



Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services

MINDFUL MATTERS

Life during

Covid

How our clients are coping

Leroy came to Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services in the late spring of 2019. We featured him in an article near the end of last year and wanted to catch up with him to see how he's doing and how the pandemic is affecting his everyday life.

It's a Monday morning in mid-July and the sun is already making the outside temperatures unbearable. Care Manager Shannon Brown is on her way to meet Leroy. When Leroy was added to Shannon's caseload last fall, he had been undergoing chemotherapy and was staying at a short-term recovery center while he finished treatment. Prior to that, Leroy had been in and out of jail since the the age of 13. He was homeless when he was diagnosed with cancer. Shannon worked with him to get psychiatric services and medication. In February, his early retirement came in and he was able to move into a one bedroom apartment on the West side — before the crisis hit.

So how did that change things for Leroy? "I was just getting close to my family again," he said. "I was able to visit with my great granddaughter every weekend. But now I

don't see anyone because of my recent health issues. I am 63 years old and my goal is to see my great granddaughter graduate from college."

Shannon recalls the day she had to phone Leroy and tell him that she wouldn't be able to see him in person but that they would still communicate over the phone. Many of her clients like Leroy rely on her to help them live independently. This could have had a negative impact on Leroy but it didn't. "He's doing really well. And he's on top of paying his rent. I'll ask him 'Did you pay it' and he always tells me he has." According to Leroy, "My family means a whole lot to me. They give me the strength to keep going. When they tell me they are proud of me, that keeps me from going back to how I used to be."



Leroy and Shannon meet outside and practice social distancing.

As state Covid-19 restrictions eased, our staff were allowed to resume in-person visits with clients. On this hot July day, they found a place in the shade where they can socially distance and talk about how he's doing. But being outside in the summer heat also means being very uncomfortable behind those surgical masks they both wear. "It's just the new normal", says Shannon. It's one of the many changes she and other GCBHS direct care workers have had to adjust to.

Leroy credits Shannon with a lot of his success. "Ms. Brown," he says, "she has a good heart. She brought me a long way. She helped me get everything together."

More than 200 of GCBHS' patients depend on long-acting medications which are typically given by injection at one of our two medical clinics. So how do you keep people safe and give them access to the healthcare they depend upon during a pandemic?



Iana (left) talks to a patient's mother while Linda consults the patient's doctor.

Taking the show on the Road

Iana Souza works in our Mental Health Division on one of the Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) teams that provide intensive wrap-around services to help people achieve independence and stability. ACT clients typically have a higher level of needs. Iana, who has been with Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services for six years, supervises the Integrated Dual Diagnosis Treatment (IDDT) team, a specialized team that works with patients who have a dual diagnosis of a mental health and substance use disorder.

When COVID-19 created a shut down, Iana along with mental health leadership and other staffers, got together to try and figure out a solution. Says Associate VP of the Mental Health ACT Division, Debbie DeMarcus, "We had to come up with something that would allow our patients to still receive care but not compromise their physical or mental well being. Many of the ACT clients have co-occurring medical conditions that put them at high risk for complications with Covid. Our clients are very vulnerable and we didn't want to unnecessarily expose them to anything. We also have a commitment to keep our staff safe as well."

So the concept of a mobile service van was born. "Having the van allows us to get medication out to those who need it," says DeMarcus.

Monday through Friday an ACT team member goes out with a nurse. The team member drives so that the nurse can prepare for the next patient. Typically they see about ten patients a day. "That is, if we can find them," says Nurse Linda Venturato. "Several of our patients do not have permanent housing so sometimes we have to look for them."

By using the van we are making certain that patients have the ability to receive their medications which is vitally important. According to Linda, "We know that long-acting injectable antipsychotics are extremely effective for individuals suffering from schizophrenia, schizoaffective, or bipolar disorder. We also know that treatment adherence is vital to successful management of these disorders, but that medication non-adherence is actually one of the major obstacles for many of our patients. These long-acting injectables help to minimize the impact of intersectional barriers by reducing the need to remember to take a medication every day. Despite the additional obstacles created by COVID-19, the mobile van has allowed us to meet our patients where they are and continue to reduce the risk of hospitalization, and/or incarceration."

