contact either Beatrice or Laura. Resolution of any potential issues will be treated as confidentially as possible and should not be discussed among Seekers and/or guides unless such a discussion is initiated and directed by Beatrice.

COMMUNITY SERVICE IN THE LAST THREE MONTHS

During the last 3 months of the program, the Seekers will be encouraged to engage in the broader community with community service or a course which would be relevant for their transition.

INNER FIRE GRADUATES

Graduates of Inner Fire, Inc. must first make arrangements with Beatrice or Laura before visiting.

SEEKER FUNDS

The tuition bill covers all needs other than toiletries which will be billed monthly. As there is no need for Seekers to have money at Inner Fire, Inc., Seekers should not have cash with them. Checks or credit cards are acceptable in the event of needing to purchase items.

STORAGE AND LOSS OF SEEKERS PERSONAL PROPERTY

Inner Fire, Inc. is not responsible for personal items that are lost or damaged. Each seeker has a box where personal items may be stored at Inner Fire, Inc.

BEDROOM CARE

The way we care for our bedroom is a reflection for how we care for ourselves. Though initially it might not come naturally, we expect every seeker to make their bed and pick up their clothes before leaving their room in the morning for the day. Food is not allowed in the bedrooms. Bedrooms may be inspected and searched by guides at any time if deemed necessary. Seekers may lock their doors, but need to respond when a guide knocks, ensuring safety for all.

RELEASE OF INFORMATION

Confidential treatment of all information contained in the seeker's record will be ensured and records will only be released with written consent, except when the release is required by law. All Release of Records will go through Laura in the main office. Copies will be made at the expense of the seeker and sent within 7 days of the request.

Inner Fire, Inc. will retain records for at least 4 years after the seeker leaves Inner Fire, Inc.

POLICY ON SEEKERS BREAKING OF CONTRACT

Please see the Seeker Service Agreement. If a seeker breaks their contract by smoking or using alcohol and/or drugs, leaving the grounds without prior permission from Beatrice or Laura, etc., they will first meet with their mentor to discuss the event and if the behavior continues, the seeker would meet with the Circle of Guides in order to better understand why the seeker is doing what he/she is doing. It is likely that if the agreement formed at the Circle meeting is broken, the seeker would be asked to leave.

POLICY AGAINST HARASSMENT

Inner Fire, Inc. expects that all Seekers and guides will treat everybody with fairness and respect. Harassment on the basis of race, religion, color, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability or national origin, or as provided under state or local law, will not be tolerated and is strictly prohibited. All Inner Fire, Inc. Seekers and guides have a responsibility for keeping the environment free of harassment. Seekers who become aware of an incident of harassment, whether by witnessing the incident or being told of it, must report it to Beatrice.

Harassment means unlawful harassment, which constitutes a form of discrimination. It means verbal or physical conduct based on a person's actual or perceived race, religion (creed), color, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation or disability and which had the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with a person's work or educational performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment (Vermont Statutes, Title 16 Section 11(a)(26)).

Harassment can include any unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct which offends, denigrates or belittles any individual because of any of the characteristics described above. Such conduct includes but is not limited to, unsolicited derogatory remarks, jokes, demeaning comments or behavior, slurs, mimicking, name calling, graffiti, innuendo, gestures, physical contact, stalking, threatening, bullying, extorting, or the display or circulation of written materials or pictures. These apply to all of the characteristics listed above.

Inner Fire, Inc. will conduct a prompt and thorough investigation of all the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident in a confidential manner. If the investigation discloses that an individual has committed an act of discrimination, that individual will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Retaliation in any form against a guide who, in good faith, complains of discrimination or harassment is strictly prohibited and will result in appropriate disciplinary action. Any guide to whom a

guide brings a complaint of harassment but who fails to take appropriate action to resolve it will also be disciplined.

Inner Fire, Inc. has a zero-tolerance harassment policy, and therefore accepts no liability for harassment of one guide by another guide or harassment by a guide of any member of the Inner Fire, Inc. community. The individual who makes unwelcome advances, threatens or in any way harasses another guide is personally liable for such actions and their consequences.

