

Workforce Development News

Integrated Healthcare Recovery Support Specialist Institute

Yuma, March 16, 2017



Certified Peer Support Specialist Graduating Class

Back Row (L to R): Francisco Porcari, David Beach, Nina Russell, Hector Martinez

Front Row (L to R): Joseph Power, Audrey Ryan, Jozel Martinez, Javier Esquerra, Nicole Zavala-Manchado



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How Hope Saw Me Through

By Carl Beach



My name is Carl and I am 41 years old. I have been through so many occasions that have given me hope it's hard to pick just one. I've been through a lot in my life, more than most people my age. Some good, and more bad than I care to share right now. Through most of the bad though, there has always been a sense of hope at the end. I have had

6 near death experiences, and out of each one, Hope has emerged. The first was self-induced. I had reached a point in my life where I had given up. I had been fired from a job, and humiliated myself in the process. My answer to dealing with it was swallowing several bottles of prescription medications. The doctors stated the dose of drugs I took was enough to kill an elephant, but I survived. During this same time, I had been dealing with the recovery from a motorcycle accident and was having a hard time with the shop that was doing the repairs. I remember saying to myself one day that someone out there had to provide a better service. During the same month that I spent recovering from the overdose, I saw a commercial for Motorcycle Mechanics Institute, and the light bulb went on. I knew right away what my future was. Seeing that commercial gave me a sense of hope that I could dedicate the time for school, and enjoy a new profession. After all, I've been riding my whole life, but knew nothing about the machine I was riding. It took a little time and sacrifice, but off to school I went, and that's where the last 15 years of my life have been. I spent almost two years in school and then opened my own Harley Davidson repair shop. But the future provides me even more sense of hope, because now I will be using my own life experiences and training to help others overcome their own shortcomings. Or in other words, I'll be helping to inspire Hope to others as they are on their own road to recovery.

Today I have Hope

Audrey Ryan

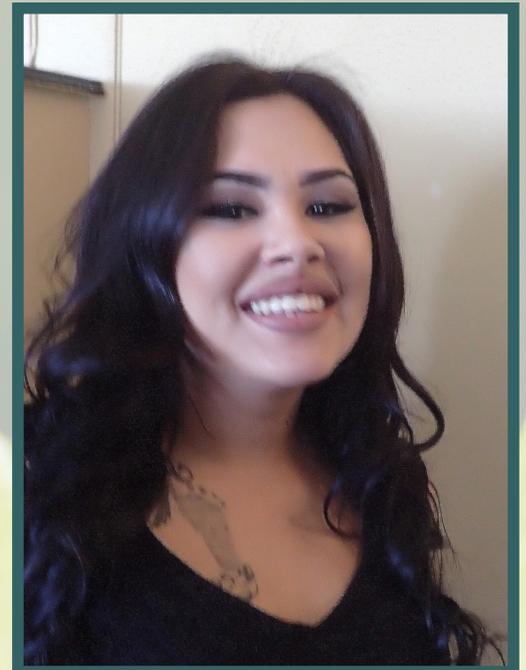
Hope for me is knowing that things will get better with each passing day. Three years ago I could honestly say, I didn't have much hope. As time went by I realized I did have hope for my recovery, future, and life. If it wasn't for my support team, I don't think I would have made it this far in my recovery. My support team has been the strongest help and has been the biggest part of my recovery and now, I want to help others like they helped me. I want to be a peer support and give others a listening ear, so I can help give them hope. A Special Thank You to my Dad, Juan, Susanna and Roxanna for being there.



