



Testimonials from Parents, Alumni & Students

Yellowbrick's treatment model is based on the core values of integrity, excellence in innovation and a commitment to life-enhancing outcomes. Yellowbrick offers emerging adults the opportunity to better understand themselves, access their strengths, develop necessary competence and actualize life goals.

From Parents

Yellowbrick entered into my son's life after six years of struggling with depression, anxiety and finally a correct diagnosis of bipolar disorder. Multiple psychiatrists and multiple psychotherapists couldn't seem to make a dent in his mental health, until he got to Yellowbrick. Their level of professionalism and expertise was unrivaled by anyone else he had worked with. Within two weeks of arriving there, and living in the beautiful brownstone, Yellowbrick got him on the right medication and as he said, "I feel like myself again." He last felt this way six years before during his freshman year in college. I highly recommend Yellowbrick and the entire staff there...a thankful parent.

Thank you Yellowbrick team. After a very long journey over a number of years, we may have our daughter back. She just finished her first week at vocational training school and is thrilled to be there. She has separated from a romantic relationship which had us worried for years.. Her peers are now supportive, working and sober. She has a part time job and mostly supporting herself. She is sober and stable and accepting of her challenges.

She needed you when she came home demoralized and Yellowbrick was there and able to offer her the kind of support she wanted....the ability to rely on you when she needed and wanted it and the freedom to be independent. Thanks for making the connection to a new set of medical support near her school.

Thank you again. Fingers crossed.

I received an event notification from all of you at Yellowbrick, and in that, I thought of you. I hope you are doing well. I'm happy to share with you that our son is doing SO well. His precious life has totally transformed this year since his treatment at Yellowbrick. He moved to be closer to family and our relationships have healed in so many meaningful ways. We are all working in family therapy while our son continues in individual counseling as well. We are so much closer as a family now. He has been working for a year now... has a fabulous job working for a solid company and was recently promoted. Management really respects him and his work ethic. We are all thrilled for him! He has faced his social awkwardness and is working through this. He has an amazing sense of humor that surprises us all. He is so funny.... who knew?!

I could go on... but this is enough! Wanted to share with you. All of you there embraced him and initiated the healing process for him and our entire family.

THANK YOU!

Warm regards

Dear Dr. Baron,

I want to thank YOU and ALL the staff at Yellowbrick who have been so helpful and so patient with our emerging adult. It is clearly evident there is really significant progress and certainly things were rapidly moving in the other direction when treatment started about a year ago. We remain hopeful that every low point could possibly represent a turning point (while trying to steel ourselves for the next low point).

As you note, we did not always agree about everything, but in such a stressful and crisis-ridden case, that is to be expected. I admire your dedication to your very difficult and needy patients.

Best wishes

Mom of emerging adult

5 stars = as good as it gets!!! Yellowbrick is a unique treatment program. Unlike other programs that separate themselves according to diagnosis or special condition, Yellowbrick does not. Yellowbrick views each young adult as a unique individual who can be a valuable member of the Yellowbrick community. Yellowbrick recognizes and respects the particular struggles that are inherent to this critical time in a young person's development.

Most young adults come to Yellowbrick with painful histories that often include failure at other programs. Anxiety, depression eating disorders, substance abuse, traumatic exposure are some of the issues that face these young adults. Many have despaired and hold little hope for change.

The clinical approach at YB is by far the most comprehensive treatment available. As a clinician myself and a parent of a YB alumni I cannot begin to express my appreciation for the care and kindness and integrity that our family was shown. The program philosophy is backed by evidence based research and years of experience. One size does not fit all and YB recognizes that the path to recovery and self efficacy is through authentic relationships within a community based program. The demands are high because YB takes each life seriously. The work is difficult and requires courage and trust, however the results can be life altering and in our case, life saving.

Yellowbrick saved our son's life. It is that simple and that complex. Our son (now 21) spent 7 months in the Yellowbrick program and he too agrees that it saved his life. I have worked in the field of children's behavioral health my entire career and can say without a doubt the professional staff at YB is the most expert, clinically sophisticated, caring and committed group I have ever experienced. They work nearly 24 hours a day, always on call, talking with the kids and the parents and managing endless crises. Yes, treatment at YB is expensive....but you are getting the best of the best. Honestly, most families get to YB once they have tried everything else; for years; at our wit's end. These are young adults experiencing multiple very significant behavioral health challenges. In our case, no one had been able to even clearly diagnose our son over 8 years of treatment at some other "best institutions" in the country. Had it not been for YB he would have ended up dead or in jail. I imagine he was not the only one in that same situation.

I have read the negative reviews and I hear what these former participants in the program are saying - yes, there are young adults there who are very self-destructive, suicidal, traumatized, self-injurious - that is exactly why they are there! I am more than sure all of the kids at YB have been hospitalized (in our case multiple times) where they experience the same kind of behaviors without the excellent treatment to support them.

YB is also amazingly supportive to parents in a way we had never experienced with any other program or treatment center. They truly partner with parents - and the young adult - and provide education and support.

Is our son cured? Of course not. There is no cure (yet!) for mental illness. However, we have repaired our relationship together and enjoy each others' company; he has some measure of self-respect and competence (which he had none of when he entered YB); he is clean and sober; and he is committed to continuing to seek the treatment he needs.

My husband and I are so thankful to have found such a unique and effective program. And yes, it is clinically at the forefront of treatment. It does have a most clinically expert staff. The milieu of accountability they create is uniquely effective. Most importantly, our son would agree.

