

Workforce Development News

Integrated Healthcare Recovery Support Specialist Institute

Tucson, Arizona December 20, 2018



Certified Peer Support Specialist Graduates

Back Row left to right: Shanna Maxam, Joshua McDaniel, Daniel McFarland (Phree), Elijah Jackson, Steven Bugyik, Alicia Hurley

Back Middle Row left to right: Susan Lackey, Twila Guerrero, Mitchell Coderre, Shanna Battle, Donna De Weese-Carr

Front Middle Row left to right: Robin Mayo, Cozetta Shaw (Z), Ann Schultz, Tracy Thielemann, Shannon Dixon, Michael Gonzales (Dizzy)

Front Row left to right: Tammy Plymale-Hinshaw, Eva Florez, Hannah King-Mendoza



**Workforce Development
Program**



Hope and Resilience

Alicia Hurley, CRSS



Fall 2013, during my junior year of college, marks one of a handful of prominent times in my life that I experienced some of my darkest days, but eventually led to promoting a strong sense of hope and resilience. I happened to be taking what would end up being my favorite courses, taught by whom would become my favorite professors in both subjects: Psychopharmacology, the effects of drugs on the brain and behavior, along with a painting course. These two courses

are additionally the courses that I requested and received an Incomplete in that Fall, and was thankfully, supported significantly by both professors – specifically my Psychopharmacology professor, the first person I reached out to when I was in crisis, who patiently and caringly provided me with guidance and resources; someone who I will forever be thankful for. What saved me from failing out of college, but moreover, what served as tools and resources I utilized while re-stabilizing my mental and physical health and rerouting myself back to my road of recovery: cohesively using my adversity with what I had learned in my psychology studies, particularly psychopharmacology, along with the power of art, particularly painting, to help me climb back out of the hole I had fallen down. This reaffirmed for me a goal and internal motivation. By utilizing art as my therapy, and continuing to learn and delve into what truly interests me – that I can use my experience, studies, and passion, to help others who are struggling or seeking solace, promoting the power of creative expression. For my senior thesis, I studied and found significant support for the link between Affective Disorders and artistic creativity, further motivating me to reach my goal and helping provide me with an identity that builds off my strengths I have gained from my struggles.

I Have Hope

Tracy Thielemann, CRSS



The moment I realized there was still hope for me was the last time I was arrested. I was getting ready to be released, thinking about how cold it was outside, how far I'd have to walk to get somewhere "safe" since i was homeless, and how I wished

I could just stay there so I wouldn't be on the streets. I knew my mom wouldn't be outside waiting for me. She had already done all she could over the last 8 years. After losing my brother to the disease of addiction a few years earlier, she had given up on saving me. I expected no one to be outside those doors. When the officers placed me outside, I begged to go back in. My mind wasn't right, and I had nowhere to go. Seconds later, I heard someone yell my name. I realized it was my best friend. She ran up, and as she gave me a hug she told me, "Shh...it's going to be okay. I'm here." I hadn't seen her in months. She had been looking for me. I couldn't believe she still cared. She saved my life that night and got me to a facility where I could get help, and I was willing to do anything to get better. She started me on my road to recovery. I'll never know where I would have ended up that night. That was the day I learned what hope for a better life felt like, and that I still had people who loved and cared for me. Today I am almost one year clean, and recovery has also made living happily with a mental illness possible. Today I am living a better life. Today I have hope.

Aspire to Inspire

Daniel McFarland (Phree), CRSS

For me, I guess I never understood hope until I found it. I didn't realize I was without hope until I found it. For most of my young life, I lived a lifestyle that perpetuated hopelessness. The situation that introduced me to hope was not necessarily a positive one, but as a result, I was introduced to people and places that inspired hope. I had a counselor early on in my recovery, and in one of our first sessions she told me a little bit about herself and how she too is in recovery. With that came the realization that I too can find recovery and live a successful and meaningful life. Today I aspire to inspire that same hope in people who wish to find a better quality of life for themselves.



