



WCS Connection

September 2021

NATIONAL RECOVERY MONTH

From the desk of the WCS Executive Director:

Supporting Wellness and Recovery During the Month of September

The month of September is set aside on a national level to bring attention to recovery and is recognized as National Recovery Month. It is a month to celebrate the gains that are made by those in recovery from substance use and mental health disorders. Recovery Month also raises awareness about the importance of treating behavioral health needs just like other health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and asthma. There are millions of Americans whose lives have been transformed through recovery. They are part of an expanding community providing support, encouragement, and inspiration to those who are struggling to begin their recovery journey. The recovery community also provides a strong and valuable voice about the effectiveness of treatment. We see a growing number of nationally recognized figures in sports, entertainment, and politics who are active in their recovery and willing to share their stories about struggles with mental health needs and addiction.

The recovery community has had a strong influence on the development of Peer Support Specialists. These are individuals with lived experiences who have received training (and in some cases certification) in supporting recovery and wellness. Parts of this movement can be traced back several decades to the early days of deinstitutionalization. During this time, previously institutionalized individuals came together to support each other in ways that only they could truly understand because they had similar experiences. The inclusion of individuals who have lived experience with behavioral health needs has grown exponentially during the past 20 years. This has become the focus of considerable research and now there is significant evidence that peer staff are effective in engaging people in care and treatment and reducing admissions into hospitals, emergency rooms, and jails.

Thanks to the leadership of key WCS staff, the inclusion of Peer Supports in WCS programs is now a significant part of the work of the agency. Today, WCS has more than 55 Peers employed at the agency supporting recovery and engagement across many programs.

During National Recovery month, let's all recognize the unique and exceptional contributions that persons with lived experience continue to make in the journey to

Clarence Johnson



A Comeback Story to Applaud

Known for his passion and energy, Torre Johnson is a true hero to so many members of the Milwaukee community including participants at WCS. Because of how he turned his life around many years ago and his current tireless commitment to our community, Torre was honored with a Comeback Award at the 2021 Comeback Re-entry Conference on August 26, 2021. The event brought together returning citizens, practitioners in the re-entry field, and community leaders dedicated to improving outcomes for justice-involved individuals. Torre was one of four individuals recognized for their perseverance in turning their past mistakes into their current successes. Upon receiving his award, Torre gave inspiring words of encouragement and hope as he shared stories of his past triumphs that have molded him into the incredibly successful community leader and activist that he is today. Congratulations Torre on being an honoree at the 2021 Comeback Re-Entry Conference! Milwaukee is a better place because Torre Johnson lives and works here! WCS is proud to have Torre as an important part of our WCS team and grateful for all the ways in which he helps move the mission of WCS forward.



WCS Recovery is for Everyone

By Susie Austin, WCS Peer Services Coordinator in Waukesha

The WCS Peer Support Group in Waukesha led the first “Recovery is for Everyone” Picnic and Softball Tournament at Waukesha’s Grandview Park on September 18, 2021. More than 175 individuals attended this educational and inspirational event to celebrate recovery and build community. The picnic could not have been held without the generous support of the following sponsors: SOFA (Saving Others For Archie), Wisconsin Voices For Recovery, Rogers Behavioral Health, ARC (Addiction Resource



Council), and WisHope.

It is important for people new in recovery to see how much fun life can be, and this picnic provided lots of exciting activities. Throughout the day, individuals enjoyed volleyball games, tennis (led by tennis pro Andy Badura), great music (by the Candy Cigarettes) and delicious food from Kerry's Kitchen. Our WCS Treatment Court Crew won the softball tournament along with bragging rights for a year and a traveling trophy!

It was great to have so many individuals in recovery attend the event along with their family and friends. We were also thrilled to have many First Responders attend the picnic. First Responders had the opportunity to meet recovering individuals who are healthy and having fun. They told us that they see people at their worst, and witnessing the recovery side of things, and talking to people they may have saved, gives them hope. In addition to the array of fun activities, the event provided valuable resource information and many of the attendees learned how to respond to an overdose emergency by taking part in a Narcan training provided by ARC.

Communities need to see people in recovery, and recovering people should be proud of who they are, and the battle they have fought. The "Recovery is For Everyone" picnic accomplished just this!



Career Opportunities at WCS

WCS is looking for caring and dedicated people for the following positions:

Human Resource (HR) Generalist - Administration

As a hands-on HR Generalist, you will contribute to the day-to-day operations of all things HR. This includes recruiting new hires, coordinating an employee's life cycle at WCS (including performance management, workers' compensation, COBRA Administration), and coaching managers through employee relations. Occasionally, you will be the back-up to the HR Director. Applicants must have a bachelor's degree in HR or related field, three to 10 years of experience as a HR generalist, and experience with FMLA, ADA, workers' compensation, as well as unemployment compensation.

Supervisor - Youth Shelter Care-Bahiya House

We are looking for a hardworking and energetic individual to supervise the staff and operations of Bahiya House in conjunction with the Program Director. As the Supervisor, you will provide management and leadership to all program staff, maintain communication with various parties, ensure policies of the program are being followed, and serve as a positive role model for the program's youth. Qualified candidates must have a minimum of three years of experience with youth of a similar age of the program's population and a high school diploma or GED/HSED. An associate's or bachelor's degree in a human services field is preferred.

Youth Care Worker – Youth Shelter Care

If you are passionate about working with youth and want to serve as a mentor, then this is a position for you. The Youth Care Worker provides supervision of the individuals placed in the Youth Shelter Care Program.

Did You Know?

You can become a Treatment Foster Parent! WCS' Treatment Foster Care Program recruits, trains, and licenses foster homes to provide quality placements for youth who are at risk of or are returning from residential care.

The program is committed to serving youth and families of all backgrounds as they work towards reunification. If you are interested in becoming a Treatment Foster Parent or know of someone who is, please contact WCS at 414-840-8452 or rwaters@wiscs.org.

This includes implementing the daily schedule of activities, providing group educational activities, recreational activities, following up individually with youth, and serving as a mentor and role model for youth. Applicants need to have at least three years of experience with youth.



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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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