The tragic backslide of singer/actress Demi Lovato into addiction may have shocked some of her fans, but comes with less surprise to those familiar with the signs and symptoms of an impending relapse.

According to news reports, she was seen in late-night clubs, was struggling to keep her commitments and had even stopped working with her recovery coach. Her most recent single, "Sober," includes lyrics apologizing to her parents and fans, singing, "I'm so sorry I'm not sober anymore."

"A pretty big red flag," said J. Craig Allen, MD, medical director of Rushford. "This high-profile relapse highlights the risks for anyone with a substance use disorder, which is a chronic and reoccurring brain disease where the underlying chances in neurocircuitry impact judgment, impulsivity, memory and the reward systems driving decision-making to over-value a return to use while minimizing the negative consequences.

"Recovery is an ongoing battle. Though it can get easier over time, it always requires active recovery work and an ever-present vigilance for the signs and symptoms of relapse."

Relapse is not uncommon. In fact, in the case of opioid use disorder, he said about 90 percent of people will relapse if attempting to reach recovery without medication-assisted treatment (MAT). Even with MAT, nearly 50 percent may still relapse, however those in treatment are identified quicker and can access support and interventions to help them get back on the recovery track. The numbers are roughly the same for other addictive substances, including alcohol.

After engaging in effective treatment and establishing a network of sober supports, people may be considered "in

**Continued on page 2**
Recovery is a battle that always requires active work

Continued from page 1

recovery,” according to Dr. Allen. The challenge is to stay there. One way to help keep that path clear, he said, is to identify the signs and symptoms of impending relapse, which can include:

- Experiencing cravings and urges to obtain and use drugs or alcohol
- Missing appointments, either skipping them intentionally or “forgetting”
- Engaging in substance use-related behaviors such as keeping company with the wrong people, venturing to the wrong places, lying or stealing
- Avoiding urine toxicology screens or having unexpected results, such as positive or negative for substances that are or are not supposed to be present
- Failing to fulfill obligations and responsibilities
- Veering off from any component of the treatment agreement

If someone is showing or experiencing these signs, it’s important for them to talk to their clinician or get back into treatment. Other important steps include boosting the sober support network through friends, family, recovery coach or community-based groups like Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous and others.

Relapse happens to many people seeking sobriety, but Dr. Allen calls it another step in the journey and a lesson in handling setbacks. To find help with a substance abuse issue, go to https://rushford.org/.

Clinicians tap into their empathy

Empathy is defined as the ability to put yourself in someone else’s shoes, an important quality for healthcare providers, many of whom are drawn to the profession because of an internal desire to help others in need.

Medical disorders with overt physical symptoms — those of a heart attack or broken bone, for example — engender these feelings. Unfortunately, medical disorders that present with emotional or behavioral symptoms are often not seen in the same light. Psychiatric and substance use disorders are typically relegated to clinicians who have specialized education, training and experience enabling them to compassionately help. But, even for these experts, a client’s relapse can be challenging.

J. Craig Allen, MD, medical director of Rushford, said this struggle is understandable.

“You develop a relationship and a treatment plan where the most obvious goal is sobriety. A patient’s return to drug or alcohol use, accompanied by the associated actions and behaviors, can feel like a betrayal to the clinician or, worse, a personal failure. A clinician feeling helpless, hopeless and even angry at the patient is not unheard of,” he said. “Yet, this is when the patient is most vulnerable and needs the clinician most. This period can be an opportunity for learning and developing a more solid recovery plan.”

