



Supporting a Diverse Chicago West Side Community

Westside ROSC Council

Lead Agency: Chicago Recovering Communities Coalition

Friday, March 29, 2024

10am – 12pm

[Zoom Meeting Information](#)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/695761637?pwd=eVVOUzJlN3VUcXl6WFJzSnVNOVJXdz09>

Meeting ID: 695 761 637 | Password: 038839

Meeting Minutes

Welcome Extended by; Venessa Moreno: Expressed appreciation for members present, and continued support, and to those who were attending ROSC meetings for the first time. Also mentioned that from now on ROSC will be offering CEU's.

Participant Introductions: Sharon McDaniel, Government: Re-entry programs, WestCare Illinois; Danny Sourbis, LCPC, Recovery Supports: RCO, DuPage ROSC/Serenity House Counseling Services, Inc.; Kimberly Haywood, Recovery Supports: Other, Brighter Behavior Choices Inc. NFP; Cristina Banda, Treatment: Local Provider, The Illinois Family Resource Center; Linda Sharp, Treatment: Local Provider, Woodridge Interventions; Debra Laws, Treatment: Local Provider, Renewed Hope Community Services; Mary Dowling, Volunteer: Drug Free Coalitions, West Side Heroin/Opioid Task Force; Charlotte A. Estell, Recovery Supports: Housing, Kalimba Foundation; Adam L Scheffler, Service Providers: Other, Social Worker; Ruthie Williams, Recovery Supports: Housing, Faith Way Men's Independent Living Facility; Walter Houston, Recovery Supports: Housing, Kalimba House; Dr. Bramlett, Healthcare: MAR Prescriber, Radius Foundation; Barton Fitzpatrick, Healthcare: MAR Prescriber, Optimal HealthCare Group, LLC; Maria Gonzalez, Recovery Supports: Other, Campaign For A Drug Free Westside Inc.; Jocelyn Beckham, Recovery Supports: Housing, Adrian's Purpose Sober Living; Melody Lewis, Volunteer: Drug Free Coalitions, West Side Heroin/Opioid Task Force

Our council is made up of members including Hospitals, Treatment Centers, Mental Health Facilities, First Responders, Recovery Programs, Schools, Local Government, Employment Agencies, and importantly persons with lived experience.

Goals and Objectives by; Venessa Moreno: Westside ROSC Councils overall goal is to advocate and assist with guiding and monitoring the development of an integrated system of recovery by creating a shared vision to improve availability of services by building a sustainable ROSC Council. Our objectives 1. To create communities of recovery that encourage and integrate resources for the recovering individual, families, and friends. 2. Develop supportive recovery communities that foster growth, respect and understanding of those who have identified problems in the areas of substance use and mental health. 3. Implement effective communication that will allow for inclusion of PLE's (persons with lived experience) voices to be heard.

Council Updates by Venessa Moreno: Faith Based initiatives happening in the community and let us know if there is an event that the council can support. The council is working hard at showing up in force to community events and providing Narcan and Narcan training at various events and in different organizations. We are looking to get more updates from our members to share out to the larger groups so please send those over via email or share in the last part of our meeting today.

March ROSC Council Speakers: The Role of Peer Support Specialist in the Recovery Community: ROSC Peer Members: Yulanda A Thomas, NCRS (Peer Support Specialist, The Path Recovery Living for Women); Antell Little, NCRS, CPRS (Peer Support Specialist, CRCC); Update: Opioid Crisis Community Outreach: Melody Lewis (Peer Outreach Specialist, West Side Heroin/Opioid Task Force)



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Speaker: Update: Opioid Crisis Community Outreach: Melody Lewis, Peer Outreach Specialist, West Side Heroin/Opioid Task Force

The West Side Heroin Opioid Task Force is on the street every day of the week in different hot spots on the West Side of Chicago distributing Narcan and partnering with different organization to provide services to those that we engage with while doing outreach. Resources for homeless, MAR medication, social services such as getting IDs and other medical services, and employment. There is a lot of education that happens around drug use and about how Narcan works and how it can save lives. They also offer soup and working with a food pantry. There are also harm reduction efforts to help individuals to reduce risk of death until they are ready to seek help to stop. We do everything we can to reduce overdose rates in hotspots.

We also conduct various trainings for organizations who need training on Narcan and education on harm reduction. Any organization can reach out to us for the outreach schedule and if you are interested in joining us, please reach out to us via email for the Task Force. We also have a Faith Based initiative that is hosting events across the West Side and South Side. We also work with Police/CAPS on the West Side.