A Perfect Sunset after a Storm

Elijah Jackson, CRSS

Hope to me is something that gives meaning to my life. The people that gave me hope were the heroes who stood by me during the roughest storms of my life. A friend I can call a sister who listened to me and prayed for me when I told her about my thoughts of suicide. The brother I call best friend that never understood my disorder, but tried to help me the best he could. The mother and father that I can call family that were always there to send me to the CRC. Hope to me is when you put your heart and mind together and create something that distracts you from what hurts, and take that distraction and make something beautiful out of what pours out. It doesn't have to be God or religion. It can simply be a perfect sunset after a storm.



Hope is a Gift

Ann Schultz, CRSS



I have always been optimistic (another word for hope), I just never knew that's what it was called. To me it was being hardheaded, which I heard about me throughout my childhood from my family; I always felt that it was probably something that was not a good thing. Today I know different, that being optimistic is believing and having hope. Hope is what has changed my life today. Once again, I didn't know what it was called.

Almost 10 years clean and sober now, I know what hope is. It's the reason I am here today.

I've held on to a job for 9 years, have been a good mother to my children, a good wife and grandmother, and today I sponsor other women in their sobriety because I feel I have something to share with them. All of these things have made my belief in God so big, and have given me courage and hope in continuing with my new growing life. My sponsor and all the women in my life today that have shown me courage and hope are unbelievable; they have made me strong spiritually, physically and mentally.

When I came to a point in my life recently of "what now", once again God said you're not done yet and put my friend Dee back into my life. Then I met Beverly, who gave me hope that I am supposed to be here by signing me up for the Parent and Family Specialist Institute program. There I met Stephanie, another great inspiring woman in my life and sobriety. Today I am finishing my RSS program because I stood steadfast and listened for directions, and took count of the wonderful things that are just about to happen for me. What Dee, Beverly and Stephanie have given me is hope through their smiles, kindness, and words of encouragement. Hope for me today is a gift.

Believe in Hope

Tammy Plymale-Hinshaw , CRSS



I believe my hope comes from what I have gone through, and from my Papa. I tried to kill myself when I was around 10 1/2 years old. I then had to see a psychiatrist, who said I had bipolar disorder with depression and mania. From that point on, I was put on lithium and put into a lockdown mental institution for children. My Papa stood by my side; he was always there for me to call and talk to. He would tell me all the things he knew I would be able to do one day because he believed in me and had hope for my life. I broke out of that place and due to abuse and running away; I got put into another mental institution.

I eventually ran away from that one too, and lived on the street.

While on the street, I was gang raped by 15 guys with a gun. After that I did what I had to. Papa knew and never looked down on me. He would tell me that I would overcome this. I started snorting cocaine and drinking; it helped to stop from thinking of anything, and it gave me a super feeling of being happy. Through this entire part of my life, Papa stood by me. No matter what I did or told him, he never judged me as he held out his hope for me. He knew I had the strength to get through all these roadblocks. Papa use to tell me we are the normal ones and everyone else in my family are the mentally challenged ones. When I got married, my Papa was there for me. When my ex-husband got kicked out of the Navy for being a peeping tom and for messing around with younger women, Papa was there when I cried about it and had to move out of navy housing.

One day I got a call 3:15 a.m., and was told my Papa died in his sleep. I was devastated - how could Papa leave me? I went on a two week binge. Who could I trust, who would believe in me, who would have hope for me, who would love me... That is what I was thinking as I rode the F train back and forth. I had nowhere to go. It hit me then. If I did not take control of myself, I would not make it too much longer. I took all the hope Papa had for me, and made it my hope. I checked into a mental health hospital. I met with a doctor and he told me what they had set up for my treatment. I said

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My Past, My Greatest Asset

Michael Gonzales (Dizzy), CRSS

Hope in my life is the foundation and the beginning of my recovery. With others speaking into my life a positive message, hoping I could see the possibility of change. It all occurred when I was at my lowest point, knowing that the circumstances and all odds were against me. I was prepared for the worst; it was the extensive prison sentence for a small narcotic arrest due to my criminal history, or death by the lifestyle I have chosen to live. Either way, I felt my time was up. I went to the program Teen Challenge with very little support. Struggling with my hurts, thoughts and pride, Teen Challenge didn't give up on me. After 4 months of being in the program, I began to realize this was the best place I could be to begin healing. Regardless of my fate dealing with my health or legal issues, I could not let the bad choices in my life define me. After a series of events, a turning point struck when I was healed and given an opportunity to change my life. I am fourteen months clean and sober. I now have restoration with my family, plans for my future, and feel it is my dark past that has become my



greatest asset. Through my story of change, I believe I can come alongside someone struggling who has given up and say, "Hey I've been here before, there is a way out."