It’s important for professionals working people who have relapsed to:

- **Focus on the disease.** Addiction changes a person’s brain function impacting decision-making and behaviors. Relapse is just another symptom of that underlying disease.
- **Focus on the chronic disease model.** A relapse is unwanted but not unexpected, like a hyperglycemic episode in someone with diabetes.
- **Review the precipitants.** This is an opportunity to explore triggers such as people, places or things that may have led to the slip.
- **Remember, abstinence is not the only treatment goal.** Developing conflict resolution skills, sober living skills and harm reduction are important tasks as well. Relapsing in a therapeutic relationship that allows for a quick return to treatment and recovery-oriented action avoids a “run” of harmful, even deadly, use.
- **Develop a safety plan.** This can include specifics on how the patient will manage high-risk situations in the future and how they want their clinician and other supports to help them manage those situations.
- **Keep it professional.** Feelings of disappointment are natural, but a clinician’s responsibility is to help the patient. Conveying hopefulness and having a positive, productive approach is what is needed.
- **Always remember that your patient feels worse.** People who relapse experience hopelessness, helplessness and self-loathing, sometimes to the point of suicide.

“Empathy is key to maintaining trust and improving communication. It’s vital to the success of our clients that we maintain an empathetic role, particularly during a relapse when they need us most,” Dr. Allen said.
Tip No. 3 — There is no excuse for rudeness

- As healthcare professionals, it is our duty to improve patients’ health and wellbeing (“First, do no harm”)
- We all have bad days and bad moods, but it is not acceptable to let those feelings impact our patients or colleagues
- Discourteous behavior among colleagues affects the team’s ability to care for patients
- Rudeness begets rudeness — patients who perceive that they are being treated poorly are more likely to treat their care team poorly
- Patients who are treated rudely have poorer compliance and outcomes
- “Rude behavior” = Lack of consideration for others’ feelings
  - Lack of courtesy (“please” and “thank you”)
  - Dismissing patient’s concerns
  - Cutting the patient off or interrupting
  - Ignoring the patient

Patient shares thoughts on staff

A client graduating from Natchaug Hospital’s Care Plus program called the Patient Experience Office to share this feedback:

“They are knowledgeable, compassionate and friendly. They go out of their way to make sure all your needs are met. I have suffered with PTSD and Bipolar and came here a 10 on the anxiety scale and now I am graduating at maybe a 2. I cannot say enough about how wonderful it is at Care Plus.”

Cash back on vehicles for HHC employees

That Hartford HealthCare employees are eligible to receive up to $500 cash back when they purchase or lease certain vehicles?

Eligible manufacturers include Chrysler, Dodge, Jeep, Ram, Fiat and Hyundai. For more information, visit www.bonusdrive.com, choose Hartford HealthCare as your organization, and complete the application.

Creating a positive patient experience is everyone’s responsibility. The Office of Customer Experience will be sharing tips and tricks for improving patient experience in the next few issues of BHNews.
### Mental Health First Aid classes on HealthStream

In an effort to standardize BHN registration for trainings, Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training schedules and registration are now found on HealthStream.

MHFA training is offered at the Institute of Living on the third Friday of each month through September. To learn more, contact MHFA coordinator Patricia Graham at patriciac.graham@hhchealth.org.

### Help for those in financial need

Do you know a patient who is in need of financial assistance? Hartford HealthCare can provide help to patients in need.

Learn more about the program at [https://intranet.hartfordhealthcare.org/inside-hhc/patient-support](https://intranet.hartfordhealthcare.org/inside-hhc/patient-support).

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### Center for Mental Health Group Schedule*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MONDAY</th>
<th>TUESDAY</th>
<th>WEDNESDAY</th>
<th>THURSDAY</th>
<th>FRIDAY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First week</td>
<td>11:30 am – Transition</td>
<td>10 am – Geriatric Group</td>
<td>11:30 am – Women’s</td>
<td>3 pm – Relapse Prevention</td>
<td>2 pm – General</td>
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<tr>
<td>of each month</td>
<td>Group (general support)</td>
<td>(every other Tuesday)</td>
<td>General Support</td>
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<td>Support/Medication</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3:30 pm – Anger</td>
<td>2 pm – Smoking</td>
<td>1 pm – Grief &amp; Loss</td>
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<td>Management</td>
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<td>Management</td>
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<td>Second week</td>
<td>11:30 am – Transition</td>
<td>2 pm – Smoking</td>
<td>11:30 am – Women’s</td>
<td>3 pm – Relapse Prevention</td>
<td>2 pm – General</td>
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<tr>
<td>of each month</td>
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<td>cessation with Vickie</td>
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<td>Third week</td>
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<td>2 pm – Smoking</td>
<td>11:30 am – Women’s</td>
<td>2 pm – General</td>
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<td>of each month</td>
<td>Group</td>
<td>cessation with Vickie</td>
<td>General Support</td>
<td>Support/Medication</td>
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<td>11:30 am – Women’s</td>
<td>2 pm – General</td>
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**About BHNews**