To prospective Yellowbrick Parents:

This is probably the most important letter of recommendation that I've ever written. I am wholeheartedly writing to recommend Yellowbrick for its treatment program for emerging adults. My brilliant, talented, and sensitive son was restored here at Yellowbrick. I couldn't be more grateful. I remember sitting in the family meetings early on, wondering if this would really work; if it would be worth all of the effort, time, and money. I would cling to things that parents who had been there longer would say. I want to reassure you that yes -- this works. It isn't easy. For the young adult -they need to participate. They need to become sober and learn to take responsibility for whatever issues have been dealt to them. And it isn't easy for the parents: to face our responsibility in getting to this point; to shoulder the financial burden that this fabulous treatment facility costs; to participate with and support our emerging adult children during their journey.

But I can reassure you that if your talented, brilliant and sensitive child is willing to participate in this program, they will come through the other side. My son is now enrolled full-time in an engineering program, successfully working toward his degree and his bright future. He is living on his own, in a happy and healthy committed relationship. And his and my relationship is a strong and happy one.

I am grateful for Yellowbrick's program, for saving my son and for giving us the present and the future that I had always dreamed of.

Dear Dr. Viner,

We are writing in support of Yellowbrick and the dedicated professionals who have helped our daughter in her journey to achieve a healthy and happy life.

Our daughter was much younger and less experienced than most of the residents at Yellowbrick but no less troubled. Yet, with the kind and loving care of her therapists and doctors, we began to see gradual improvements almost from the beginning. Today, she is thriving at college and continuing her journey to stay strong and focused on meeting the challenges of her illness.

You do not have an easy job. Mental illness doesn't go away with a pill or with group therapy. It is a life time struggle for the patient and the family. And although we know she is a work in progress, Yellowbrick helped our family when hospitals and other programs could not.

Thank you for all you have done to help our daughter move forward. You are a remarkable dedicated group of professionals.

Our son was treated at Yellowbrick for five months in 2012-2013. It was not an easy decision for him (or us) to commit to the program, but we are all grateful we did. While our son knew he needed help, he also was resistant to it. Over the course of his time at Yellowbrick, which was characterized by advances and setbacks, he emerged from a depressed state, and left ready to take the next steps in his life. He is now in college, engaging with his peers and getting great grades. For this we are immensely appreciative and thankful for the dedicated efforts of all the staff at Yellowbrick who made this possible.

Our experience with Yellowbrick as a family was very rewarding and our daughter benefited greatly. Dr. Viner and his staff were very helpful throughout her treatment and we saw a positive change in her. Our daughters journey continues and we can see that she is in a good place emotionally and that the Yellowbrick experience was significant in providing her insight and self-awareness as she matures as a young adult.. We can only hope as parents that we can identify the required help our children need however it still is up to them to do the work. Yellowbrick's quality staff was intense and diligent in counseling our daughter and in the process provided us as parents the tools that helped us understand and change our attitude on how to be empathetic to our daughter's needs. The change that has come about for all of us has been significantly rewarding for our family.

There is nothing more frightening than having a child in serious distress and not knowing where to turn. It is a time of aloneness and uncertainty. There are many treatment centers and I am so grateful to have been directed to Yellowbrick. What Dr. Viner and his staff have created is an environment that gives the young adults an opportunity to learn how to manage whatever it is that brought them through the doors. My son, a former patient, is doing extremely well thanks to the time spent there. I am forever grateful for all of the doctors and staff at Yellowbrick. Not only did my son learn, but I learned a great deal as well. In addition, the entire family reaped the benefits of the time there. I can, without reservation, highly recommend the Yellowbrick treatment center.

Yellowbrick saved my son's life. He was in treatment there for 17 months for depression and substance abuse. It took him 2-3 months to buy into the program, but he then proceeded to gradually undergo a remarkable transition to a useful person (to himself and to others). The Yellowbrick staff gave him the tools for dealing with life and identified an effective program of medication to assist in this process. I participated in the monthly family weekends at Yellowbrick for the duration of my son's stay in the program and found them very productive, professional and helpful. Since leaving the program, he has been enrolled in college full time for almost a year and a half and is doing very well. He is approaching the 3 year mark in his successful participation in AA. I cannot possibly offer enough praise for the thoughtful, sensitive, but firm approach of the Yellowbrick staff in treating the very difficult challenges presented by their patients. I encountered a few patients who did not seem to benefit from the program, but they had a history of having difficulty with other treatment programs. Anyone with a son or daughter who is suffering from depression or substance abuse issues would be well-advised to give the Yellowbrick treatment program serious consideration.

I'd like to let you know that since leaving Yellowbrick 6 months ago, our daughter has made steady growth, now works at a job she loves and is generally doing quite well. I am grateful for the substantial contribution Yellowbrick made to her continuing recovery.

Dr. Viner,

Just wanted to check in with you. Our daughter seems to be adjusting well to the transition to Yellowbrick. I am finally starting to relax a little bit - I have been waiting for the explosion and am very happy so far that it hasn't happened. I know it still can.

Our daughter was very pleased to find out that you were going to be her psychiatrist, as were we. She really does feel a connection to you. She has described you as very genuine and even went so far as to say that she liked you.

I think she is so relieved to be in a more "normal" living environment and is energized by being independent and accomplishing tasks on her own. She visits us on weekends and gets here by taking the train. Her siblings have come as well on a few of the days. It is really nice to all be together.

The apartments at Yellowbrick are beautiful - It is a very warm and cheerful environment. You and your staff have really welcomed our daughter to feel at home!

Lastly - I just wanted to thank you for everything. I think your program is just what she needed. My husband and I were talking about - hope. I think we all finally have some!

Dear Dr. Viner -

We wish to thank you for all you did on our son's behalf during his recent illness. It is our firm belief that he is alive today because of your efforts and contacts.

