

Montgomery County Behavioral Health Court

In June 2009, the Montgomery County Behavioral Health Court was established to more effectively address the needs of defendants with serious mental illness cycling through the court and prison system.

This court represents a collaboration between the Court, Office of the Public Defender, Office of the District Attorney, Office of Behavioral Health, Probation and Parole Department, Correctional Facility, Montgomery County Emergency Service, Inc. and other community based treatment providers.

Prospective program participants should contact their Attorneys or The Behavioral Health Court Coordinator
Stephanie H. Landes

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*Application and more information
available online at:
<https://wiki.montcopa.org/BHCourt>*



Montgomery County Court of Common Pleas Behavioral Health Court

Honorable Joseph A. Smyth, Judge



MISSION STATEMENT

To enhance public safety and reduce recidivism of criminal defendants with serious mental illness by connecting them with community treatment services and supports.

To find appropriate dispositions to their criminal charges by considering the defendant's mental illness and the seriousness of the offense.



Montgomery County Behavioral Health Court

Behavioral Health Court Goals

- Connect criminal defendants who suffer from serious mental illness to treatment and support services in the community.
- Reduce time spent involved with the criminal justice system.
- Decrease time spent in jail by moving defendants with serious mental illness expeditiously into appropriate community based treatment settings.
- Promote employment and other evidences of recovery among defendants served by the Behavioral Health Court.

Structure/Model

- Behavioral Health Court will accept referrals after criminal charges have been filed and the case has been forwarded to the Court of Common Pleas for further disposition.
- Referrals will also be accepted for defendants who are before the Court of Common Pleas for alleged violations of probation/parole sentences.
- Participation is voluntary. When the defendant is formally accepted into Behavioral Health Court, the defendant must enter a plea to certain agreed upon charges.
- Upon successful completion of the Behavioral Health Court program, the defendant's charges may be reduced or dropped all together.



Eligibility Criteria

- The defendant must be a resident of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania.
- The defendant must be 18 years of age or older.
- The defendant must have a serious mental illness (SMI) diagnosis (schizophrenia, major mood disorder, psychosis NOS, borderline personality disorder) that contributed to the criminal behavior.
- Defendants with co-occurring disorders (mental health and substance abuse) will be evaluated for Behavioral Health Court if they meet the criteria for serious mental illness.
- The Court prefers to address non-violent offenses but other crimes will be taken into consideration on a case-by-case basis.

Exclusionary Criteria

While each case will be considered individually, the following offenses will typically be excluded from the court:

- Felony sex offenses
- Felony crimes of violence
- Felony crimes of violence committed with a firearm
- Felony drug offenses
- Defendants are considered ineligible if there are any unresolved out of county charges. It is the responsibility of the defendant's counsel to resolve any pending out of county charges.
- **Murder and Manslaughter will not be considered under any circumstances.**



Eric Goldstein, Administrator



was making a big statement and taking a chance. But, she knew the work her staff had been performing under her leadership to take the call for Peer Support quite seriously. Montgomery County's Nancy Wieman and Molly Franz were involved in what I like to call "the Revolution" back in the 1990's. So as forerunners of peer support we were on the mark for Certified

Peer Specialists and can celebrate with 100's of Montgomery County citizens who have benefited.

Montgomery County's Mental Health System has been forever changed with that first class in 2004, and as each class joins that journey, we continue to learn and cultivate a culture that supports the journey of others.

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When Nancy Wieman declared that we were going to be a Recovery County and lead the way for the State in 2003 she

Nancy Wieman, Deputy Administrator



When we started the Partnership for Recovery: A Journey of Hope here in Montgomery County in 2003 part of the Recovery Workgroups journey was to train people who experienced mental health challenges to work in the Mental Health system. We found as in the "I Am the Evidence" creed that one step begins a journey towards endless possibilities.

Along the way we said "yes" to peer support and the endless possibilities began.

At the 10 Year Celebration, when I acknowledged and asked all the CPS's in the room, all the CPS Supervisors in the room and all the agency's employing CPS's to stand, from my position at the podium, the room was full! This was the

unimaginable reality! Bravo to everyone who helped Montgomery County along the way!