Mary Dowling who is with the West Side Task Force also contributed to the update: I specially work on housing for individuals and particularly advocate for individuals on MAR treatment and individuals for active users. It is a big challenge to provide housing for individuals in either of these categories and we are always looking for more options to explore. We believe in housing first to help support an individual. April 8th a Zoom meeting about an open discussion about housing options that can be shared with individuals they engage in during outreach. We invite recovery homes to the table as there is more opportunity to tap into there. Any recovery homes on this call please join us and I will put my information in the chat.

Speaker: The Role of Peer Support Specialist in the Recovery Community: Yulanda A Thomas, NCRS; Peer Support Specialist, The Path Recovery Living for Women

AS a peer specialist we do both workforce development and peer support at CRCC. Participants have either trauma or substance use and need support getting back on their feet. It is my job to open, listen and understand. It is not my job to direct them. I am not a therapist, a counselor, I am here to support. I encourage that this is one day at a time, and it takes time. Those with trauma need additional support and trust to share that trauma to heal and accept the help that we connect them to. Peer support is also integrated in our Workforce Program and life skills, stress management, self-care, better communication because those are not strong skills, and they need to be developed. The soft skills matter as much as the hard skills. These help with recovery as they go through that change. We are resource brokers to connect them to solutions that can help them overcome barriers. Peers work with peers to provide support that clinical workers cannot. You are as good as your referrals because you never know what your participants need. As a peer I need to know what my role is and not try to open any trauma that I cannot close. I refer out and I must know my lane to be successful at providing peer support. Know your role. We help reduce stigma and treat them with dignity and build them back up. Culture competency is so important to help treat the person effectively. Boundaries are so important in this work.

Speaker: The Role of Peer Support Specialist in the Recovery Community: Antell Little, NCRS, CPRS; Peer Support Specialist, CRCC

My experience is in all the big agencies, prole, probation and halfway back, roundups, ATF, working inside DOC, and in recovery support services. One of the most important things is to reach a participant to look at their behavior if they want to make a change in their recovery. The focus is on what I want and not looking at what they need for their recovery. A recovery support specialist is how to be able to reach the client and educate them. If you do not have resources to help them, they will see that, and it will be harder to reach them. We also need to reach them to realize that they are their best resources. Peers working with peers. They can give referrals to help each other.



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Educating them about resources they need to help support their recovery is critical and explaining to them how this disease has affected everything around them and how to take care of themselves. Peers lead by example when it comes to helping participants. Continued education is important to grow as a peer support specialist. The more credentials you can attain help you to gain the knowledge you need to be more effective. Peer specialists provide the tools and help participants to learn that they must use them. Recovery cannot be done for you; you must do it. Action. Boundaries are important to encourage them to build their recovery capital.

Discussion Highlight Talking Points:

Yulanda: I have done a lot of work with my church to help educate them and show them resources that are available if we have anyone from our congregation who needs help. If there was an emergency such as an overdose, we need to know how to do respond. Westside ROSC Council went out to our church and provided Narcan training and opened their eyes to help carry the message as people will come to their churches. They are not open to training to understand how to support individuals in or seeking recovery.

Venessa: Self care is important but if you get a chance to engage in the community in a different way to have a different impact, I encourage you to get outside the box and do something that not only has an impact but fulfills you with the work we do. I have that experience with the training we do with faith-based organizations and with the Cook County DOC training. Find something that sparks passion and fulfillment in your life by doing this work and don't forget to recharge your battery.

Cristina: Are those Narcan trainings in Spanish? We need more trainings done in Spanish and that is something my organization is looking at doing and we would like to partner with the Council to help make that happen. Venessa mentioned that the Council has literature in Spanish and can provide more resources if needed and there is a collaboration that needs to happen.

Venessa: There is a growing need for more services in Spanish and the council encourages members on this meeting to connect with Cristina and share also your resources that you have available in Spanish to the group.

Venessa: There is the 2024 National Rally for Recovery on September 21st. Please save the date and let everyone know that Illinois recovery will be on stage for everyone and folks across the country.

Mary: Difference between a recovery coach and a peer specialist. Mr. Little: Specialist is more from a curriculum and working on their barriers with providing referrals. Recovery coaches are more hands on dealing with the recovery planner and looking at what is needed to live on a day-to-day basis.

Mr. Little: You are here to service the client and if you do that, and you do not get personal you are in line. You have the resources you need and provide those. Know your job. CADCs provide service plans. Peers/Recovery Coaches provide a recovery plan.

Closing Remarks

Venessa: Thanked the membership for sharing openly and respectfully and we will see everyone next month. Next Westside ROSC Council meeting will be hosted via Zoom April 26, 2024

Please Join Us in Building a Sustainable Westside ROSC Council

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