You and all the staff at Yellowbrick went beyond the call of duty. Not only are we impressed by your compassion and caring but also at your willingness to help us in our time of need in a place foreign to us.

You are a true professional. There is no way we can repay you nor thank you enough. It has been a privilege and honor to have met you.

Thankfully,

We are eternally grateful for the warmth and dedication which you have bestowed upon our son and us. You exemplify the highest standards of professionalism and we appreciate so much being part of your Yellowbrick community. We cherish our relationship and wish you health and success in all of your endeavors. Thank you for helping and guiding all of us down the Yellow Brick Road.

We wanted to thank you for the tremendous support and care that you and the entire Yellowbrick team have given our son and our family over the past year and a half. I know that he would be in a very different place if not for the expert work of Yellowbrick. We appreciate very much all of the effort that you and the rest of the Yellowbrick staff have made to give our son the best chance to lead a successful and productive life. Not only does he have a very positive outlook, but we have learned a lot as well as you know. This has been a great part of the Yellowbrick experience for us as we now have a much better relationship with him from what we have learned at Yellowbrick. I hope that we can maintain contact with you and Yellowbrick. It was a life changing experience for all of us. And we do not want to lose the connection with you and the rest of the wonderful caring folks at Yellowbrick.

From Our Alumni

Good evening Dr. Viner,

I hope this email finds you safe and well. I have some news...

Tomorrow, I graduate with my Master of Social Work with a clinical focus. I am in the process of obtaining licensure, but have a few leads already to practice psychotherapy, accrue supervised clinical hours, etc. Ultimately, I intend to pursue psychoanalytic training with a relational/interpersonal focus.

I owe some of this direction to my lived experiences as a patient. Thank you for creating a container for some of these experiences. I am grateful to be in a position to utilize this perspective and create space for others.

Please feel free to share this as you wish.

Thank you!

Your colleague (!),

E

Yellowbrick,

I had to share in this momentous milestone as Yellowbrick encouraged me and gave me the strength to get back in school. I didn't think I was ready, but you showed be otherwise and I am sitting here as a BSW in Social Work and graduated Summa Cum Laude with a 4.0! Many times we don't know our strength until we take that first step, and I'm so glad Yellowbrick was there with me as I took my fist step. All I can say is never give up! Several years ago I was on the hospice route preparing to die and now I'm preparing to show others to fight for their life. Much gratitude to the Yellowbrick staff, and please never stop encouraging your clients because we're going to get there!

Always,

K

Hey Dr Losoff

I hope all is well. I just wanted to say thank you for all your help. I've been working on everything that I learned at Yellowbrick recently and I've really noticed a difference. I had a really constructive time at Yellowbrick and am really glad that I was lucky enough to find you guys. Again, thank you so much and good luck with everything.

Adolescent alumnus

My time at Yellowbrick was nothing short of a miracle. After 25 years of living with an eating disorder and other mental health issues, and being in over 100 different placements during that time, I thought I was a lost cause and many others thought the same. I was living in a very dark place. Seven suicide attempts, enduring every kind of abuse possible, being removed from my home and living in foster homes and state facilities, I silently suffered and starved myself behind the intense pain and emotions. At the height of my disorder I was in a wheelchair, living with a feeding tube for years, and going into hospice because I was told I was dying. I had no quality of life and was so medically compromised that no treatment facilities would touch me. However, Yellowbrick was different. Once medically stabilized they were ready to take on my difficult case that no one else would touch. The unique treatment

model at Yellowbrick gave me my life back. I was able to learn how to successfully live with my disorders and disabilities, and not have them take over my life. The amazing highly specialized care I received was by far the best that I have ever received in 25 years of consistent treatment and hospitalizations. The unique team collaboration allowed every aspect of my life to be addressed, not only my disorder. Their neurobiology clinic was even able to correct dysregulation in my brain. At Yellowbrick they truly care about you as a person and not just dollar signs like many other facilities I've been to. They will go above and beyond to make sure you are getting the highest level of treatment possible. You have a say in your care and treatment and can accomplish things on your terms when you feel ready. Their supportive housing had to be one of the most important aspects to my treatment. I was able to escape an abusive situation and have a place to call home. The staff were there for me 24 hours a day and I could always feel safe while going through the recovery process. If you are reading this and saying, "No one can help me, it's pointless, and I always fail!" Then this is the place for you! If you are being told your life will never amount to anything and your worthless, then this is the place for you! If you have been in treatment like a revolving door and nothing has worked, this is the place for you! In my 38 years of life I can finally say I'm happy and have my life back. I'm healthy and living a successful life thanks to Yellowbrick. Yellowbrick has showed me that I am worth it, and so are you! Take the leap and let Yellowbrick help you find your way home! -KB

I was one of the first residents of Yellowbrick. I am happy to see it still running. I am married with two beautiful girls and am working as a registered nurse. Just wanted to touch base. Thank you for teaching me DBT as I find it a useful tool even today. I really do love and use the skills taught to me all those years ago. It still blows my mind when I think of how far I've come.

12 year Alumnus

Just thought I would check in and tell you where I am at one year after my discharge from Yellowbrick (feels like a lot longer).

I guess things are going as well as they could be. I have managed to stay out of the hospital or an emergency room for 15 months and away from self harm for 10 months. Certainly there are still challenges, ups and downs. I have plenty to work on and probably a long way to go before I experience true contentment, but I have overcome a great deal and I am in a good place. I am fully engaged in my life and feel closer to being a hopeful, optimistic and self-assured person than I have in years. I think it was an important part of my recovery to re-ignite my sense of productivity and self-efficacy, which I have been able to do because of the gains I made in treatment.

