



WCS Connection

October 2020



From the desk of the WCS Executive Director:

What Does the Future Hold as We Try to Heal from the COVID-19 Pandemic?

The first full week in October is designated as Mental Illness Awareness Week. The primary purpose of the week is to educate and increase awareness about mental illness. Did you know that, for example, in a given year about one in five adults experiences a mental health challenge? During the COVID-19 public health crisis and pandemic, some estimate that the number will increase to one out of every three adults. However, it will not surprise anyone if we find out that those estimates are low and the actual prevalence is much higher. This problem is especially acute for the young adult population, 19 to 29 years old. This age group, many who have recently completed high school or college can experience high levels of anxiety and concern as they worry about jobs, marriage, careers, and what the next several years of their lives will bring. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to wreak havoc across our country, state, and locally in southeast Wisconsin. At the same time, there appears to be hope in the not too distant future with the promise of a vaccine that should be available sometime during the next three to six months. The next few months will be some of the most difficult times that we experience during the pandemic and will surely test the resilience and strength of all of us. As we pass through those difficult times and emerge on the other end in 2021, we will see more clearly how the pandemic has damaged the psychological well-being of so many people across our country. We will be challenged to find ways to support pathways to healing and wellness, especially among our most vulnerable and marginalized citizens. This can only happen if we find ways to work together and are committed to bringing everyone to the table, recognizing that underserved, marginalized, and those with very significant mental health needs may require extraordinary help to support their healing and wellness. I am sure that most of you would agree that it is indeed an investment and commitment that is worth making.

Clarence Johnson



New Program: Youth Crisis Stabilization Facility

Earlier this month, WCS, in collaboration with the Milwaukee County Behavioral Health Division Children's Community Services and Wraparound, opened a Youth Crisis Stabilization Facility. This is the first Youth Crisis Stabilization Program certified in the State of Wisconsin. The program is part of the Specialized Services Division of WCS and the program staff is excited to begin serving youth through this innovative program.

The Youth Crisis Stabilization Program is a resource for youth in crisis, as well as a resource in the continuum of care system and an alternative for escalation to a more restrictive placement. The goal of the program is to prevent hospitalization and promote a safe return to a community-based residence including a family home, a group home, a foster home, a residential care center, or other identified resources. The program will serve up to six male youth, ages 13 to 17 years, at once whose stays at the program are short-term, with the expected length to be five days or fewer, although some stays may be as long as 30 days. Program staff provides counseling, crisis de-escalation, and other treatment services during the youth's stay. The staff also collaborates with the youth's support system, including his family, school, and other service providers to ensure his mental health needs are met.

The program is funded through a grant from the State of Wisconsin Department of Health Services and funding through Wraparound Milwaukee.



October is National Bullying Prevention Month

Every day in schools across the country, students are bullied based on aspects of their identity including race, religion, gender and gender identity, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, etc. National Bullying Prevention Month is an opportunity to reflect on the classroom and school culture. It is a time to examine best practices when it comes to creating respectful school environments that foster inclusion and respect.



Be Resilient. Trust Your Process. Pay It Forward.

During October, to recognize National Bullying Prevention Month, the youth at the WCS Aspire Program recognized the issue of bullying and developed a community awareness campaign. The campaign includes physical signage, social media, and apparel to deliver their anti-bullying message to their peers. Their message is "Why Be a Bully, When You Can Be a PLAYER?" Youth tracked the number of views and shares on social media and asked youth who received a t-shirt to

sign an anti-bullying pledge. The pledge asks youth to be a PLAYER. A PLAYER is a person who follows the acrostic below:

P= Player Mentality

L= Laid Back

A= Anti Bully

Y= Young Educated

E= Everybody Matters

R= Respect Other



Career Opportunities at WCS

WCS is seeking caring and enthusiastic people to fill the following positions:

Clinician – Bakari Youth Residential Care Center

This position is responsible for delivering individual therapy, supervising group therapy, and facilitating workshops for the youth residing at Bakari Center. They will provide service coordination in collaboration with the case managers and Bakari Center staff. Also, the clinician will interview, assess, and screen youth for placement in the program. Applicants must have a knowledge of Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) because the clinician will train and coach program staff and teach DBT skills to the program youth. A master's degree in social work, psychology, or a behavioral science field is required as well as two years of experience working with children or families with significant life needs.

Forensic Specialist/Case Worker III – Conditional Release

The forensic specialist provides ongoing service coordination, monitoring, treatment planning, and advocacy for individuals who have been found Not Guilty by Reason of Mental Disease or Defect. As part of the WCS Conditional Release program, in this role they will engage and develop a supportive one-to-one therapeutic relationship with each program participant. When appropriate, the forensic specialist is responsible for developing and submitting court documents. Applicants must have a bachelor's degree in a related human service field, experience in case management and service coordination, and knowledge of the criminal justice system and the mental health/substance abuse service systems.

Forensic Specialist/Case Worker III – OARS

Due to expansion of the Opening Avenues to Re-entry Success (OARS) Program, this position will serve Racine, Walworth, Jefferson, or Waukesha County. The forensic specialist provides wraparound case management services to high risk/high need individuals with mental health needs who are being released from the Wisconsin state prison system. They will coordinate, plan, and ensure follow-through with community treatment for individuals participating in the OARS Program. Also, they will engage and develop a supportive one-to-one therapeutic relationship with each program participant. Applicants must have a bachelor's degree in a related human service field and experience in case management and service coordination, particularly with mentally ill, substance abusing individuals, or other special populations.



**TELLING OUR STORY
IN LIVING COLOR**

Did You Know?

The young men at the WCS Rashid House have been inspired by the beautiful murals created across Milwaukee during the global pandemic and movement for racial justice in 2020. They are hoping to raise funds to paint a mural inside the house to support one another through a challenging period in their lives. To learn more about the project or make a donation, [click here](#).

Youth Care Worker (Part-Time) – Bahiya House Youth Shelter – Girls

A youth care worker provides supervision of the youth placed in the shelter as well as planning positive and effective group educational and recreational activities. They will also serve as a mentor and role model for the youth as they interact with them in a therapeutic manner. This is a weekend position, on Saturdays and Sundays, from 7 am to 7 pm. A minimum of one year of experience with youth of a similar age to the program population (ages 14 to 17) and a high school diploma or GED/HSED is required by all applicants.



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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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