The future possibilities of peer support services are endless and ever changing. Part of the vision is that peer support is an everyday practice that all people who come for service have the opportunity to experience.

Reflections from OMHSAS



*Bill Boyer from
OMHSAS*

What a privilege it was to be a part of the Ten Years of Peer Support Celebration. I was truly honored to be asked to speak and offer some reflections on our partnership to create the statewide service. Montgomery County was the initial driving force and we appreciate your vision and leadership.

It was very humbling and unexpected for me to receive the appreciation award from Montgomery County Peer Specialists. I want you to know that your Montgomery County Team are among my most valued and admired colleagues...For myself and for our OMHSAS team, we are very blessed to have such a positive and results-

oriented leaders in the state. Many thanks to Eric, Nancy, Peggy and Pam and all of the Montgomery County Certified Peer Specialists...please extend my thanks and best regards...Looking forward to our next collaborative project!! Bill

Bill Boyer, Section Chief
Program Development
Department of Public Welfare
OMHSAS

Fingerprints on the Award



*Pam Howard and
daughter Mara*

I wanted to take an opportunity to express what a wonderful day Wednesday, the day of the Mental Health Reception was. Frozen in my memory was the moment when Nancy Wieman asked for all of the Certified Peer Specialists who were there to stand and be recognized. There were so many CPS in the room! What a great group of people.

It was very special to me to be acknowledged on that same day with the Dr. Miller Award. I never have been taken so completely by surprise in my life. I was so shocked and then amazed by the appearance of my daughter, seemingly out of nowhere, that I really didn't get

the opportunity to express how meaningful the award is to me.

It was when I realized this later that evening that I began to think about the fingerprints on the award. Fingerprints on glass are what happen when a 9-year old excitedly handles her mom's award. When someone noted them it really resonated with me. It seemed very symbolic. Fingerprints are a completely individualized imprint of a person that they leave behind. The fingerprints on that award make me think of all the peer specialists that have crossed my path over these ten years. It's as if you all touched that glass. I feel blessed to have

had my journey intersect with yours. You have continually inspired me to feel and hold hope; to work to build a system that supports recovery. Your stories have left an imprint upon my life.

What an exciting journey we have been on over these past ten years. I thank all of you, as well as the individual leaders within agencies who have supported and made possible the CPS initiative here in Montgomery County. I thank you all for your fingerprints. I am excited at the possibilities that lie ahead for all of us. Let's keep going on this journey.

In gratitude,
Pam Howard

This 2014 Recovery & Resiliency Award

Jack has been a Certified Peer Specialist with the Mental Health Association's Community Support Program since 2007.

Jack's success in peer support lies in his genuineness. He tells it like it is, but demonstrates the core values of advocacy, hope and ownership. Jack champions for participants rights and services; and believes that everyone deserves a second chance.

Jack inspires others by his

resourcefulness, resilience, and commitment to his participants. At many different agencies he is always greeted enthusiastically by the staff and the participants, and engages with each person, remembering details of prior conversations and showing a level of care that explains why people are drawn to him.

Jack is a true leader with the ability to lead others to their recovery starting point, using his own experiences as a guide

while also encouraging the individual to define their own recovery.

What does recovery mean to Jack? In his words "Recovery to me means an active change of ideas, attitudes, and behaviors, with the opportunity to recapture things that were lost, the opportunity to change and to realize that hope IS possible."



Goes to Jack Riley, CPS

This 2014 Recovery & Resiliency

Ryan has been a Certified Peer Specialist since the summer of 2011 and is currently working at the Penn Foundation for a little less than a year.

Ryan is terrific at what he does. He has an unfailing faith in recovery and brings that faith and hope to all of his interactions with others, including his co-workers and

personal relationships. And, he does this from the perspective of an individual who knows firsthand how hard that journey can be.

Ryan is always enthusiastic and very dedicated to being the best father, CPS, friend, and person that he can be, and he inspires others to do the same.

A few comments from the peers he walks with:

Ryan is very understanding of my needs

Ryan supports and encourages me in the community

Ryan is one of the most integral parts of my recovery.