BHNews is published every other Friday. Story ideas or submissions may be sent to [amanda.nappi@hhchealth.org](mailto:amanda.nappi@hhchealth.org) or [susan.mcdonald@hhchealth.org](mailto:susan.mcdonald@hhchealth.org). Articles must be submitted as a Microsoft Word document. Every effort will be made to run the article in its entirety, but due to space constraints and style requirements, editing may be necessary.

The deadline for the next edition of BHNews is Tuesday, Aug. 21, at noon.

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1. **Universal Flu Prevention**

- Find a flu shot clinic schedule and exemption forms at [hhcconnect.org/flu](http://hhcconnect.org/flu), and on the HHC (external) internet at [http://www.hartfordhealthcare.org/flu](http://www.hartfordhealthcare.org/flu).

- [Exemption applications due by October 1, 2018](http://www.hartfordhealthcare.org/flu).
- [Flu shots due by November 6, 2018](http://www.hartfordhealthcare.org/flu).

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10% off all Independence at Home Services & Products

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Hartford HealthCare Independence at Home

*Eligible discounts are for immediate family members*
Five group members and facilitators of the Institute of Living’s dementia support group were panelists at the 2018 Alzheimer’s Association Connecticut Chapter’s 21st annual Dementia Education Conference on Thursday, April 19, at the Mohegan Sun Convention Center.

Nancy March, LCSW, and Glynis Cassis, LCSW, who co-facilitate the IOL support group, along with Susanne Yeakel, RN, MSN, Marian Dziama, MT, ASCP, and Lans Anderson, presented a workshop and panel discussion entitled “Love Lessons: Accepting and Using Support through the Ups and Downs of Caregiving” to more than 80 seminar attendees.

March and Cassis, who in addition to facilitating the support group have mothers with dementia, planned a unique presentation with no Powerpoint, prepared statements or rehearsed content, but rather encouraged audience participation and open dialogue.

“We wanted the audience to know that we understand what they are going through because we are caregivers ourselves,” Cassis said. “We look forward to additional opportunities to share and support others who are challenged in the role of caregivers.”

Several audience members emotionally shared their challenges in caregiving, and post-conference evaluations were overwhelmingly positive:

- “Best group today”
- “Emotional, genuine, raw and funny. Really felt a connection with each and everyone one of them.”
- “Big thank you to all the speakers for sharing your stories... I admire the strength courage and honest in discussing your journeys.”

The dementia support group meets on the first Tuesday of every month from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the Donnelly conference room at the Institute of Living. For more information, please call the Family Resource Center at 860.545.7665.

Roadmap to Retirement

People of all ages should be thinking ahead and planning for retirement. But where do you start?

Join the IOL’s Family Resource Center for a Financial Wellness Series open to all employees and their families. This series will be presented and sponsored by Financial Advisors with Coburn & Meredith, Inc.

