



## WCS Connection

May 2019



*From the desk of the WCS Executive Director:*

### May is Mental Health Awareness Month

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), mental health conditions affect millions of Americans every year. Some of the basic facts about the prevalence of mental illness indicate that about one in 25 adults in this country will experience a serious mental illness in a given year that will substantially impact or impair one or more major life activities. Also, about one in five adults in the U.S. experiences some form of mental illness (almost 47 million Americans) every year. This means that if you are part of a family that includes five or more individuals, the odds are that someone in your family will experience a mental health issue this year. May is Mental Health Awareness Month, a month dedicated to raise awareness around trauma and the impact it can have on the well-being of individuals and communities. Like many conditions, as a society we should focus attention and resources to address root causes and prevention where possible. Prevention in the end is always less expensive and clearly has more positive long-term benefits for everyone, not just those afflicted. The reality, however, is that millions of Americans will continue to experience mental health issues. Many of these individuals will end up in jails and prisons because of the lack of treatment. Mental health issues are treatable and the earlier a person is able to access treatment, the better the long-term prospects are for wellness and recovery. While it is helpful to have one month designated as Mental Health Awareness Month, we should be aware every day of how this condition affects our families and communities. We should also be aware that getting people into treatment as soon as possible, leads to better long-term outcomes for all of us.



*Clarence Johnson*



## Important Work of a Peer Support Specialist

Ron has been a Certified Peer Specialist with the WCS Office of Consumer Affairs program since May 1, 2018. His work includes providing peer services for individuals in Team Connect. Team Connect is a short term program that provides follow-up services and support to individuals discharged from Milwaukee County Behavioral Health

Division's (BHD) psychiatric crisis services, observation and acute care units. The program also connects a recently discharged individual with a Peer Support Specialist. This "warm handoff" to a Peer is key to helping an individual as they reconnect with their families and their community. Other services involve identifying needed resources, getting to mental health appointments and offering the mutual connection of lived experience. Here is one of Ron's most recent success stories:

"I just broke down one day," Shavon said after suffering the loss of several loved ones, a car accident, and feeling overburdened at work. "I felt like I was walking in puddles at work, and the ceiling was opening and God was ready for me." Shavon was taken by her daughters to the Psychiatric Crisis Services at Milwaukee County BHD where she was treated for her mental health needs. The services she received through BHD connected her to an outpatient medication appointment and therapy. As part of her after-care, she was connected with Ronald (whom she refers to as "Mr. Ron").

"Mr. Ron called me, took me out for a burger, and we talked," Shavon said. "He's a real nice man." Ron's interactions with Shavon have helped to reduce her tendency to isolate by getting out into the community again. This included Ron connecting Shavon to additional social outlets in the community and resources to support her recovery. Ron's compassionate and empathetic approach allowed him to quickly build rapport with Shavon. He took the time to listen to her needs and develop rapport through their connection. Shavon is very grateful for Mr. Ron's help and she credits her success to the supportive people in her life.



## WCS Employee Honored by Waukesha County Bar Association

WCS employee, JoAnn Eiring, received the Community Service Award from the Waukesha County Bar Association as they honored her at their Annual Meeting and Awards banquet on May 14, 2019. The Honorable Laura L. Lau presented the award to JoAnn, recognizing her numerous professional achievements over her career as both a WCS employee and in her role as Municipal Judge for Brookfield. In addition to recognizing her extensive achievements, JoAnn was hailed as a hero for her extensive community service work which includes being a long-time youth mentor, volunteering in the NICU, her selfless act of donating a kidney, and her efforts to promote organ donation. WCS is proud to have JoAnn on our team!



Honorable Laura F. Lau with JoAnn Eiring



## Career Opportunities at WCS

WCS is currently looking for reliable, enthusiastic people to fill these positions:

### Certified Peer Support Specialist

The role of the Peer Support Specialist is that of a coach or mentor who through his or her lived recovery experience, can provide the guidance and role modeling necessary to promote wellness, purpose in life, develop relationships, and the insight necessary to move forward. This position is for the agency's Community Based Mental Health Programs. Applicants must have a current WI Peer Support Specialist certification.

### Youth Behavioral Case Manager

WCS is seeking a motivated, culturally sensitive Case Manager who has the ability to communicate effectively with youth and their families. The Case Manager will use their desire and skills to plan, coordinate, and deliver integrated treatment services for urban youth. This position is for Bakari Center, the agency's new Residential Care Center that works with male youth ages 12-17. A master's degree in a social or behavioral science field is required for the position.

### Case Manager

A Case Manager will provide program services in the Milwaukee/Waukesha County area for the WCS Conditional Release Program. The Case Manager will provide ongoing service coordination, monitoring, treatment planning, and advocacy to individuals who are committed under WI Stat 971.17, Not Guilty by Reason of Mental Disease or Defect, and OCRP (Outpatient Competency Restoration Program). Applicants need to have a bachelor's degree in a related human service field and experience in case management and service coordination.

Visit our website to learn more and find a listing of additional opportunities!

## Did You Know?

**In 1978 WCS began offering outpatient mental health services to individuals diagnosed with severe and persistent mental illness.**



### **Wisconsin Community Services, Inc.**

3732 West Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 320

Milwaukee, WI 53208

Phone: 414-290-0400

Fax: 414-271-4605

[www.wiscs.org](http://www.wiscs.org)

*Wisconsin Community Services, Inc. (WCS) advocates for justice and community safety, providing innovative opportunities for individuals to overcome adversity.*

WCS is a 501(c) 3 non-profit agency that provides services in southeastern Wisconsin.

WCS has been serving the community successfully for over 100 years.



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