My adventure, my hope, my recovery

by Jozel Martinez

As a person with co-occurring disorders, this journey has been far from easy, but all the hard work has been worth it. Along the way I was called crazy, different, nuts, and other unkind words. At times I was told I was weak minded, to just get over it, or better yet that it was all in my head. After quite some time, I made myself believe I was not like everyone else. I had flaws that others didn't. I was no longer able to function in the world and that I could never be somebody because of my disorder. So I gave up and let the label I was given define me. It wasn't until I surrounded myself with people who actually listened to me, that I became hopeful. Between my case manager and my best friend, I had a support system. They accepted me for me and looked past my diagnosis. They asked me what I wanted out of life. They reminded me of the strengths and the intelligence I had within myself. Not once did they give up on me. Most importantly they made me feel normal. Starting then, I did not let my diagnoses define me, but instead it gave me hope to hold onto. Having that hope gave me the motivation I needed to succeed. Today I am back in college. I am a Certified Recovery/Peer support Specialist, a mother, and it can only get better. The chance of recovery is 100% so never sell yourself short because you were defined by a diagnosis. Remember to never lose your hope, smile and show everyone that nothing is impossible.



Humans Adaption to New Ways of Living

Francisco Porcari



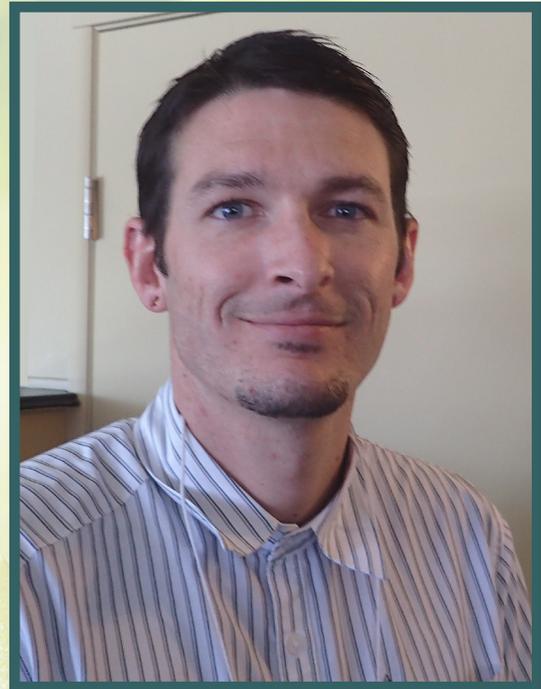
My addiction did not occur in a specific time period. I did not see it coming, but it became stronger over time and eventually took over my life. It dominated and became my life. The terrible actions, consequences and experiences I have encountered, and the awkward situations I put my family and friends into were very stressful and harmful to anyone around me. My recovery started a few years ago. I don't recall a specific time frame but eventually my life began

to change dramatically. I noticed that my whole world had turned upside down. I no longer had what it took to support myself. My list of friends started shrinking to the point of no one to call. The interaction with the community came to a stop. It became a struggle to be social and join others in normal activities. After that, going to rehab, relapse, and trips to the hospital were almost on a monthly basis. My turning point was on March of 2016 when I was diagnosed with stage three liver cirrhosis. I am grateful to my Mother who has been there for me in my worst and best times. She never stopped believing in me and that gave me courage to combat my dependence on alcohol. Also the love for my child and the fear of losing custody was a big motivator, and the fear of being homeless. Also my health provider has worked wonders; they have been very professional and patient with my recovery, helping me overcome my relapses and my depression. What works for me to remain in sobriety is to stay as positive in my thinking as possible. Also learning how to cope with triggers and recognizing my precursors has helped me learn how to avoid those terrible cravings. It is possible to live a normal life while living with a mental illness or substance use disorder; after all, humans thrive at adapting to new ways of living.

With HOPE, You Can Be Anything!

Joseph Power

HOPE, for me, is changing the world through my eyes and how I envision things could be if I tried my best to make a positive impact on the world. For example: I HOPE to be president, of the United States of America one day. I had a buddy tell me one day to shoot for president that way I might be a senator. Shoot for a billion, that way I might make a million. By constantly staying in the frame of mind that I, Joseph Glenn Power, can reshape the whole world positively, then I'm able to maintain a sense of HOPE that I can constantly reshape the lives of everyone around me positively wherever I may go. I HOPE for the best for everyone.