Believe in Hope, by Tammy Plymale-Hinshaw, continued...

NO! I need help, but not to be locked up somewhere like a criminal. So we started a treatment plan that I helped with, which was medicine and a weekly check-in. I was also put into a group home where I was able to feel safe. I feel hope in the fact that I can do this and I will do this. I will take

care of my mental health and live a life like I want without turning to drugs or drinking. That is what I have done with my hope and with my trust in God. Yes, I still need medicines and a check in with a doctor, but I know this and own the fact that this is me. Hope is a wonderful thing if you have it, use it and believe in it.

Hope, Experience and Wisdom

Steven Bugyik, CRSS



1) When did hope occur for me?

Hope comes and goes but at times, I feel most hopeful when being in the hospital. I feel hopeful that I will get the right medication, and also gain knowledge on how to possibly stay out of the hospital.

2) What role did hope play in my recovery?

Each time I gain knowledge about mental illness. There always seems to be helpful people and programs to assist in my recovery. This is hope at its best, as far as I'm concerned. By one day gaining good employment and getting good health insurance. That gives me hope in my recovery.

3) How was it a "turning point"?

All of my life I felt out of place. Mentally I just couldn't keep up with things. I know now I can stay on the right path by helping people in the behavioral health field. It has taken me a long time to get the experience I have. I know now that with it comes wisdom. That is what's needed to bring change in the health care system.

A Brighter Future For Myself

Donna De Weese-Carr, CRSS

I have lived through a great deal of trauma and abuse, due to mental illness, family abuse disorder and multiple persons with co-occurring disorders in my life. I grew up in a very dysfunctional family. I have been married several times. All of them have been abusive relationships. I accepted Jesus as my savior at the age of ten, which has given me the strength to endure all the negative situations in my life. I lost all hope a few years ago, after having multiple surgeries. I stopped breathing four times during one of the procedures and had a mental breakdown, caused by an allergic reaction to the anesthesia. Stress also played a part. In the following year I lost my husband, home, family and friends. I went from living a comfortable life to living in a condemned travel trailer. The final trauma was a domestic violence situation where I had a gun pulled on me for the fifth time in my life. The police were involved and I was placed in a domestic violence shelter. This was in July of 2018. In the shelter I started to become more hopeful. I started taking classes that helped me to recognize the abuse and negative patterns I'd lived with all my life. They helped me to see a more positive way to live. With the help



and support of my spiritual leaders, medical team, therapists, RSS team, teachers from group sessions, IHRSSI program, my sister and a few friends from out of state, I have begun to see a brighter future for myself. I'm eternally grateful to each and every person who has helped me on this journey.

The Beginning of Hope

Shanna Maxam, CRSS



It is clear as day when my lightbulb flickered on and hope flooded my mind. It was the turning point in my recovery and my new life. When I started IOP directly after being discharged from detox, I was overwhelmed with suggestions, information, literature, meetings, appointments and much more. The person teaching the group, Paulina, also became my therapist. It was suggested to me that I create a weekly schedule, as well as daily meditation, journaling, weekly therapy and

consistent attendance at IOP. After a couple months of therapy and IOP, Paulina suggested I start working the 12 steps of the AA program. Paulina provided me the packets of the steps. I felt I was doing well. I told Paulina I was doing all of these things. I was, but not consistently or to the best of my ability. Three months into my recovery I took a two week vacation to Flagstaff. Against everyone's wishes for me to cancel my trip, being at high risk for relapse, I went anyway.