I hope you are well and that everything at YB is going smoothly. While I am very happy to have moved on and feel certain it was the right decision at the right time, a year on I look back at YB with nostalgia, which is a feeling I have come to really appreciate for its bittersweet qualities. I am a more substantial person because of the experiences I have had and have a stronger understanding of myself and people around me. And there were a lot of funny moments, great friendships, and a feeling of support that I haven't had anywhere else in my life.

Hi to former and current Yellowbrick staff,

I wanted to send an update on how I'm doing. I was a client at YB from November 2008-May 2011.

Like most people who come to YB for help, I came in at my absolute lowest point. I wasn't functioning. I was suicidal, I wanted to feel connected with people and my family but didn't know how to connect well with people and was driving my family away, and was a general mess. I don't need to explain how dysfunctional I was 'cause I'm sure that you all understand what people who come to YB for help are like in general when they enter. When I graduated from YB, I moved back out of state where I grew up. I moved into an apartment with my dog, who my mom took care of while I was at YB. I didn't have many friends left in the city nor did I know what to do with my time. I was also

still struggling with adverse effects of medication which were otherwise necessary at the time. But gradually things started to improve. This was way back in 2011.

Shortly after I moved back I found a fabulous therapist, not the one that YB had found for me though 'cause I didn't end up clicking with that therapist, a wonderful psychiatrist and a life coach (who I stopped seeing in 2015 'cause I didn't need her help anymore by then. My psychiatrist gradually took me off all my psych meds. Yes- you got that right...I'm med free finally after 15+ years of going deep down the rabbit hole of being medicated. This wasn't a light decision on his part and I certainly wasn't ready to be unmedicated before 2015/2016. My therapist, psychiatrist and I all collaborated on how I'd respond to not being on psych meds. It was a giant gamble with my history. But with the skills I gained at YB I was ready to try. It wasn't just my time at YB that contributed to this decision, though I know that what I learned at YB gave me the base to expand my life and use what is offered to me on an OP level.

What also helped was the unfortunate fact that my best friend died in 2013 and I took a NAMI peer to peer class per the suggestion of her mom. I'm still very close to her mom and dad. I made a fabulous friend in the NAMI peer to peer class and. That friend was basically my first healthy friend outside of treatment since high school. My friend and I started to get involved in the peer mental health movement and I haven't stopped since. My mom died in 2015 and my dad was diagnosed and was rapidly declining from frontal lobe dementia, however I rose to the occasion and went into rational mind- yay DBT skills. I was also able to rekindle my relationship with my sister which was very tenuous even after my time at YB.

Fast forward to present day for my relationship with my husband: Yes- I got married to my boyfriend I met when we were only 20 back in 2001. We've basically grown up together and have created a lovely life together. We own a beautiful condo that we both take care of in the heart of the city. When I was at YB I was just learning how to do laundry and do basic cleaning. Now I do some of the home repairs myself and organize the other repairs that need to be done since my husband works full time out of the house.

So that brings me to work: I work part time for the Mental Health Association, do a lot of paid public speaking on my lived experience, volunteer extensively in the peer mental health community and even founded and run a support group for people with OCD and related challenges. I've also learned so much about interpersonal relationships, mental health, mad studies and how to function in the world. Of course I still have work to do on myself and go to therapy 3x/week.

I should also mention that when I go out to tell my lived experience story I often bring up how my first introduction to the peer community was at YellowBrick, how you all helped me learn how to use my strengths to help me deal with my deficits and build a life for myself in a way that worked for me. YellowBrick was truly supportive and wasn't coercive. I have so many positive memories of my time at YellowBrick and want to thank you for creating such an amazing program and community. I know that YellowBrick has grown tremendously from when I was there- but the core of non-coercive treatment, using people's strengths to help them with their deficits, being open to people making mistakes and learning from their mistakes- that's what I know will always be at the heart of YellowBrick.

I wasn't functional when I arrived at YB, but you helped me learn what I needed to do to create the life I have today which includes being a certified peer mental health specialist and generally functioning well despite dealing with some of life's hardest things at the same time. I keep moving forward and am doing very well thanks to what my family provided for me like my time at YellowBrick. Thank you all for helping me achieve a life very worth living.

With gratitude,

B

Dear Yellowbrick Staff,

I thank you for all your time, and all the tools you've given me, to sprout my wings and fly, well rather mend broken parts of me.

I'm not always "Glad All Over" as the Dave Clark 5 band would say, but I think even Gary would agree that that's okay.

I came in suicidal, not but an ounce to live, and now I feel more confident, more vibrant, with so much to give.

Now before you stop me, to tell me that's my Core Enactment, trust me when I say I know, and I will work to combat it.

Overall, you've changed my life with the program you provide here.

So I wanted to say thank you, everyone, for the care and thoughtful minds dear. You've done a lot for me Yellowbrick! But it's sadly/happily time for me to click my heels (3x!) and go home. You all will forever be in my heart.

Michaela

I wrote a testimonial for Yellowbrick about 2 years ago, just a few months after I left the program. I fully stand behind my previous positive comments. Yellowbrick is a uniquely life-changing treatment center, and my experiences there continue to have a positive impact on my life now.

I am posting again to provide an update regarding Yellowbrick's commitment to their patients. Last fall, long after I had been a patient, I sent a few staff members an email asking for advice. I was looking to transfer out of community college to finish my education, but was unsure how to approach time gaps in my transcript, prior poor academic performance, etc. Given Yellowbrick's emerging adult patient demographic, I thought they would be able to provide some guidance. Within the day, I heard back from each staff member and was given helpful, free advice. I took their words to heart, put in my own hard work, and just started my first semester at an Ivy League university. I cannot tell you how much my life has taken a turn for the better and how much my experiences at Yellowbrick helped me to get where I am today.