POLICY AGAINST SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment as well as gender-based and sexual orientation discrimination is illegal and contrary to the policy of Inner Fire, Inc. Inner Fire, Inc. foster a work environment free of sexual harassment, gender-based discrimination, sexual orientation, intimidation, and insult. Inner Fire, Inc. prohibits any guide from making sexual advances, unwelcome, offensive, or inappropriate comments regarding another person's gender or engaging in other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual or gender-offensive nature, when an individual's submission to that conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of that individual's employment, or when that conduct creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. Harassment based on gender is a form of misconduct that undermines both personal and professional relationships in the workplace. Every guide must be assured that he or she can work in an environment that is free from unwanted and unwelcome harassment and discrimination.

Sexual harassment creates unacceptable stress for the entire organization, adversely affecting morale, demeans the individual so treated, and could cause potentially devastating costs to Inner Fire, Inc. Inner Fire, Inc. believes that courteous, mutually respectful, pleasant, non-coercive interactions between guides and Seekers will best serve the wellbeing of each individual and Inner Fire, Inc.

All guides, both male and female, are strictly prohibited from sexually harassing or making improper advances toward other guides and Seekers or harassing other guides or Seekers as a result of their gender. Sexual harassment is a form of unlawful harassment and means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to that conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a seeker's education or guide's employment;
- Submission to or refractor of such conduct by a person is used as a component of the basis for decisions affecting a seeker's education or guide's employment;

The conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with a student's education or guide's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive

environment (Vermont Statutes, Title 16, Section 11(a)(26)). This applies whether the harassment is between people of the same or different gender. Sexual harassment can include unwelcome, written or physical conduct, directed at or related to a person's gender, such as sexual gossip or personal comments of a sexual nature, sexually suggestive or foul language, sexual jokes, whistling, spreading rumors or lies of a sexual nature about someone, demanding sexual favors, forcing sexual activity by threat or punishment or offer of educational reward, obscene kissing or hugging, or restraining someone's movement in a sexual way.

Any person who believes that he/she is a victim of any type of discriminatory conduct, including sexual harassment, should bring that conduct to the immediate attention of Beatrice Birch. Inner Fire, Inc. will conduct a prompt and thorough investigation of all the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident in a confidential manner. If the investigation discloses that an individual has committed an act of discrimination, that individual will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Retaliation in any form against a guide or seeker who complains of discrimination or harassment is strictly prohibited and will result in appropriate disciplinary action. Any guide to whom a guide brings a complaint of sexual harassment but who fails to take appropriate action to resolve it will also be disciplined.

The provisions of this section also apply to any sexual interaction, whether consensual or otherwise, with a seeker.

ANGER IS OK, VIOLENCE IS UNACCEPTABLE POLICY

Transparency is essential in our mutual intention to support the seeker in their healing journey. In order to more consciously work with the striving individual, it is essential for us to know whether violence has been part of the seeker's history. Included in the application packet are documents for the applicant and parent/guardian to fully disclosing all known violent episodes in detail. Signatures indicate full disclosure of all known violent circumstances in which the applicant has been involved. As tapering can be traumatic, and individuals may not always be in control of their feelings, we understand there is the possibility of expressed anger and violent situations. Full disclosure of any past violent episodes enables us to provide proper support and be fully prepared to work through incidents that may arise in a manner that is safe for all.

POLICY

Inner Fire continuously seeks to ensure a safe environment for all Seekers, staff, and visitors. Inner Fire exercises a zero tolerance policy for violence which could lead to immediate dismissal from the program. Examples of violence may include, but are not limited to:

- Verbal or written threats that express intent to harm.
- Verbal assaults
- Physical assaults, including: biting, kicking, punching, scratching, spitting, etc.
- Any perceived act that causes fear or harm to one's self, seeker, staff or visitor.
- Intentional destruction of property.

Acts of violence will be assessed on a case by case basis, resulting in appropriate, immediate interventions. All cases of violence will be assessed by thorough investigation and evaluation of the circumstances surrounding the violent event. Inner Fire reserves the right to contact parents/guardians of the offender in the event of a violent episode. This process is intended to help Inner Fire determine what can be done to prevent the same, or similar events from reoccurring and maintaining a safe environment for all.