Goes to Ryan Schweiger, CPS

This 2014 Recovery & Resiliency Award

Michael graduated from the August 2011 Certified Peer Specialist class. He originally started working as an intern at Salisbury Behavioral Health and then was hired there as a full time employee. Michael is an example of what it means to not only be

in recovery, but also to guide his peers to find their own recovery path. Michael is dedicated to his peers and his responsibility as a CPS. He is consistently integrating his peers into the community while using himself as an example.

Michael cares very much about the service he provides and the people he provides the service to! Michael always puts the needs of the person first. Michael is smart, kind and compassionate and Salisbury feels so fortunate to have him on



Goes to Michael Richardson, CPS

Thoughts to the County on the Celebration...

I want to thank you for all the hard work you have done to make our jobs possible. This job has brought joy to my life. I absolutely love my job and has turned my diagnosis from a curse into a blessing. So once again thank you for all that you have done and continue to do.

Sincerely,
Jason Matlack, CPS
Central Montgomery MH/MR Center

Thank you for all you do to make the CPS Program in Montgomery County ROCK. Have an excellent holiday!
Michelle Tuk, CPS
Creative Health

Thank you very much! You do so much to enhance our CPS program. For that we are grateful. Have a great weekend also!!

Awesome thank you from Pam. Tell her I said thank you for all she has done for Montgomery County. It's greatly appreciated by all CPS's.
Maggie Catagnus, CPS

NHS

Ryan and Mike and I talked about this and all agreed:

It was really inspiring to be there and hear how Montgomery County has been able to grow Peer Support in the county in the last 10 years. We were also very happy to be there when both Pam and Nancy received their awards, and to have an opportunity to hear and be inspired by their stories. It was also fun to see all the other award recipients receiving their awards, and to witness so many people being recognized for all their hard work. And last but not least, we all enjoyed having to time to reconnect with old co-workers and other friends while enjoying some good noshies and admiring all the peer support pictures and artwork!

Jane S. Straw, MA
Supervisor, Child/Adolescent MH Case Management
Director, Peer Support Services
Penn Foundation

What a great accomplishment for the county and a great celebration. It was a joy to participate! Hope you have a fabulous weekend, also! ☺

Angela Roland | Human Services Program Specialist
Department of Public Welfare | Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

Ditto! It was an honor to be included in the celebration of your tenth anniversary of peer support. Montgomery County is truly a leader and it shined through brightly on Wednesday. I'm so excited to be working with you on the COAPS project. Have a wonderful weekend!

Ginny Mastrine | Human Services Program Specialist
Department of Public Welfare | Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

More Thoughts to the County on the Celebration...

If I could just choose one word to describe the feeling I experienced while witnessing the 10th Anniversary of the CPS Initiative & Awards Ceremony, what comes to mind is Awe. It's a small word, but represents such an enormous feeling of encouragement and gratitude. I am so thankful that I was able to participate in part of the groundwork of the initiative as well as participate in the first CPS class in Montgomery County. I remember the day so clearly; I was unsure, scared, and quite ambivalent as to whether I was appropriate for the training. I walked in and out of that room in the Human Services Center wondering if I could do this. I talked quietly in a corner to one of my instructors, Jeanie Whitecraft. Jeanie listened to me, heard my words, and gently encouraged me back into the room that would in turn teach me, guide me, and motivate me to help others be well and stay well. Sitting in the room at the luncheon with more than 20 Certified Peer Specialists and those that support and employ us filled me with an indescribable type of joy. Once again, I was in the right room. Congratulations to all, and best wishes for many more years to come.

Patrice S. Patterson, CPS

During my short time as CPS Supervisor at Lower Merion Counseling Services I have quickly come to realize the importance and invaluable performance of my peer support specialist staff. The relationships and connections that they build and share with their peers is nothing short of amazing. Our team is small, but they have huge hearts and they will stop at nothing to support, advocate, encourage, and inspire their peers. Their work in the community is a true testament to the vision of peer support ten years ago. I am happy to supervise a team of individuals that share amazing stories, facilitate Wellness Groups, support their peers in the attainment of goals; they are an absolute joy to work with.