Lunch and Learn Workshops

Bring your lunch to Clark Social, Staunton Williams Building, to dive deeper into the following topics:

- **Train Your Brain: August 16 and August 23**
  Understand the brain and improve focus while decreasing your risk of dementia

To RSVP, contact Laura Durst
Laura.Durst@hhchealth.org
860.545.7324
The Institute of Living is seeking donations of backpacks and school supplies to give away to children in need from Greater Hartford. Donation ideas include:

- Backpacks
- Markers
- Spiral bound notebooks
- Pens & pencils
- Glue Sticks
- Paper (lined & unlined)
- Erasers
- Index cards
- Kid-friendly scissors
- Highlighters
- Rulers
- Calculators
- Notebooks
- Pocket folders
- Calculators
- Pencil cases

Donated items may be dropped off at two locations: the IOL Assessment Center, located in the lower level of the Donnelly Building, at any time, or at the Carolina Cottage, in the Family Resource Center office on the second floor, Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**Donation deadline: 4:30 p.m. on Friday, August 3**

For more information, contact Laura in the Family Resource Center at 860.545.7324 or Minka or Sayonara in the Assessment Center at 860.545.7200.

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**Family Resource Center Support Groups**

The IOL Family Resource Center (FRC) holds regular support groups. All programs are free of charge and, unless otherwise noted, are held in the Massachusetts Cottage, First Floor Group Room at the IOL Campus, 200 Retreat Ave., Hartford. The upcoming IOL FRC Support Group schedule is as follows:

- **Support Group For Those Coping With A New Or Chronic Medical Condition.** Aug. 10, 17, 24, 31, Sept. 14, 21, 28, Oct. 12, 19, 26. (Every Friday except the first of the month), 1 - 2 p.m. in the Center Building, First Floor Conference Room. For young adults ages 17-26 struggling with a new diagnosis, chronic medical conditions, physical symptoms or limitations. The group will help with difficult losses and limitation due to a medical condition, and build a positive, future-oriented focus with realistic goals. To RSVP, please email marissa.sicley-rogers@hhchealth.org.

- **Depression Bipolar Support Alliance Group (DBSA).** Aug. 13, 20, 27, Sept. 10, 17, 24, Oct. 1, 8, 16, 22, 29. (Every Monday), noon – 1 p.m. in the Todd Building, Bunker Room, Aug. 15, 22, 29, Sept. 5, 12, 19, 26, Oct. 3, 10, 17, 24, 31. (Every Wednesday), 7 – 8 p.m. in the Commons Building, 2nd Floor, Litchfield Room. Peer run support group for those who have been diagnosed with depression or bipolar disorder.

- **It’s Hard To Be A Mom.** Aug. 16, Sept. 6, 20, Oct. 14, 28, Nov. 1, 15, Dec. 6, 20. (First and third Thursday of each month), 10 - 11:30 a.m. Peer-led group that acknowledges the inherent challenges with modern-day mothering and offers an opportunity for mothers to come together, share experiences, and support each other. This group welcomes expecting mothers and mothers with babies to discuss any and all challenges associated with motherhood. Babies welcome! Please RSVP to Laura at 860.545.7324.

- **Hearing Voices Network (HVN).** Aug. 16, 23, 30, Sept. 6, 13, 20, 27, Oct. 4, 11, 18, 25. (Every Thursday), 5 - 6:30 p.m. in the Todd Building, Bunker Room. Peer run support group based firmly on a belief of self-help, mutual respect and understanding where people can safely share their experiences of voices, visions, unusual sensory perceptions. The groups offer an opportunity for people to accept and find meaning in their experiences that help them regain power over their lives.

- **Support Group For Families Dealing With Major Mental Illness.** Aug. 16, Sept. 6, 20, Oct. 4, 18, Nov. 1, 15, Dec. 6, 20. (First and third Thursday of each month), 5:15 - 6:30 p.m. in the Center Building, First Floor Conference Room. For family and friends of individuals who have schizophrenia, bipolar or other related disorders.