I returned from Flagstaff feeling refreshed, happy and proud of myself that I remained sober. The day after I returned I had IOP and therapy. In my therapy I had a wakeup call. My therapist was saying she thought for sure I was going to relapse. Not only while I was gone, but also in the near future. This made me angry especially after being so proud of myself. In reality, she was right because the only thing I was doing was taking my meds. I used my anger to prove that I was not going to relapse and she was wrong. I started that day doing all the things that were suggested months prior. I actually sat down, read and wrote out the steps I had claimed to already do. In working the first step, I realized I had reservations and doubts about recovery. This is why I didn't apply myself, even though I wanted to change. It was when I finished the second and third steps my lightbulb turned on. It wasn't just the step work but my work in therapy, a spiritual realization, and the push I needed to see the possibility of hope.

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Hope

Cozetta Shaw (Z), CRSS

My recovery started the day I was petitioned to Sonoran Behavioral Hospital. The stay there helped me lose both my home and my job. All because of a mental illness which affects me to this very day. The embarrassment I felt at my actions, while in a manic frame of mind, still follow me today. Hope remains with me still; however, that my illness will never control nor contort my life like that again. My neighbor at the time of my mental breakdown called the leasing office so that they could call the police to take me to the CRC, whom then transferred me to Sonoran Behavioral Health. Once I lost my home, my neighbor opened up their doors to me. They have been patient through my recovery, and have supported me through my psychosis and are still present and willing to help through my stability. Without their help, I might still be lost...yet because of their support, I am medication compliant, going to therapy, and even graduating the Recovery Support Specialist Institute, so that I may use my story of HOPE to help others recover.



The Beginning of Hope by Shanna Maxam, continued...

Of course, the support of my fiancé and family have been essential.

When I felt hope I felt like a new person; like I had a new brain and I definitely felt changed. It may sound bizarre to some people, but it's true. I had changed. I was excited about life, recovery and all the limitless possibilities ahead. I became motivated to work harder and open my mind to new

ideas and ways to continue to better myself. Even better, I had a strong desire to share the possibilities with everyone. I became more than just a person with co-occurring disorders. I felt like a normal person ready to live and be a contributing member of society. This is an amazing gift of life, that I absolutely want to share with everyone I possibly can.

A New Way of Life

Eva Florez, CRSS

It was October 27, 2017. I was arrested for a \$2 hit of heroin. Never did I think that I was going to be sitting in the Pima County Jail at the age of 58. This was the sixth time I had been arrested for drug possession. Doing time isn't hard to do, but I didn't want to do time at the age of 58. I had a lot of anger and shame. I heard about a program called DTAP (Drug Treatment Alternative to Prison). For the first time in my life, I asked for help with my 30-year drug addiction. When I got an interview with DTAP, I could see that little bit of hope I was holding onto. It got brighter and bigger as my time went on. I did 99 days in jail. In those 99 days God showed me so much that I knew this was my calling. DTAP and The Haven gave me hope to begin my journey to recovery and a new way of life.



Turning Wisdom into Skills

Belgin Bicer, CRSS

“Out of suffering have emerged the strongest souls; the most massive characters are seared with scars.”-Khalil Gibran

My name is Belgin. I am a person with bipolar disorder. Originally, I am Turkish, however, I have lived in many countries and all over the United States. Coming from a culture that has stigma against mental illness, I wanted to learn all about recovery and addiction psychology. This program gave me the opportunity to help myself

turn my wisdom into skills that I can use to help others to understand their pain, and learn to cope and heal.

Once upon a time, I was hopeless. Now, I have all the hope I need for a journey of recovery. I believe, being a person with a unique set of social skills and compassion for all living souls and cultures, I would make a difference in someone's life. With the tools I have in my bag, thanks to the RSS program, I can use them no matter where my journey takes me.

Seeking Hope

Joshua McDaniel, CRSS



I found hope when I made the choice to open up to someone. I truly believed in it when I found it within myself. I knew I had lost hope when someone asked me if I could see myself on my next birthday, and I honestly had no answer. That feeling of dread and despair was a real push to make a change. It was this realization that made me make a very real and very important choice. I personally believe in hope as the ability to recognize that it can be done, that recovery is possible for everyone, even myself. I found hope but I didn't stumble upon it. I had to seek it out. Once I did, I learned to be hopeful for many things, but most of all, that everything is going to be all right.