I urge anyone reading this to do yourself or your loved one a favor and seriously consider this program.

L

Yellowbrick has great facilities, uses best practice interventions, and creates a unique treatment environment for those seeking an intensive program. What impresses me most about Yellowbrick, though, is its dedicated interdisciplinary team. An incredible amount of empathy, clinical reasoning, and passion goes into the work being done by each professional to support clients towards treatment goals. Having a community model means that peers are responsible for their behaviors and accountable to the entire community for both their successes and struggles. This is challenging for most, as it creates room for open dialogue and deeper self-exploration without isolation. But that challenge is where the work of treatment lies. I have found Yellowbrick to be truly unique, and I fully recommend it to those looking for a holistic, intensive setting to work on transitioning to adulthood.

The past 6 months have been wonderful. I have continued to use all of the tools that Yellowbrick taught me.

Yellowbrick was truly life changing for me. If it weren't for Dr Viner and the Yellowbrick staff, I wouldn't have come out of my shell and become my authentic self.

Every single day I think about how lucky I am to have been a part of such an amazing program. I think about how lucky I am that Dr. Viner believed in me. I think about the conversation I had with Dr. Viner when he said I was worth it. Now, finally, I believe that. I believe that I was and am still worth it. My life is drastically different, and Yellowbrick gave me the opportunity to do the work and turn my life around.

Dr. Viner, thank you again. Words cannot express how grateful I am.

I got to Yellowbrick in April 2013, after being at another treatment program. I “graduated” from groups in October 2013, and am now currently in “outpatient” where I still see my advocate (therapist) and psychiatrist.

I can honestly say that Yellowbrick has changed my life. When I got here, I was a mess. I was almost non-functional. I wouldn’t leave my house, I was doing drugs, I wasn’t working, and at 23 years old, I had never lived on my own. I was talking to my dad all the time, maybe 8-10 times a day (excessive, I know). I was on medications I didn’t like, I wasn’t sleeping, and I was having nightmares. The latter two were from trauma.

I began TRP (the trauma recovery program) a month or two maybe after I got here. They don’t start you in TRP right away, and that gives you time to get acclimated and start working with your advocate (therapist).

My medications are now stable and on a combination that I actually like (for the first time in my life). My psychiatrist works with me to make sure that I’m stable and happy with the medications that I am on. In my experience, the psychiatrists here keep people off of addictive medications as much as possible.

As far as all the staff, I love them all. They’re professional and actually care about the people they are treating. It’s not like the other treatment center where I was before this where you’re just a number. Yellowbrick is a smaller program, so it gives you the opportunity to get to know essentially all of the staff pretty well. They will know who you are, and they will all care about you regardless of how often you are in a group with them or actually see them.

Do relapses happen? Yes. Unless you’re in a lock down treatment center, I doubt you will find a place that has addicts in their program and doesn’t have some relapses. No, Yellowbrick does not automatically kick someone out for relapsing. The difference between Yellowbrick and any other treatment center I have heard of is that they don’t just abandon or kick someone out who is struggling. Now if you’re putting yourself and other people at Yellowbrick in danger, that would be another story.

Dr. Viner has helped me tremendously. He is a caring man that will do everything in his power to help you, as long as you want to be helped. Dr. Viner and the other medical staff at Yellowbrick will help whoever they can, but if you don’t want help, there isn’t anything anyone (not just Yellowbrick staff) can do for you.

Would I recommend Yellowbrick? Absolutely 100% yes. If you have had trauma especially, this place does incredible trauma work. I’m not telling you it’s going to be easy, because it’s not. But I can tell you that if you open up and be completely honest about the things you have been through, it will be worth it.

As for me? Now.. Now I’m sober for a year and 2 days. I have a full time job. I’m living in my own apartment (close to Yellowbrick so I can still get support from staff at the residence and peers). I’m sleeping throughout the night. My trauma symptoms are gone (they come back sometimes, but only when something triggers it). I check in with my dad once a day just to let him know that I’m okay. And for the first time in my life.. I’m happy and I’m proud of myself. That’s all thanks to the hard work that I put in here, Dr. Viner, and Yellowbrick.

Parents: If you’re looking for a place to send your young adult to help them become independent and express their authentic selves to you, Yellowbrick can help. Dr. Viner and the other staff at Yellowbrick are here to help you. You will be able to do family therapy, and you will be able to build an authentic relationship with your young adult that you may have never thought possible.

Potential Patients: If you’re willing to be honest, work hard, and want to get help.. This place can help you. You need to be willing to dedicate your time and energy to treatment. If you dedicate that time and energy, and really work hard to change your ways, Yellowbrick will change your life the way that it has changed mine.

Dr. Viner & Yellowbrick Staff: Thank you for all that you have done for me, and thank you for changing my life. I could never have accomplished all that I have in the last year without your help and support.

I’m finishing up my stay at YB, it’s been about 14 months, and I cannot overstate this, but YB saved my life.

It is just amazing for me to look back over the past year to see how much I’ve grown. Entering the program, I was a suicidal, insecure, lonely and angry person. My relationship with my family was especially strained.

Some background, I’m a 23 year old male who has been dealing with depression and social anxiety my whole life. After my third medical leave from college, I decided to give YB a try, since less intensive outpatient programs seemed to not be working.

YB, through individual therapy, group psychotherapy and just my general interactions with the community, gave me such an immensely rich understanding of myself. This understanding of who I am has led me to take control of my life and be the person who I've always wanted to be.

Also, YB was just not for myself, but for my family as well. I had family therapy here in a way that I've never had family therapy before. My parents and I were able to face some pretty difficult stuff, and as a result, the relationship with my family has never been stronger.