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**IOL Backpack and School Supply Drive**

The Institute of Living is seeking donations of backpacks and school supplies to give away to children in need from Greater Hartford. Donation ideas include:

- Backpacks
- Pens & pencils
- Erasers
- Highlighters
- Notebooks
- Crayons
- Markers
- Glue Sticks
- Index cards
- Rulers
- Calculators
- Binders
- Spiral bound notebooks
- Paper (lined & unlined)
- Kid-friendly scissors
- Calculators
- Pocket folders

Donated items may be dropped off at two locations: the IOL Assessment Center, located in the lower level of the Donnelly Building, at any time, or at the Carolina Cottage, in the Family Resource Center office on the second floor, Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**Donation deadline: 4:30 p.m. on Friday, August 3**

For more information, contact Laura in the Family Resource Center at 860.545.7324 or Minka or Sayonara in the Assessment Center at 860.545.7200.
Family Resource Center Support Groups (continued)


- Bipolar: An Introduction To The Disorder. Aug. 21, Oct. 30, 6:30 – 7:45 p.m. For family members and friends of individuals who have bipolar or a related disorder. It will present a basic understanding of the disorder, its treatment, along with specific suggestions to help cope with the illness. To attend, please RSVP to Laura at 860.545.7324.

- Social Support Group — LGBTQ Issues (Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender/Questioning). Aug. 22, Sept. 12, 26, Oct. 10, 24, Nov. 14, 28, Dec. 12, 26. (Second and fourth Wednesday of each month), 5 – 6:15 p.m. in the Center Building, Young Adult Service Group Room. Support group for 16- to 23-year-olds who identify LGBTQ issues as being prominent in their lives. The goal is to discuss support strategies to manage life challenges.

- Dementia Support/Educational Group Meeting. Sept. 4, Oct. 2, Nov. 6, Dec. 4. (First Tuesday of each month), 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the Donnelly Conference Room, First Floor. Please join us as we bring together experts and those who want guidance, direction, and support. Space is limited — reservations are required by calling 860.545.7665.

- Anxiety Disorders: An Introduction. Sept. 11, Dec. 18, 6:30 – 7:45 p.m. This lecture is for families and friends of individuals who have an anxiety disorder or a related disorder. Participants will acquire a basic understanding of anxiety disorders, their treatments and suggestions to help them better cope with the illness. To attend, please RSVP to Laura at 860.545.7324.

- Substance Use Educational And Support Group. Sept. 13, Oct. 11, Nov. 8, Dec. 13. (Second Thursday of each month), 4 – 5 p.m. For family members impacted by loved ones with substance abuse.

- Autism Spectrum Support/Educational Group Meeting For Parents. Sept. 19, Oct. 17, Nov. 14, Dec. 19. (Third Wednesday of the month), 6 - 7 p.m. Providing a place for parents of children on the autism spectrum, or another related disorder, to come together and get support and information. Monthly, peer-run support groups interspersed with special guests and speakers to offer additional guidance and perspective. Please RSVP to Goviana at 860.560.1711 or gmorales@spedconnecticut.org.

- Introduction To Mental Health Benefits and Services. Sept. 25, 1, 6:30 – 7:45 p.m. This presentation will provide an overview of benefit programs available for individuals with mental health disabilities. To attend, please RSVP to Laura at 860.545.7324.
Drs. Mervyn and Olga Little, founders of Natchaug Hospital.

Happy birthday to Natchaug

Did you know that 64 years and one day ago, the first patients arrived at Natchaug Hospital?

Although originally opened as a 40-bed convalescent home, Natchaug admitted psychiatric treatment under the care of founder Olga Little, MD, from its earliest days.

Anything to share?

Are you interested in sharing your clinical experience or knowledge with co-workers? Consider submitting an article to the Clinical Corner.

To learn more, e-mail amanda.nappi@hhchealth.org.

Road Race & Fun Walk

Saturday, Sept. 15, 2018

Natchaug Hospital
Connect to healthier.™

Natchaug Hospital
189 Storrs Road
Mansfield Center, CT

8 AM registration; 9 AM race start*
$20 pre-registration; $30 day of event
*Registration and start/finish line are located at the 196 Conantville Road building behind the Hospital.