Hope is Possible

Hannah King-Mendoza, CRSS

My hope comes from my God. I also have a wonderful staff at Camp Wellness that keeps up with me, such as Paige and Michele. They push me mentally, physically and spiritually, and they hold me accountable in all I do, wrong and right. They have made me so much stronger over the years; my communication skills are better, I have better relationships with God, family, and friends because of these two women. I don't think they know how much they mean to me. I just thank God for these dependable women. HOPE is possible.

Hope, My Driving Force

Mitchell Coderre, CRSS

Thinking about my first day in PHP, after having just spent 6 days in detox, I can remember the moment I had my first spark of hope. Confused and lost, I sat in the meeting barely listening to what anyone was saying. With all of the thoughts going through my head, it was hard to get a word in edge wise. It wasn't until a long-haired skateboarder's turn to speak came that I started to change my outlook on everything. He spoke about spirituality and the future in a way that I had never heard before. His passion for the opportunity that we all shared in using our past and strengths to get to this point finally made me start to open my eyes. After I looked around and truly began to listen to people, I started finding hope everywhere. My experience with hope was brought together by a community. I've found hope to be an infectious thing. I continue to see it in those around me, and the hope I have for myself is to inspire others to find it as I did. It is my driving force and without it, I would not be moving forward.



Hope

Robin Mayo, CRSS

June 1st 2015, my journey of hope started. I began to have hope that I would stay clean and sober, and mentally well for the rest of my life. There were three people in my life who provided me with Hope. Two Recovery Coaches and a Nurse Practitioner. My coaches saw me on a daily basis in groups, instilling hope and aspirations to fulfill my wish to better my life. Hope has brought me through the steps in my life to end up obtaining my Recovery Support Specialist certification.





Trust the Hope Inside

Shanna Battle, CRSS

Hope is very important to me. Hope is the very reason I got on a Greyhound Bus headed to Tucson, Arizona. I knew if I trusted the hope inside of me, my life would get better. The hope I had for changing my life meant everything to me. Hope keeps me pushing forward with my recovery. I have been clean now for 10 months because of my hope for the future. Hope turned my life around, and it keeps me going. Hope gave me the strength to step out on faith and become the person I am today. I thank God for the hope he gave to me. I MADE IT!



Back to Calm

Twila Guerrero, CRSS

I found hope in a therapy session. My therapist taught me about the nervous system, and how to bring it back to a calm state by doing mindful breathing or a body scan. I was upset and feeling a lot of anxiety, and my therapist had me do a body scan. I was amazed at how after only a few minutes my anxiety was almost gone. The tightness in my chest had gone and my breathing was normal. This proved to me that I did have self-control, even though I didn't think I could ever have self-control over my emotions. This gave me my first taste of hope.

The Best Decision Ever

Shannon Dixon, CRSS

They say that hurt people hurt people, and it's definitely true. You can say you love someone, but the way they know it is in your actions. I knew I had to make a change when my actions were hurting the people closest to me, the people I love. Not only was I hurting those around me, but I was hurting myself too. Being spared jail time was the catalyst I needed to make that change. It was in my darkest moments that I made the best decision ever. I decided to commit to myself - to my healing, to not being under the control of my mental illness. I didn't know what healing would look like, but I had a number to an agency and I had hope...and that was enough for me.



A New Life Program

Susan Lackey, CRSS

My personal experience of recovery over the last 12 years included many peaks and valleys. From the time I met other women who had created joyful and purposeful lives through Women for Sobriety's (WFS) New Life Program (womenforsobriety.org), I had hope that I'd find my way, too. Throughout my journey, of both growth and setbacks, I also dreamed of helping others create their new lives. A vital key to recovery from substance use and mental health challenges is being treated respectfully - as capable, worthy and whole - no matter what. To that end, I am grateful for the learning and connection that I received from the RSS Institute. I look forward to sharing the many gifts of recovery.



Workforce Development Program

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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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