Don't get me wrong, there were bumps in the road. This was truly the hardest work of my life - the work of confronting myself. It can be draining, frustrating and sometimes even intolerable at moments. But these are some serious issues that I am confronting, and there is a reason why I haven't faced them before. YB provided a safe and supporting environment to experience the spectrum of emotions and feelings I needed to go through in order to move forward with my life.

Now that I'm about to leave YB, I have a lot of great opportunities lined up for myself and I'm excited to live the rest of my life, which is something I can't say before I started YB. I'm also sad though that I will be leaving this community. I have developed some of the best relationships of my life with peers here. The YB staff is INCREDIBLE. They care so deeply about everyone at YB and are truly committed to making the lives of myself and others change for the better.

This review does not do justice in describing the extent of how YB works and operates and just how amazing and unique this program really is. I just hope that people out there who feel lost, trapped or hopeless (what I once was) can realize that YB is a life-changing experience for the better.

It has been a couple years since I left the Yellowbrick program. I feel that writing this review might help guide others to get the help that they need.

Like many, I came into YB immature, angry and unable to live a productive life. I knew I couldn't live life the way I was living, but I was too angry and depressed to do anything about it. Spending time there helped me become self-confident and independent, to be able to face life's challenges head-on instead of running away from my problems. Yellowbrick is unique among treatment centers because allows patients to learn from their mistakes in a therapeutic environment. The therapists guide their patients along their journey towards recovery from their issues. When patients act out, they are not punished or kicked to the curb. Instead, they are forced to examine these behaviors with their team of therapists and the community around them. While this was extremely difficult at times, I know this was a vital part of my treatment. The program's strong focus on community and working together was also extremely beneficial and has helped me immensely going forward. The program was just as important for my relationship with my family. We have never been closer or better at communicating. While many would like a quick fix for their problems, Yellowbrick is not some sort of panacea that will make its patients' lives perfect and make their problems go away. It is, however, a place that gives young people the tools to do hard work that will help them into long term recovery from serious issues.

In the couple years since I left, I finished my undergraduate degree and I now work in an industry I always dreamed about. Yellowbrick taught me that I matter to the world and gave me the skills to succeed.

I hope you remember me it's been a few years. I just wanted to email you to let you know today I have one year clean and sober, I have worked all 12 steps and am doing well. I work at a treatment center and I'm about to move into an apartment with my best sober friend. I wanted to thank you and Yellowbrick for being a part of my journey. As long as it was, I couldn't have gotten to where I am now without all of that experience. After all, alcohol is a great persuader, eh? I hope you are doing well and staying warm out there.

Love,
Alumni 2011

As a former patient of Yellowbrick I wanted to help clear the air. My experience at Yellowbrick was the most helpful thing that has ever happened in my treatment life. Now I'm not one of those people who spent time jumping from treatment center to treatment center, however I have been in a life long struggle with depression and other personal issues just as any one else had. When I was down the worst, I found that it wasn't the staff at Yellowbrick who were hurting me, it was myself. The people who don't get help from Yellowbrick, are not the ones who are singled out by staff. They aren't the ones that get treated less fairly due to their reputation. They are the ones who deep down don't want to get better. They are the ones who didn't tell the truth each and every day that they were there. Whether they didn't want to admit their truths to others to keep from trouble, or that they didn't want to admit it to themselves, I don't know. But I know that my experience came from me being open and honest and committing to the process. My stay with Yellow brick was 8 months and to be honest it was a short 8 months. Most patients go in with the idea that because the minimum is 4 months then that is how long they are staying. I even thought it myself. Then about two months in I learned that Telling myself the truth and understanding who I was, was going to take more than that. I doubled the minimum. I also was out earlier than a lot of my friends there. Yes I did just write I made friends. People who I cared about and people who cared about me. I don't mean just patients either. I formed a bond with my therapist that was very strong and I found that others had done the same. The Yellowbrick community can be a strong wonderful place to get better, and it can be the most rewarding experience of your life, or you can go and think its stupid and everyone is out to get you and you can lie and deceive. But what you're doing then is just wasting time, money, and the space for someone else who wants to get better. I went into Yellowbrick a college drop out who had been working a minimum wage job and had no motivations. Yellowbrick helped me to apply to school, find work and extend myself. I am currently attending the School of the Art Institute of Chicago after receiving a scholarship that staff helped me get. I work a dream job that will lead to a career. And I am happy. By the end of the day I can say I'm finally happy. That's what its all about anyways, right?

Yellowbrick not only saved my life, but it has led me to the life I have always hoped I could live one day. I was one of those troubled patients at Yellowbrick. My addictions ruled my every decision and I couldn't see that Yellowbrick was providing me with a wonderful opportunity. I was extremely lucky and am so grateful I was never kicked out because all the chances I received, led me to the place I am at now. I know not everyone finds this happy place, but I was one of those people who thought I could never live free of my addiction and I would never be happy. I am so grateful to say that I am now at a place in my life I never thought Id be at. I am not only free of my addictions, but I am leading a successful and fulfilling life. I just hope I can persuade one more person to consider Yellowbrick so they get a second chance at life the way I did.

Dr. Viner:

I would like to convey, and regrettably later then desired, it is because of you and your treatment team, that I am alive and well. Recovery was the hardest thing I have had to do in my life. I learned more during your program than I did during all my graduate studies and clinical work: the importance of accepting what you cannot change and understanding the underlying reasons for the eating disorder as well as the secondary gains. I could go on and on. And while I would never wish an eating disorder on anyone, I know that I would not be the person I am today if I was not forced to examine myself with the depth I did in your program. So, a very belated thank you to you and your treatment team. If you ever need someone to share their recovery story I would be more than happy to do so. I want others to know that it is possible to get to the other side and well worth the challenging journey. Lastly, my father and I have a peaceful and healthy relationship now. I frequently spend quality time with him.. Best to everyone.

