

Workforce Development News

Integrated Healthcare Recovery Support Specialist Institute

January 31, 2019



Certified Peer Support Specialist Graduating Class

Back Row (Left to Right): Jermahl Eve, Wesley Yokota, Jessica Manns, Jason Stevens, Ashlee Gates

Middle Row (Left to Right): Lourdes Lodge, Patricia Chambers, Janice Linsky, Micheal Schelin

Front: Scott Lentz



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The Best of Me

by Janice Linsky, CRSS



Hope? Wow...I've had many stops and starts, and circles during my years in recovery. Sometimes I thought I had found hope...but it was never true.

There are 3 specific times in my life when I experienced such dark hopelessness that I had to be hospitalized. My first glimmer of hope came about after spending 3 months at a Rehab Center in California. This was where I did some really hard work; soul cleansing group therapy sessions, confessions of guilt and shame,

regardless if they were real or perceived. I left feeling healthy, a bit scared, and yes, hopeful.

Any problems with this? Three months, \$30,000, East to West Coast, clean, sober, and thinking..."Okay, I got this! Finally I get it!!" Sounds good, except I forgot the most important thing - SUPPORT SYSTEMS!

Flash forward 17 years...

Stops and starts, ins and outs. As the lyrics to one of my favorite support songs by Sugarland states, "I might lose my way, but hear me when I say, I WILL STAND BACK UP."

My biggest and most healing hope to date is the realization that I have NO control over the feelings and judgements of others, mainly how my children have excluded me from their lives. I am more than my mistakes. I have begged forgiveness. I have learned, listened, and grown in the midst of my deepest darkest despair.

Now here in Tucson, just turning 60 and putting in a lot of painful work with the help of wonderful people here at Marana, and with the learned lessons and mindfulness of closing the doors to my past, I feel well and hopeful and I fully realize that in this moment I am exactly where I belong.

I am stronger now, or maybe strong again? Maybe I always was?

I will give myself the BEST of ME!!

Hope

by Ashlee Gates, CRSS

Hope is the essence of life. Many of us could not live a life of peace, without having hope deep inside our heart. Hope is being able to see the light despite all the darkness. Hope keeps telling us that tomorrow will be better than today, hope keeps us staying positive. Hope gives us mind power. Hope motivates us! The essence of Hope is always very sweet, it is an inspiration to live life the best way that we can! Hope guides me. It is what gets me through the day, and especially through the night!

H- is for Happiness and Humble

O- is Opportunity and Open minded

P- is Positivity and Peaceful

E- is for the Excellent Energy in Everyday life!



Fire of Hope

by Jason Stevens, CRSS

For me, I can't exactly pinpoint the moment of hope. It was more a need to be determined to change my fate. As with everyone who is not satisfied with their situation in life, change is a dream. That something that is a "maybe or a someday". I guess that my hope came when somebody said that my dreams and ideas of my future were an obtainable reality. I was given examples of what I could do for myself. I found that for once, I actually had the power of choice. This is something that I had not had for myself in years and that sparked a fire of hope for a future. So, for me the moment of hope was when I realized "I could" and "I can" be something more.



My Dream Team

by Wesley (Beau) Yokota, CRSS

My personal experience of hope is based on a new beginning and the people around me. The illness that was gifted to me was a case of schizophrenia in 2013. The road to recovery was slow but steady and full of many obstacles. I knew that for me to succeed in my recovery that I would need to put a lot on myself, but I could count on others around me. After I finally came to front and center with my illness, I slowly began educating myself on the disease and what I could do to help it. It took a lot of personal responsibility to make sure I was always ahead in the game and making the right choices to further my recovery. The biggest turning point I think in my success is the transformation of what I like to call my "Dream Team". I got a therapist named Janeen and was able to get in a couple classes with an excellent teacher named Corrina. The final piece came a bit later with my case manager named Brittani. The three of them together steering me in the right direction, with the support of my family and friends really got me to where I am today. Now today I do have my off days



but I have many good days. I have even been able to pursue a certification in the RSS program. I got a different path in life but I think without hope I would have never made it this far.