REPORTING A VIOLENT EVENT

Any witnessed violent events will be immediately reported verbally by phone or in person to an Inner Fire administrative team member who will then complete an incident report as soon as is safely possible, within the same shift of the violent incident. An in-person review of the incident with the administrative leadership team will be scheduled as soon as is possible to process and determine next steps.

Inner Fire maintains a no retaliation policy ensuring all Seekers, staff, and visitors in no way will be retaliated upon for reporting violent actions. Inner Fire will initiate steps to begin a restorative plan to recover property damage resulting from violent episodes. We will also initiate restorative justice as a way to reestablish safe and healthy community relationships that may have been damaged by a violent episode. Any expenses incurred due to property damage are the responsibility of the seeker (parents/guardians) for full reimbursement.

GRIEVANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

The Seeker and Seeker's family should understand that mental health care is not an exact science, and that no guarantees are made as to results of the provision of any such care and/or services or programs associated therewith, nor that such guarantees should be expected. However, our wish is to ensure that any complaint or grievance by a Seeker or the Seeker's family is addressed, no matter how large or small, in a respectful and timely manner. We will give a meaningful response to the person or persons issuing the complaint or grievance and there will be no compromise to the quality of care due to any complaint or grievance issued either verbally or in writing.

DEFINITION OF TERMS:

Complaint: A “complaint” is an oral/verbal expression of displeasure or dissatisfaction voiced by a Seeker or Seeker’s family that can be resolved quickly by staff who are present at the time of the complaint or who can quickly be present to resolve the complaint.

Grievance: A “grievance” is a written or oral concern which has not been resolved at the time it was raised or was postponed or referred to other staff for later resolution, requires investigation, and/or requires further actions for resolution, then the complaint is a grievance. A concern or complaint expressed in writing is always considered a grievance. An email or fax is considered written.

PROCEDURE:

Upon admission, each seeker is provided with a copy of the Seeker Handbook which includes Inner Fire’s Grievance Procedure.

Seekers are encouraged to discuss concerns directly with their mentor or staff. Many concerns can be resolved in this manner.

If the mentor or staff present cannot resolve the complaint to the Seeker’s satisfaction, or if the Seeker chooses not to pursue a complaint with the mentor or staff, the Seeker may initiate a formal grievance.

A Seeker or the Seeker’s Family may initiate a grievance at any time by providing a statement that explains the problem and any relief requested to any Inner Fire employee. A Seeker may receive assistance in transcribing an oral grievance from anyone, including Inner Fire staff.

Inner Fire will accept grievances in any written form or format.

When an Inner Fire employee receives a written grievance, the employee shall provide the Seeker or Seeker’s family with a copy of their grievance. The Executive Director of Inner Fire will be informed and provided with the name of the Seeker or Seeker’s family initiating the grievance and the nature of the grievance. The Inner Fire employee will then forward the original copy of the written grievance to the Executive Director.

Upon receipt of the grievance, a committee will be formed with two or more Inner Fire staff to investigate the grievance, which may or may not include the Executive Director.

If a grievance is with the Executive Director of Inner Fire, we request you put your grievance in writing and give to your mentor who will take the grievance to a Board of Directors representative.

If the grievance includes any allegation of abuse or neglect, staff will also follow the Inner Fire’s mandated reporting policy.

All grievances will be investigated and responded to in writing within a reasonable timeframe, usually within five (5) working days, but in no event beyond ten (10) working days.

The Seeker or Seeker's family member may appeal the response to their grievance if they are dissatisfied with their response.

Upon conclusion of the investigation into a grievance, the Executive Director of Inner Fire, or designated Inner Fire staff member, shall ensure that a written response to the grievance is provided to the Seeker or Seeker's family.

APPEAL PROCESS:

The Executive Director and additional staff shall form a committee and:

1. Review the grievance decision and take such other action to investigate the matter as the Committee deems appropriate.
2. Provide the Seeker or Seeker's family with a written notice of the decision, including the steps taken to investigate the appeal and the reason for the decision. The Committee's decision will be final.