I have gone from thinking that I don't need people in my life to knowing the value and importance that relationships play in my life. I have moved away from my notion that things are the only thing I need. I am more direct with people and am more willing to state my needs. I now reach out to people (and I say people, not things) in times of distress. I allow myself to feel my feelings, especially around loss. An important part of my treatment was accessing my emotions and putting them into words. Now I can do that without even saying "I don't know" or "I don't remember" every time a question is asked. I now have the willingness to change myself and my behaviors, especially around my obsessions. I am more open and honest and I'm not afraid to look at the risks that the future presents. I now invite people in when faced with a problem. Most importantly, I want to live and experience all that life offers. I don't want to hurt myself because I know I am better than that. I could not have accomplished this without Yellowbrick. I truly became a young adult, whereas when I came in, I was just a teenager. The freedom that this program offers really made me accountable for my own actions and showed me the wonders of life and that I didn't have to hurt myself. Now I truly know that there are things in life to enjoy and live for. Yellowbrick, I truly found my way home and I thank you for that.

It's been awhile since I've been in touch, but I wanted to thank you for all of your assistance. I was at a place where, like you noted, I wanted certainty and reassurance. The fact that I was left with more questions than immediate answers made me feel angry and frustrated at the time. Your feedback was exactly what I needed. I think it would have been a poor choice for me to continue to buy into the idea that I need a conventional path in order to remain well and in the weeks and months following our sessions, I reflected on what we had discussed and found the book *Present Perfect* that you recommended to be very enlightening. I am back to pursuing a degree as I originally planned and leaving the option open to explore additional studies in grad school down the road when I have a greater degree of stability to manage the demands of more intensive academic work. I am now (relatively) comfortable with accepting that the future holds many possibilities, not just one that needs to be worked out now. I am very grateful for your honesty and support. It has given me the ability to see that in avoiding ambiguity I would only be continuing a past pattern of refusing to tolerate discomfort, which keeps me stuck and prevents me from moving towards the things I really want in my life.

Let me start by saying Yellowbrick is a treatment center, not a some kind of magical panacea for psychological issues. Anyone who goes in expecting to spend some time, hang out, and come out the other side "cured" is going to be disappointed. Treatment is hard work. It sucks. You spend every day wrestling with the things that are most painful, traumatic and difficult for you. And in my experience, in order to benefit from Yellowbrick's system, you have to be ALL IN. Since the target age group for the Yellowbrick program is 18-30, naturally there are a lot of people who try to "half ass" their treatment for a myriad of reasons, and then are disgruntled when they leave, against medical advice, "uncured". While the system is designed so that you and Yellowbrick work together towards a common goal of helping you, I've seen many patients who adapt a defiant "me vs. Yellowbrick" attitude, which will NOT work in this setting. Treatment at Yellowbrick will not be successful if you keep one foot out the door, waiting to run at the first sign of trouble.

That being said, Yellowbrick is a wonderful, amazing place that has dramatically changed my life for the better. And I've personally witnessed the staff and clinicians here not only changing, but SAVING lives. I've gone from being practically unable to emotionally read, much less connect with, other people, to being a dramatically more sensitive, and therefore more connected person. My relationship with my mother, which for almost two decades had been rocky at best, has done a complete 180. I have learned to grieve at Yellowbrick. I have learned to understand and connect with the feelings, thoughts and emotive processes of others. I have learned, and perhaps more importantly come to accept, that the world is not black and white, and how to navigate the gray areas. And I am indescribably, irrevocably better off for it.

I could literally write a book about this, but I will try (and fail, for it is an impossible task) to sum up my thoughts here: Yellowbrick is not for everyone. But, if you are ready to admit that you need help, ready to accept the help you get here in the forms in which it is given, jump in with both feet, and work WITH the Yellowbrick system towards the common goal of helping yourself, then Yellowbrick just might be right for you.

I have been at Yellowbrick for some time now and Yellowbrick has become like a family to me, I am here working on trauma and a number of other things and one thing I never thought I would ever do is connect to someone-let alone a group of people- but I have somehow made incredible connections here at Yellowbrick. Like the others have said- the apartments are beautiful. But something more beautiful than the apartments are the hearts of the staff and the community here. Yes, some people have their ups and downs, that's only natural, but overall this community is extremely supportive. Viner is like a father to the community, he only has your best interest at heart, and wants what is best for the rest of the community. Also, many of the stories these ladies recount are highly dramatized, I feel bad they had such sour experience at Yellowbrick, but I promise you that if you or a family member are thinking about coming to Yellowbrick you are making the right decision. In the amount of time I have been here my life has turned around for the better, I am becoming a new, healthier, version of me. I love Yellowbrick, and I cannot begin to tell you how fortunate I feel to be here and to be with these incredible people and to be apart of such a wonderful program.

You have been a huge part of my life for the past 11ish months. You have been a mentor/ an inspiration/ a mirror & a friend to me...although I would not pick you up from the airport. Your compassion & support for me helped me to build my confidence and my foundation for the unbelievable amount of growth I made at Yellowbrick. I feel Blessed to have had you as my advocate/therapist. Your support and compassion has meant so much to me x2. Your humor and spirit will not be forgotten as I continue to grow to live myself more & more.
Thank you for Always being you. I will truly miss you!

As I said, I could not have asked for a better advocate. I thank you for all you have done for me in our work together. You challenged me when necessary and asked me when I most needed it. You truly are remarkable at what you do.