But do the patients like the service?

"It helps people who can't get around real well. Take me, for instance," says Charles,

a GCBHS client since 2000. "I live near Sharonville and I have no transportation. I have to rely on relatives to take me to the clinic on Madison. So this is much more convenient."



I'm not much for change but I talk to my psychiatrist on the phone and my care manager still checks on me. I'm happy with the service because my injection keeps me out of trouble. So as far as GCB(HS), I'm all good with them."

- Anthony

BOARD UPDATES

GCBHS Board Member and Vice Chair George Wright was recently voted in to a two-year term as Board Chair. George has been a member of our Board of Directors since 2014 when GCBHS merged with Clermont Recovery Center. He has been the Board Treasurer and served as Vice Chair for the past two years. George practiced veterinary medicine in Milford until his retirement in 2016.



When asked about being a part of our organization George says, “I am honored to serve as Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services’ Board Chair, especially during this complicated time. The pandemic will continue to be a factor in how we do our work. So far we have learned a great deal about continuing to provide services to the community in a healthcare crisis. I have no doubt we will get even better.”

Welcome New Board Member Liz Jukic



Liz Jukic is the Head of Consumer Transformation at Fifth Third Bank where her team drives execution of key strategic initiatives through project and portfolio management. Liz started her career with General Electric and spent 14 years in three different businesses before joining Fifth Third Bank in 2007. She has served in roles spanning operations, customer service, marketing, and program management. Liz earned a bachelor’s degree in Computer & Information Science Engineering at Ohio State University and an MBA from Cleveland State University. Liz enjoys traveling, reading, photography, and the arts.



• CINCINNATI •



Did you know... the Flying Pig Marathon has a raffle to benefit local Cincinnati non-profits? And this year, due to the pandemic, they have extended the raffle. You can now “adopt a pig” online until October 10th. Not only can you win great prizes but for every \$5 ticket you purchase, GCBHS receives the entire \$5 as a donation!

On October 11th, one lucky winner will receive \$5,000 cash and the organization they selected to receive their ticket purchase, also receives \$5,000! Second place is \$2,500 for the winner AND the non-profit and 3rd place is a Cincinnati Get-Away package valued at over \$1,500. You do not need to be present to win. If you would like to purchase an entry go to www.piggestraffle.com and choose Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services as your charity. Feel free to share with family and friends and good luck!



Become a Keeper of Hope

Can you help us during this time of crisis? While we greatly appreciate any and all gifts, please consider becoming a Keeper of Hope. As a Keeper of Hope your monthly contribution is an investment in our community and in the lives of people living with mental illness and addiction.

By joining us as a Keeper of Hope you are demonstrating your commitment to the work we do at Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services. Your monthly gift ensures steady, continuous support for the individuals and families we serve.

You can sign up to become a Keeper of Hope by going to our website: www.gcbhs.com. For questions about monthly giving or becoming a Keeper of Hope please contact Ron Cropper at 513-354-7054.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

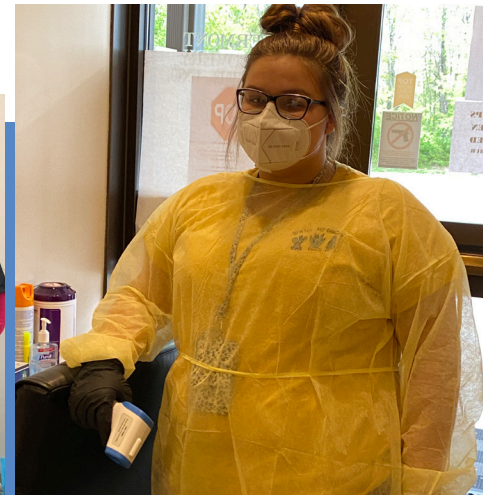
Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services would like to thank the following Foundations and Government Agencies for their support of our work through grant awards.