EXTERNAL RESOURCES FOR COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES:

Commissioner
Vermont Department of Mental Health
26 Terrace Street, Redstone Building
Montpelier, VT 05602
802-828-3867

Department of Disabilities, Aging &
Independent Living,
Division of Licensing and Protection
103 South Main Street
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Vermont Department of Health
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Medical Practice & Hospital Licensing
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Vermont Department of Health
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Burlington, VT 05402-0070
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89 Main Street, Third Floor, City Center
Montpelier, Vermont 05620
802-828-2177

Vermont Board of Medical Practice
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Disability Rights Vermont
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Terrace, IL 60181
630-792-5000

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89 Main Street, Montpelier, VT 05620
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APPENDIX 1 - Lyme Tick Prevention and Care

Maintaining good health, a strong immune system, and a positive attitude are the key ingredients to coping with any assault on one's health that may arise. Healthy diet which promotes positive digestive microbiology, plenty of fresh air, exercise, meaningful work/activity, and creative social and personal life all contribute to one's overall well-being and capacity to maintain health even when confronted with challenges such as tick bites.

Of course, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, so...

- ★ The most important thing is checking the body every day/evening for ticks. This can be done easily during a shower, while washing, feeling the skin for any small bumps. Especially check the hairline and scalp, underarms and groins, and the back with a buddy or a mirror. Doing a once over the entire skin of one's body is the best way to discover an attached tick.
- ★ Ticks are more often found in forest cover and tall grasses because they are moisture dependent and can't survive in dry places. Extra awareness when hiking or working in the woods is needed. Tucking pant legs into socks, and shirts into pant waist can prevent ticks from crawling up under clothing. Light coloured clothing can make it easier to see ticks on clothing.
- ★ If a tick is found, immediate removal, by a careful assistant, is the first step. See below: "How to remove a tick". A "tick key" or other device may be used, but a pair of fine tweezers is all that is needed. Tamara has a source of a soft-tipped tweezer that could be recommended.
- ★ Clean the area with alcohol or other antiseptic.
- ★ Apply homeopathic ledum, in the form of "Sting Stop", or tea tree oil.
- ★ A drawing paste of green clay or activated charcoal/castor oil can be applied to draw out anything the tick may have transmitted.
- ★ Cover, clean and re-apply antiseptic and drawing paste daily.

- ★ Monitor the site daily, for the first week, watching for the bulls-eye rash.
- ★ If fever, rash, fatigue, or pain develop see a doctor.
- ★ Tick Comp Tincture: a homeopathic combination of herbs created by Tamara Pospelueva, our homeopathic/naturopathic physician. This tincture helps to kill off any bacteria, virus or other pathogens potentially transmitted by ticks. Only 5% of ticks carry Lyme disease, but anytime someone has a tick, we have them take this prophylactically, 15 drops/ hour for the first day, then 3x/day for the first week. Tick Comp contains: Teasel, Cat's Claw bark, Samento, Banderol, Ceanothus, Geranium Robertianum, Andrographis, Astragalus, Smilax, Astragalus Arnica, Thuja Thymus comp, Lachesis Belladonna, PhytoLymex, Lyme nosode drops, Tick Pathogen Nosode, Lyme Balance, Lyme and Co-infection Nosode, LymePlex.
- ★ Most importantly, in the event of finding an attached tick, stay calm; don't panic. Be proactive with immune support and follow the above protocols.
- ★ If immunity is strong enough you can live the entire life w/o symptoms
- ★ Be aware that things can happen and that fear can knock you down.
- ★ Do the best you can there is no universal protocol.
- ★ Use common sense; keep a healthy outlook
- ★ Maintain good hygiene and nutrition because...
- ★ It all depends on the health condition of the host.

Below are some clear and common sense medical research/facts and advice about dealing with ticks.

<https://www.uptodate.com/contents/what-to-do-after-a-tick-bite-to-prevent-lyme-disease-beyond-the-basics>

Patient education: What to do after a tick bite to prevent Lyme disease (Beyond the Basics)

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TICK BITE OVERVIEW

There are many different types of ticks in the United States, some of which are capable of transmitting infections. The risk of developing these infections depends upon the geographic location, season of the year, type of tick, and, for Lyme disease, how long the tick was attached to the skin.