Hope put in Motion

by Scott Lentz, CRSS



It was in late 2015 that I went to a doctor appointment. For the first couple of months, I just felt like I could not go on. Almost every night I kept thinking of ways to close the book

on myself. From 1990 until 2004, I watched my Father, my Wife, and my Step Father-In-Law, as they slowly and painfully passed away. It was the start of me coming to my breaking point. Between 2005 and 2010, my Sister, and then my Mother, passed away. Then in 2015, my oldest Daughter passed away, and in 2016 on the same day my Brother passed away. At this point, I am now at my breaking point. At my next visit to my doctor, I expressed to them what was going on and how I felt. So my doctor prescribed medication for my depression and also gave me a referral to MHCDBH (Marana Health Clinic Division Of Behavioral Health). After three recovery coaches and two counselors, my counselor informed me of the RSSI (Recovery Support Specialist Institute). I gave it great thought and I came to the decision that I would join the program, and I put it into motion. With that, I joined the class. With my past and with the tools that my instructors gave me, plus the support of others, I should have everything to do my best in a career as a CRSS (Certified Recovery Support Specialist).

All About Hope for Me!

by Jessica Manns, CRSS



The word HOPE means new life, new beginnings. I decided that this year 2019 is going to be all about HOPE for me! The past few years had been nothing but bad! My mom died 10 days before my 14th birthday; that is when I had turned to drugs and alcohol. Since then I have made bad choices,

which in return I have nothing to show for. I have been diagnosed with Clinical Depression, Anxiety, PTSD, and Bipolar 2. I have overdosed 4 times in the past 4 years. Even though I wanted to die, I just couldn't, or wouldn't. I had been struggling with my sobriety for the past 5 years. I was tired of living like that; homeless, nobody you can trust, people always stealing my things.

I wanted something else in my life. So finally, I decided that if I wanted my life to change, then I would have to change, and so I did! I called my dad and asked him to help me, and then I called Paula Cousins at Marana Behavioral Health. I checked myself into a detox program, and now I go Marana for other services. I was offered the wonderful opportunity to take this RSS course so that I can help others. I really enjoy helping others; it makes me feel better. People close to me are always telling me to focus on myself, and that I need to help myself before I can help others. So now that I have been helping myself, I can help others too! Thank you! This year so far has been about new beginnings for me, and being sober too! I finally have my family and good friends in my life! I don't ever want to go back to that life before!

Hopefulness

by Patricia Chambers, CRSS

"Never doubt in the dark what God has promised in the light."

"Loss comes, leaving a hollow hole in the lives of those who remain. With a broken heart, we struggle with the heavy veils of the mourning."

"We feel angry. At first, it is shielded by shock. But as the days and weeks pass, the blur wears off and the sharp corners of anger cut deep."

"We feel the loss; sometimes the only consolation for the grief stricken seems to be the hopeful return of what has been taken. The only future seems to be the past."

Mothers Devotional Bible Reference

Then there is always HOPE. Since my kids have been taken, this has been the only thing keeping me afloat. I have a case going on now for four years; time and time again I've gotten my hopes up...For what? Only to have been shut down repeatedly. Well, until this last year when I actually felt hopeless and self-sabotaged myself from the return of my children. Just knowing that I felt that low amazes me to this very day. That is not how I want to live my life anymore! By being very relentless and resilient in achieving the return of my child. Recovery and restoration of my family is my ultimate goal of hopefulness that drives me each and every day!



Keys to the Kingdom

by Micheal Schelin, CRSS



My journey of hope began when I walked into my first 12 Step meeting and heard laughter and people smiling. I had been in such a dark place for so long that I had forgotten that joy, and it reached deep into a hole that I so desperately needed to fill. Through continuous action on my part, I now walk a life of recovery and hope each and every day. This excerpt from the Big Book of AA sums up my life, "The last 16 years of my life have been rich and meaningful. I had my share of problems, heartaches, and disappointments because that is life, but also I have known a great deal of joy and a peace that is the handmaiden of an inner freedom. I have a wealth of friends and, with my AA/CA friends, an unusual quality of fellowship. For, to these people, I am truly related. First, through mutual pain and despair, and later through mutual objectives and a newfound faith and hope. And, as the years go by, working together, sharing our experience with one another, and also sharing a mutual trust, understanding, and love - without strings, without obligation - we acquire relationships that are unique and priceless. There is no more aloneness, with that awful ache, so deep in the heart of every alcoholic/addict that nothing before, could ever reach it. That ache is gone and never need return again. Now there is a sense of belonging, of being wanted and needed and loved. In return for a bottle/needle and a hangover, I have been give the Keys of the Kingdom."