- The Andrew Jergens Foundation for School-Based Services
- Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio (COHHIO) for COVID relief
- Delta Dental Foundation for COVID relief
- The Greater Cincinnati Foundation for COVID relief
- Greater Cincinnati Foundation for GCBHS Capital Support
- Group17a for COVID relief
- The Jack J. Smith Jr. Charitable Trust for School-Based Services
- Jacob G. Schmidlapp Trusts, Fifth Third Bank, Trustee for GCBHS Capital Support
- Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services for SOR Employment Gap Funding Services
- Realworks, through Interact for Health, in support of client technology
- The Spaulding Foundation for GCBHS Capital Support
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration for a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic Expansion
- United Way of Greater Cincinnati for COVID relief

COVID-19 IN-KIND GIFT DONORS

Thank you to those who have donated supplies for our staff and clients throughout the crisis.

Jeannie Baker	Crystal Maag
Christy Barr	Matthew 25 Ministries
Chik-fil-A	Leigh McCray
Clermont County Mental Health & Recovery Board	Janice McGowan
Lisa Deeter	Katherine Mutschler
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Wesley Kania	Joanne Taylor
Joyce Keifer	Patricia Taylor
	Mr. and Mrs. John Woesner



GCBHS Awarded a Two-Year Grant from SAMHSA

Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services (GCBHS) was recently chosen as only one of two behavioral healthcare providers in Ohio to be awarded a federal grant for a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic Expansion (CCBHC). The clinic will be based out of our current Amelia location and will strengthen and transform how services are delivered to children and adults by providing fully integrated holistic care.

The grant will allow us to improve access to services in Clermont County and will provide comprehensive services to adults who have serious mental illness (SMI) or substance use disorders (SUD); children and adolescents with a serious emotional disturbance (SED); and to adults who have co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders (COD).

To provide the needed services GCBHS will collaborate with The HealthCare Connection, a Federally Qualified Health Center and Child Focus, Inc. a licensed crisis services provider. According to Jeff O'Neil, GCBHS President & CEO, "This grant will allow us to further build on our pioneering successes with integrating holistic care. Most importantly, it will enable us to improve in the coordination of behavioral and medical services to persons in our community. Our patients face some of the most severe and complex health challenges related to severe mental illness, addiction, trauma and other health disparities."

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IN THEIR OWN WORDS

We are continuing to highlight staff across our organization to find out how the COVID-19 crisis has affected their work. In this issue we are focusing on employment and payee services.



meet
KEEFER

Keef Kaneshiro is a Transitional Support Specialist on our Homelink team. Homelink staff work with other GCBHS Care Managers to find appropriate housing for our clients. They specialize in everything connected to housing – from filling out required paperwork to securing an actual place to live, finding furniture, teaching clients how to work with a landlord and settle disputes with roommates, as well as how to pay bills.

“When things shut down in March, everyone was in a state of limbo. It was like, ‘What do we do now?’ A fundamental part of my job is meeting people out in the community. But because we weren’t the only people who put face-to-face on hold, there were additional barriers to finding housing for people. Many agencies like Social Security and Jobs & Family Services were also shut down. So how do you find housing for someone if you were waiting on an ID or a social security card to go onto the next step in the process?”

For a while it was really about anxiety management. It’s very scary if you’re homeless and you need your birth certificate to get housing, and the government agency shuts down. You think... ‘Wow! I have the worst luck ever!’ But eventually it made agencies more receptive to cooperation. If we didn’t have all of the required information, they were more open to accepting what we did have, because they knew it was no longer possible to acquire those things.

Sometimes you can do part of the work from home or online but we also need signatures for much of the paperwork and some of our clients don’t have access to technology. So we had to put adequate safety measures in place like meeting people at a park or on their patio. I’m now doing things I did pre-pandemic but it’s more methodical – I’m more aware of what I’m doing to avoid unnecessary risk. Our responsibilities have remained the same. It’s the way we go about them that has had to change.”



meet
TCHERI

Tcheri (pronounced Sherry) Ridley has been with GCBHS for 15 years. She started in medical records but has been a Representative Payee for the past 12 years. Payees are assigned to assist some clients with managing their social security benefits. This way, we are assured that people have a comfortable place to live with running water and heat. The goal is to eventually graduate them from the program so they can manage their own money.