Sincerely,

I wanted to thank you for all the time you spent helping me get my life on track. You've had a lasting impact on my life, the kind that I'm never going to forget. Best wishes for the end of this year, the new year, and every year after that.

With appreciation for your kindness, With admiration and affection, and generosity.

I want to thank you so much for all the help and support you have provided me in my journey here at Yellowbrick. As I was reflecting on my time at Yellowbrick, I decided to look at my old journal entries. Wow-there is such a difference! In my entries I journaled a lot about topics brought up in groups, particularly in healthy relationships. You provoked thought and work around so many really important issues for me- like trust, anger, attachment, the idea of going back to a dry well, patterns I get stuck in, distress tolerance, assertion, and boundaries to name a few and its

amazing to think of all the important and REALLY dramatic changes this work has lead to. I grew so much through the groups we had together not only in terms of the topics but also in terms of the actual group process and my voice within groups. You have always made me feel so safe and supported and thus, have allowed me to really be myself, put my opinions forward, and be vulnerable in front of a whole group of people. Those were all really new experiences for me and have been a wonderful process and areas where I think a lot of my overall growth occurred! You have given me such valuable feedback, compassion, and support throughout my whole time here. I have never really known how to tell you this, but you just emanate a wonderful aura of kindness and wisdom.

I cannot express the depth of my gratitude for all that you have given me. I am so excited by and proud of all the changes I have made over the past year and feel so exhilarated to live a life where I have confidence in my abilities to overcome obstacles and truly experience the joy that is in this world. I came to Yellowbrick detesting myself and now not only did I like myself overall, but I have also found many parts of myself that I love- something of which I could never conceive before my time here. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for giving such a wonderful gift. You will always hold a very special place in my heart.

Love

I miss you and Yellowbrick. You were my beacon of sanity at Yellowbrick. When we met I didn't feel like I was in therapy, I was just talking to a friend. That meant so much to me. If I told you something, it wasn't thrown back in my face, like it so often is. There were no disingenuous feelings.

As I look back on my time at Yellowbrick, your presence and support helped me foster that confidence in myself, I so desperately needed. You've always thought I was smart and could do whatever I wanted. Honestly, I am determined to do something worthwhile with my life and you have been a big part in me believing that. I'm going to brag for a moment and tell you I got 3 A-'s.. I was actually shocked, but it made me realize that others are not that much smarter than me. I can hold my own IF I have the right attitude.

As for guys, I've actually been better at that. Actually I don't know if it's better but I've started not feeling as guilty about liking guys. However, I only tell a handful of friends about liking someone or "dating someone". This stuff is still incredibly embarrassing to me. I wish I had you to listen to me talk about this silly stuff. I still remember you saying something along the lines of, "You've tried to write off humanity and it hasn't worked out for you." That still strikes a chord.

Nonetheless, all in all I want you to know that I'm doing well. I've been happy more days than I'm sad. But that sadness still gives me a pit in my stomach. I'm working on it, and I have promised myself that I will get over myself one of these days and shed these guards one day at a time. I do a little everyday and I'm going to let myself be happy- I know I will. I need to have a sense of humor about these things and just laugh at myself.

Here is the blog entry I wrote. Dr. Viner wrote a comment on my previous entry. It was actually quite sweet. Much love,

From Our Students

Dear Dr. Jesse Viner,

I would like to thank you for allowing me the opportunity to shadow Dr. Effarah and work closely with the neuroscience team at Yellowbrick! I am grateful to have experienced just how remarkable the staff and procedures at Yellowbrick truly are! Thank you once again for letting me observe the phenomenal work being done at Yellowbrick!

Sincerely,

Tyler K
Xavier University

Yellowbrick has great facilities, uses best practice interventions, and creates a unique treatment environment for those seeking an intensive program. What impresses me most about Yellowbrick, though, is its dedicated interdisciplinary team. An incredible amount of empathy, clinical reasoning, and passion goes into the work being done by each professional to support clients towards treatment goals. Having a community model means that peers are responsible for their behaviors and accountable to the entire community for both their successes and struggles. This is challenging for most, as it creates room for open dialogue and deeper self-exploration without isolation. But that challenge is where the work of treatment lies. I have found Yellowbrick to be truly unique, and I fully recommend it to those looking for a holistic, intensive setting to work on transitioning to adulthood.

During a six-month training rotation at Yellowbrick while a student at the Chicago Institute for Psychoanalysis, I had a unique opportunity to observe the operations of this innovative treatment center for emerging adults. An anthropologist by training, I have experienced a variety of cultural settings, but Yellowbrick stands out in my mind as a community like no other in its commitment to helping young people forge lives oriented toward independence, meaningful personal growth, and mental and physical health. This is a truly special place where patients and staff strike up friendly conversations around the lunch table, participate in weekly community meetings with enthusiasm and candor, and welcome each and every newcomer with empathy and warmth. Sitting in on meetings with the professional staff, I saw firsthand how diligently everyone worked to understand their patients and formulate individualized strategies for promoting each patient's well-being. If a patient started to show signs of distress, the staff was quick to notice, offer support, and mobilize all available resources to help set the individual on a more positive path. It was also remarkable to see how closely attuned the patients themselves were to each other's needs, as they spontaneously offered kind words, supportive hugs, and messages of concern to anyone in the Yellowbrick community going through a difficult time. Although no single organization can meet the needs of every individual, Yellowbrick is evidently a place where many young adults are motivated to undertake the work of rebuilding lives derailed by psychological struggle. It is hard to imagine a young person coming to Yellowbrick and not finding the tools needed to begin the work of recovery, provided the individual is open to personal change and willing to do the work.

AB