My experience of Hope

Maria D-Virgen

Hope is not a word that I used very often as recently as a year ago. It is a word which had very little meaning to me. During my depression I experienced many dark days in which nothing seemed to produce any instance of "hope". It is difficult to feel hope, when despite the number of people around you, you feel completely alone. It is also difficult to experience hope when so much of your time is spent trying to justify your existence or the purpose of your life. When I began attending the peer support program, this is the state in which I found myself, "hopeless". I am glad to state that today that is no longer the person I am. Much of our self-worth is tied to the value we think we add to society or our family, but today I realize that my value lies in the way I feel about myself. What I can produce or what I can add is a variable that can change over time and as a result of circumstances. However, when I learned to appreciate myself for who I am, I experienced a breakthrough of Hope!

Thanks to the constant encouragement from my peer support and to the new skills and classes, as well as time spent with the peer support group I have gained a renewed understanding of what it means to feel good about myself. I also want to emphasize that my renewed trust and faith in God has played a huge role in my recovery. It is an experience which I feel I need to share with others who like me, have found themselves hopeless and alone. I understand that there may be days when I will feel alone again, but I've learned that you are only alone if you allow yourself to be. I am thankful for the relationships that I have formed with my peers and the support staff which has been so instrumental in my recovery. I know that moving forward it is these relationships and those with my children and the rest of my family that I will lean on. I also know that I am perfectly ok with the person looking back at me in the mirror.

FAITH and HOPE

by Hector Martinez



When I was in my addiction I never knew anything about hope. Hope to me was that I hoped to have more drugs than my competitors.

That's what I used to think about Hope.

But on March 13, 2014 I had an awakening from God. What happened to me and my family was a car accident. My son was ejected and my wife's foot was partially amputated along with all the other broken bones and damage. I got a call from the Chaplin telling me I needed to get down to YRMC because my family was being flown to Phoenix and my whole world came down on me. That day changed me. I prayed to God that my family was OK and had HOPE and FAITH that they were going to be, and now we all have HOPE.

Hope

by Nicole Zavala-Manchado



My personal experience of having hope was when I was diagnosed with Lupus the day before Christmas of last year. I had already been in recovery over 5 years, and I knew nothing of how to be grateful for my life. I have been dealing with a lot of medical conditions all my life. My husband has always been by my side to help me through whatever I was going through. Though I have been in recovery for a while, I didn't understand that having hope plays a big part in recovery. And always having been a person who relies on themselves, I must believe in something higher than myself. Hope has come to me to help me believe that I am ok. That to be thankful of who I am as a person and a person in recovery. Having hope has shown me to be a better person. It also has helped me to realize the type of person I am becoming. My experiences with life and medical conditions has shown me to be thankful of who I am and that I am alive.

Diagnosis Does Not Define Me

Nina Russell

I met my Peer Support Person, Yolanda, about six months ago. I had just got out of the hospital and was positive that I would have to take an early retirement through Social Security. I wasn't listening to what she was trying to tell me. But she listened to me (ad nauseam), and never gave up on me. She kept encouraging me to take the Peer Support Training that she had received through the University of Arizona, so I finally gave in. The first day I showed up I was moved to tears. I learned that there is Hope of Recovery; that my 28year diagnosis of Bipolar Disorder does not define me. I have spent years self-stigmatizing and not believing I could overcome this diagnosis. Completing this course and working in the field will help me do the same for others who I am sure are feeling just as despondent and helpless as I did before learning what I have the past few weeks. Having the support from the team at CHA (my Peer Support, Yolanda, my Case Manager, Janet, and my Doctor) got me back on my feet and the RSSI instructors showed me what Hope really looks like. Thank you! This has been a wonderful experience.



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Workforce
Development News

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UA Workforce Development Program promotes recovery and expanded opportunities for people with mental illness, substance use, and dual diagnosis by employing a collaborative approach to advocacy, service, education, and research.

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