“Typically clients come to us for their checks. We pay their basic bills but they receive checks for food and incidentals. If they have questions like, ‘Can I have my account statement?’ or ‘Can you explain this?’ we are right there to answer it. That’s what we do. With COVID-19, it took clients a little bit of time to understand they couldn’t just show up. They had to call us and make an appointment. For some people it was harder than for others. We also started mailing checks, which at first was difficult. Especially if a check didn’t show up in the mail on the date it was expected.

I find that now most of my clients actually like this better. Before, some had to come in 2 days a week to ensure they wouldn’t spend all of their money on the day they received it. This pandemic has forced them to think ahead. In case there’s an issue with the post office, they have budgeted for it. They cannot just show up at the office and expect to see someone on any given day or time.

Overall it’s been a wonderful example of pulling together as a team. Care Managers, Payees, Supervisors... we’re all helping each other out and having a better understanding of what the other person’s role is here at GCBHS. I love what I do because it’s a job with meaning. The only bad thing is not being able to walk through the lobby and say ‘Good Morning’ to the people we serve and whether they’re your clients or not, you get to know people. I miss that.”



Jeff O'Neil selected as Large Organization

LEADER OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to President & CEO Jeff O'Neil for being selected in the Leadership category of this year's Top Workplace special "Best of Show" awards. Jeff was selected as Best in Leadership in the large division category. The recipients are chosen due to the high ranking of scores in areas where the organization stands out.

Says Board President George Wright, "Our President & CEO Jeff O'Neil is really multi-faceted in his abilities. He's a great leader and he's able to build great teams, which is the key to this organization's success."

Here's what our staff says...

“ Jeff has always been incredibly smart, caring, humble and genuine in his desire to serve our clients with the utmost respect and care that they so deeply deserve. I have no doubt that much of GCBHS' growth and success is a direct result of Jeff's hard work, knowledge, dedication and leadership. This year has been unlike any other in my many years with GCBHS, but through all of the unpredictability I have always had faith that Jeff would make the best decisions possible. This agency is better because of Jeff and I hope that he knows how much he is truly appreciated. ”

"I had the pleasure of working closely with Jeff my first year at GCBHS. I was able to get to know him as a person – not our CEO. Jeff has so much passion for helping folks! If I didn't know beforehand he was our boss I would have never guessed! He took the time to get to know me as a person. (To him) I wasn't just another employee."

"He's a very calm and insightful leader who always has the best interests of our clients and staff in mind when making decisions."

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TOP WORK PLACES

SINCE 2010

We are thrilled to announce that for the 11th year in a row GCBHS has been awarded Top Workplace by The Cincinnati Enquirer. Although this year looks a little different, our organization's work is needed now more than ever and we are incredibly honored to know that our committed staff values their workplace so highly.

The award is based on employee feedback gathered through an anonymous, comprehensive third-party survey. Staff ranked GCBHS high in numerous areas, including positive coworker relationships, flexibility between work and personal life and fair and constructive management. Many employees also stated that they love their work at GCBHS due to its fulfilling and meaningful nature.

When asked what about GCBHS is motivating, one of our staff members said, "The genuineness, authenticity and passion of my colleagues. Everyone has such a passion for what they do, and it shows in their work. Each person has their own special strengths that they share freely with others. It's wonderful to see such caring and empathetic individuals be able to use their strengths to serve our population and also to pass those strengths to the people we serve while encouraging them to not only recognize, but also grow their own strengths. It's inspiring."

Thank you to our hard working and dedicated staff!

GREATER CINCINNATI
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

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Thank you to our GCBHS staff!

We are SO proud of you and the work you are doing during this unprecedented crisis.



GCBHS is a leader in behavioral healthcare and related services, including housing and employment opportunities. We reach out to individuals and families whose lives have been hijacked by mental illness, addiction, and trauma.

Find out more at: gcbhs.com

Greater Cincinnati



Behavioral
Health Services

"I have always known how dedicated our staff is, but during this pandemic they have responded to the challenges and risen above and beyond what was expected. Their ability to perform as a team and support each other, jumping in to help wherever and whenever needed, has been imperative to the health and welfare of the people we serve."

Jeff O'Neil, President & CEO

**TOP
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