Hope

by Lourdes Lodge, CRSS

Hope is the essence of my life. Hope occurred in my life since I've been in recovery for mental illness. I could not live a life of peace without having hope deep inside my heart. Life is unpredictable, hard and quite notorious at times. Hope has played a big part in my journey towards recovery at times when things got out of hand and beyond control. I thank my professional team for their diligence, self-motivation, as well as dedication that have been a source of inspiration. My recovery coach has always been very supportive through my own recovery. Hope has helped me to keep the fight going, and improve the chances of making my life better. In my own experience, the turning point was when I hit bottom and I was able to reach for help. I know it is very hard keeping the inner faith during the most critical times, but those who never lose hope actually make it 'til the end. If you have a strong aspiration, hope and faith, nothing can bring you down. Aim at the sole purpose of your life.

Thank You!



Hope

by Anonymous, CRSS

My experience with hope happened a few months after having my second child. I was at my lowest financially and emotionally. It seemed like everything I touched failed. This should have been the happiest time for me, but I spent every day crying in the shower, in the car, and in my bedroom. Some days I didn't want to get out of bed or spend time with my children. One afternoon my mom came over and told me I'm stronger than whatever it was that was affecting me. Hearing that from her not only confirmed that

I could get through this, but that I wasn't alone in this fight. I realized that I didn't want to live my life without enjoying the time I had been given. I prayed that God would make me "normal" for years, but I always tried to hide myself. I was ashamed of the fact that I couldn't control the way I was feeling. I knew recovery wouldn't be easy, but my daughters deserved to have a healthy mom.

Hope, the Last Thing Left in Pandora's Box

by Anonymous


I've always been a relentlessly hopeful person. Even during the worst periods of depression, even when I was struggling with a fifteen-year period of persistent suicidal ideation, I never gave up hope that there was a better future waiting for me. Relentless hopefulness helped me to survive but it never helped me live, never allowed me to thrive because its only focus was on the future, on tomorrow, on next Monday, on the first of the month, on some other time when I would finally start living. But tomorrow, Monday, next week, the first of the month, rarely arrived, and when it did I would tell myself that there was something better over there. I need to go there, and there and there and then there: anywhere but where I was. My life became a series of stutters and stammers precipitated by my inability to stay in one place long enough to build a life. True to my nature, however, I continued to hold out hope that one day everything would come into alignment and my real life would begin. So I continued running.

Unexpectedly, it wasn't until I lost all hope that I began to live my life. On October 2, 2017, I entered a residential treatment program full of hope that in three or four months I would shed the skin of my former self and come forth a completely different person. At long last I had found a way to catch up to my life. However, the never to be expected happened; I felt hope slowly and steadily draining from my psyche until it was completely gone, leaving me panicked and bewildered for months. I don't remember why, but during the worst of that hopeless period I decided to read the myth of Pandora's Box again. I had equated my decision to enter treatment with the myth

because I was curious about the hidden contents of my mind- my own Pandora's Box. There are two different versions of the end. In one version, the box is never opened again, thereby trapping hope. In the other, the box was opened once more so hope could escape. I could write at length on the myth of Pandora's Box as a metaphor for recovery, but the element of the story that was most relevant at the time was that hope was the last thing left in the box, and it was only revealed after all of the illness, suffering and grief was released. The myth of Pandora's Box initiated a reexamination of everything I believed about the meaning and purpose of hope in my life.

As I progressed in treatment, I came to understand three things about hope. Firstly, hope is not something that I have or don't have. Hope is something that I have to develop and continually nurture. Secondly, hope isn't concerned about my future. Thirdly, I can have hope that one day I will have a better past.

Today I can say that I no longer have hope for my future. There are no more tomorrows for me, no other time in which to live my life. The day I entered treatment I began the long process of learning how to live the life I have, right where I am. I build my future through my choices and actions today, and create a better past for myself through radical acceptance and by cultivating compassion for myself and others. Replacing a future-based hope with a deeper, more complex, understanding of hope as a present-focused practice was essential to my recovery and remains a core guiding principle in my life.



Hope Was Back in Play

by Jermahl Eve, CRSS

According to the dictionary, the meaning of Hope is, "the feeling that what is wanted can be had or that events will turn out for the best."

I have been through many trials and tribulations in my life. My personal experience with hope came about a few weeks ago when my family and I were facing eviction. It took just over twenty-four hours to reach a resolution. Hope was front and center with the support of a friend; my family and I were able to return to the premises.

Of course, during that brief moment of being homeless, I had felt despair and guilt for failing my family. I did not know anything about mental

illness, and never quite understood what was happening to my girlfriend who lives with co-occurring disorder. This event for my partner triggered a setback and/or a 'dry relapse.'

I had just started classes at the Recovery Support Specialist Institute. It was here that hope was back in play. It was here I was able to identify barriers that were preventing (us) from having a joyous relationship. It was here I learned to cope with stressors differently. I look forward with optimism as this journey turns out for the best.

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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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