While many people are concerned after being bitten by a tick, the risk of acquiring a tick-borne infection is quite low, even if the tick has been attached, fed, and is actually carrying an infectious agent. Ticks transmit infection only after they have attached and then taken a blood meal from their new host. A tick that has not attached (and therefore has not yet become engorged from its blood meal) has not passed any infection. Since the deer tick that transmits Lyme disease typically feeds for >36 hours before transmission of the spirochete, the risk of acquiring Lyme disease from an observed tick bite, for example, is only 1.2 to 1.4 percent, even in an area where the disease is common.

The organism that causes Lyme disease, *Borrelia burgdorferi*, lies dormant in the inner aspect of the tick's midgut. The organism becomes active only after exposure to the warm blood meal entering the tick's gut. Once active, the organism enters the tick's salivary glands. As the tick feeds, it must get rid of excess water through the salivary glands. Thus, the tick will literally salivate organisms into the wound, thereby passing the infection to the host.

If a person is bitten by a deer tick (the type of tick that carries Lyme disease), a healthcare provider will likely advise one of two approaches:

- Observe and treat if signs or symptoms of infection develop
- Treat with a preventive antibiotic immediately

There is no benefit of blood testing for Lyme disease at the time of the tick bite; even people who become infected will not have a positive blood test until approximately two to six weeks after the infection develops (post-tick bite).

The history of the tick bite will largely determine which of these options is chosen. Before seeking medical attention, the affected person or household member should carefully remove the tick and make note of its appearance ([picture 1](#)). Only the *Ixodes* species of tick, also known as the deer tick, causes Lyme disease.

HOW TO REMOVE A TICK

The proper way to remove a tick is to use a set of fine tweezers and grip the tick as close to the skin as is possible. Do not use a smoldering match or cigarette, nail polish, petroleum jelly (eg,

Vaseline), liquid soap, or kerosene because they may irritate the tick and cause it to behave like a syringe, injecting bodily fluids into the wound.

The proper technique for tick removal includes the following:

- Use fine tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin surface as possible.
- Pull backwards gently but firmly, using an even, steady pressure. Do not jerk or twist.
- Do not squeeze, crush, or puncture the body of the tick, since its bodily fluids may contain infection-causing organisms.
- After removing the tick, wash the skin and hands thoroughly with soap and water.
- If any mouth parts of the tick remain in the skin, these should be left alone; they will be expelled on their own. Attempts to remove these parts may result in significant skin trauma.

AFTER THE TICK IS REMOVED

Tick characteristics — It is helpful if the person can provide information about the size and color of the tick ([figure 1](#)), whether it was actually attached to the skin, if it was engorged (that is, full of blood), and how long it was attached.

- Ticks that are brown and approximately the size of a poppy seed or pencil point are deer ticks; however, the size can change with feeding ([picture 1](#)). These ticks can transmit *B. burgdorferi* (the bacterium that causes Lyme disease) and a number of other tick-borne infections, including babesiosis and anaplasmosis. *B. burgdorferi*-infected deer ticks live primarily in the northeast and mid-Atlantic region (Maine to Virginia) and in the midwest region (Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio) of the United States, and less commonly in the western US (northern California).
- Ticks that are brown with a white collar and about the size of a pencil eraser are more likely to be dog ticks (*Dermacentor* species) ([picture 1](#)). These ticks do not carry Lyme disease, but can rarely carry another tick-borne infection called Rocky Mountain spotted fever that can be serious or even fatal.
- A brown to black tick with a white splotch on its back is likely a female *Amblyomma americanum* (Lone Star tick; named after the white splotch) ([picture 2](#)). This species of tick has been reported to spread an illness called southern tick-associated rash illness (STARI). STARI causes a rash that is similar to the erythema migrans rash, but without the other features of Lyme disease. Although this rash is thought to be caused by an infection, a cause for the infection has not yet been identified. This type of tick can also carry and transmit another infection called human monocytic ehrlichiosis.
- A tick that was not attached, was easy to remove or just walking on the skin, and was still flat and tiny and not full of blood when it was removed could not have transmitted Lyme disease or any other infection since it had not yet taken a blood meal.