Awards for top male and female in the following age categories: 18 & under, 19-29, 30-45, 46-59, 60-69, 70 & up.

All proceeds benefit adults receiving care on the Natchaug Hospital psychiatric inpatient units.

To register, visit www.lightboxreg.com/natchaug-stop-the-stigma-5k-charity-run-and-walk
Questions: contact Ashley Laprade at Ashley.Laprade@hhchealth.org

Board reception planned for Oct. 23

Save the date for the 64th Natchaug Hospital Annual Board Reception on Tuesday, Oct. 23, at the Hartford HealthCare East Region System Support Office at 11 Stott Ave. in Norwich. The reception will begin at 5:30 p.m. with the program at 6:30 p.m.
Stonegate clients enjoy Powder Ridge outing

Clients from Rushford’s Stonegate and Academy programs enjoyed a trip to Powder Ridge for tubing and ziplining along with a paintball outing.

How can you help HHC save up to $1 million a year?

It’s easy. Think before you print!

Here are some ways to save:

- View agendas, emails and presentations on a screen
- Print double-sided
- Print in black and white

For more information about the Hartford HealthCare’s print policy, visit the Managed Print Services page of HHC Connect.

Every dollar we save helps make care more affordable.

The time to join is now.

CONTACT:
MERIDEN: EBONY MARINE - EBONY.MARINE@HHCHEALTH.ORG

SIGN-UP INFORMATION:
HTTPS://INTRANET.HARTFORDHEALTHCARE.ORG/HUMAN-RESOURCES/HEALTH-AND-WELLNESS/WEIGHT-OPTIONS/WEIGHT-WATCHERS
Behavioral Health Home client rebuilds relationships

Glen started with Rushford in 2001 after leaving The Institute of Living. He began in the Young Men’s outpatient and anger management groups, during which he learned how to change his habits and live a productive life. Glen became the manager of a sober house from 2005 to 2008 while he continued to work towards his own recovery.

Glen aspired to further his education and obtained an associate’s degree in business administration and general studies. He worked as a tutor and education assistant during this time, and also received an award for entrepreneurship.

Before changing his life, he was estranged from his family due to his bad choices. Today, Glen has reconciled with his family and has rebuilt his relationships. He now enjoys spending time with his family including holidays and is currently looking forward to a family vacation to the beach this August. In 2011, Glen married his wife Shannon and became a father figure to her adolescent son.

Kudos to Glen on his Behavioral Health Home success!

New LGBTQ support group at Rushford

Rushford will offer a new therapy group for LGBTQ clients at the Paddock Avenue location on Thursdays at 10 a.m. The goal of the group is to offer counseling services specifically encompassing the unique experiences and stresses faced by LGBTQ individuals and to provide a safe place for clients to receive support.

Registration for the group will be the same as other referrals for intake or transfer.

For more information, contact Laurie at laurie.shires@hhhealth.org.

Glastonbury gains $5,000 grant

The George H. C. Ensworth Memorial fund awarded a $5,000 grant to Rushford for alternative therapies to support recovery.

The grant will help the Glastonbury outpatient program continue to offer acupuncture, yoga, visual journaling and expressive art to its adult and teen clients who are struggling with substance use and/or mental health.

Recovery Concert to benefit

Rushford at Middletown

Featuring Selfish Steam
Saturday, August 11, 2018
6–7:30pm
Rushford at Middletown
1250 Silver Street

Suggested donation $5
All proceeds will benefit the detox and intensive rehabilitation program client funds.

To donate and pre-order your ticket, see Kristen Yetishefsky at Rushford at Middletown.

Donations will also be accepted the day of the event.

For more information, please contact Lauren Galarneau, CAC, CADC, at lauren.galarneau@hhhealth.org or call 860.852.1089.

SUCCESS STORY

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