- Only ticks that are attached and have finished feeding or are near the end of their meal can transmit Lyme disease. After arriving on the skin, the tick that spreads Lyme disease usually takes 24 hours before feeding begins.
- Even if a tick is attached, it must have taken a blood meal to transmit Lyme disease. At least 36 to 48 hours of feeding is typically required for a tick to have fed and then transmit the bacterium that causes Lyme disease. After this amount of time, the tick will be engorged (full of blood). An engorged tick has a globular shape and is larger than an unengorged one.
- It is not clear how long a tick needs to be attached to transmit organisms other than *B. burgdorferi*.

Need for treatment — The clinician will review the description of the tick, along with any physical symptoms, to decide upon a course of action. The Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) recommends preventive treatment with antibiotics only in people who meet **ALL** of the following criteria:

- Attached tick identified as an adult or nymphal *Ixodes scapularis* (deer) tick
- Tick is estimated to have been attached for ≥ 36 hours (based upon how engorged the tick appears or the amount of time since outdoor exposure)
- The antibiotic can be given within 72 hours of tick removal
- The local rate of tick infection with *B. burgdorferi* is ≥ 20 percent (known to occur in parts of New England, parts of the mid-Atlantic states, and parts of Minnesota and Wisconsin)
- The person can take doxycycline (eg, the person is not pregnant or breastfeeding or a child < 8 years of age)

If the person meets ALL of the above criteria, the recommended dose of doxycycline is a single dose of 200 mg for adults and 4 mg/kg, up to a maximum dose of 200 mg, in children ≥ 8 years.

If the person cannot take doxycycline, the IDSA does not recommend preventive treatment with an alternate antibiotic for several reasons: there are no data to support a short course of another antibiotic, a longer course of antibiotics may have side effects, antibiotic treatment is highly effective if Lyme disease were to develop, and the risk of developing a serious complication of Lyme disease after a recognized bite is extremely low.

MONITORING FOR LYME DISEASE

Many people have incorrect information about Lyme disease. For example, some people are concerned that Lyme disease is untreatable if antibiotics are not given early (this is untrue; even later features of Lyme disease can be effectively treated with appropriate antibiotics). Many local Lyme disease networks and national organizations disseminate unproven information and should not be the sole source of education about Lyme disease. Reputable sources are listed below (see ['Where to get more information'](#) below).

Signs of Lyme disease — Whether or not a clinician is consulted after a tick bite, the person who was bitten (or the parents, if a child was bitten) should observe the area of the bite for

expanding redness, which would suggest erythema migrans (EM), the characteristic rash of Lyme disease ([picture 3](#)). Approximately 80 percent of people with Lyme disease develop EM; 10 to 20 percent of people have multiple lesions. (See "[Patient education: Lyme disease symptoms and diagnosis \(Beyond the Basics\)](#)".)

The EM rash is usually a salmon color although, rarely, it can be an intense red, sometimes resembling a skin infection. The color may be almost uniform. The lesion typically expands over a few days or weeks and can reach over 20 cm (8 inches) in diameter. As the rash expands, it can become clear (skin-colored) in the center. The center of the rash can then appear a lighter color than its edges or the rash can develop into a series of concentric rings giving it a "bull's eye" appearance. The rash usually causes no symptoms, although burning or itching has been reported.

In people with early localized Lyme disease, EM occurs within one month of the tick bite, typically within a week of the tick bite, although only one-third of people recall the tick bite that gave them Lyme disease. Components of tick saliva can also cause a rash; however, this rash should not be confused with EM. The rash caused by tick saliva typically occurs while the tick is still feeding or just after the tick detaches, and usually does not expand to a size larger than a dime.

If EM or other signs or symptoms suggestive of Lyme disease develop ([table 1](#)), the person should see a healthcare provider for proper diagnosis and treatment. (See "[Patient education: Lyme disease treatment \(Beyond the Basics\)](#)".)

<https://www.livescience.com/46160-how-to-avoid-tick-bites.html>