Monique R. Ferguson, BS, MPA
Certified Peer Specialist Supervisor/Recovery Coach
Resources for Human Development
Lower Merion Counseling Services

I am proud to be a Certified Peer Specialist, and my gratitude to Montgomery County Department of BH/DD runs deep. Montgomery County has been my "recovery home" since 2007. My life changed exponentially when I came to Montgomery County to work for C.I.C., and it transformed yet again when I became a CPS in March 2008. C.I.C. and Montgomery County have given me gifts of knowledge, skills, and OPPORTUNITY. Each May at the Mental Health Reception I join my Recovery Community to celebrate what I have received, and to honor those I work and walk beside. This year's reception celebrating 10-years of Certified Peer Specialist Support in Montgomery County was exceptionally sweet. I enjoyed watching the streaming video of my peers and friends on the large screen, and I was touched as always when the recovery and resilience award recipients were named—as has usually been the case, many of those recognized were peer specialists. When *all* the certified peer specialists stood, I felt carried along on a wave of recovery, friendship, and community. Thank you!

Berta Britz, CPS

The CPS team at Central thought the Scavenger hunt was a great idea - it helped greatly with meeting new people and the reception was enjoyed by all.

Lisa M. Leh, M.S., CPS
CPS Supervisor

More Thoughts to the County on the Celebration...

As newcomers to peer support, we have felt fortunate to learn from the seasoned peer support community in Montgomery County! You are an inspirational and motivated group, who are truly passionate about changing the service delivery system. Indian Creek is honored to join you as we support people with intellectual disabilities in their Recovery journey.

Janice Nuss

Indian Creek Foundation

I am happy to celebrate with my fellow peers 10 years of peer support. I know that the existence of this service has been extremely helpful to many people including myself. I believe that all human beings instinctively understand the value of having someone who can go beyond sympathizing with them. There are times when we experience suffering in life when we want someone who can empathize with us. Someone who knows exactly what it is like to feel what we are feeling and to me that is in part what peer support is. It is a way for people who are in the trenches with those who have mental health challenges to come along side of them and be a companion to them in their journey towards reaching their goals. It is a truly unique service which I hope will continue to be provided to people for many years to come.
James Chandler, CPS

"What peer support means to me?"

Helping people reach their goals. Seeing people grow and believe in themselves. When I am able to walk side by side with someone along a path they haven't traveled. Instilling hope in someone and encouraging people to pursue their dreams.

Peer support has come so far in the last ten years. Being able to support people who have faced some of the same challenges that you have faced and using your life experience as an example of what a meaningful life full of purpose can look like. This was a recovery model that was unheard of years ago.

Peer support means encouraging people to have a voice and advocate for themselves. Peer support means being the evidence that recovery is possible. What does peer support mean to me? It means more than words can ever say.

Derrick Wheeler, CPS

The celebration of 'Ten Years of CPS Service' made me especially proud to be a CPS in Montgomery County. In centering the annual awards reception around Peer Support, it is clear that our county 'rainmakers' truly appreciate our value and the positive changes we can facilitate. Many speakers described the beginning of peer services as somewhat of an 'unknown'. However, our county as a whole was ready to TRY it, and it worked! This 'dare to be different' (and dedicated) mentality is just one of the strengths shared by all award recipients. I look forward to the next set of trendsetting services our CPS team can make a success (and learn from).

-Tracey Riper-Thomas, CPS

The Peer Support Team at Central Montgomery MH/MR Center has been through a variety of challenges and changes over the last several years. They have been diligently working to meet the expectations of working in a community mental health agency. Their focus is always on the well-being of the individuals they support as well as each other. Each member brings their own uniqueness to the team, while providing hope, empathy and advocacy. These qualities, in addition to their professionalism, have allowed this service to grow within our agency. I am honored to be the coordinator of this team and I am proud of their accomplishments as well as the growth they have shown.

Toni Ryan

Central IOP /PST Coordinator

More Thoughts to the County on the Celebration...

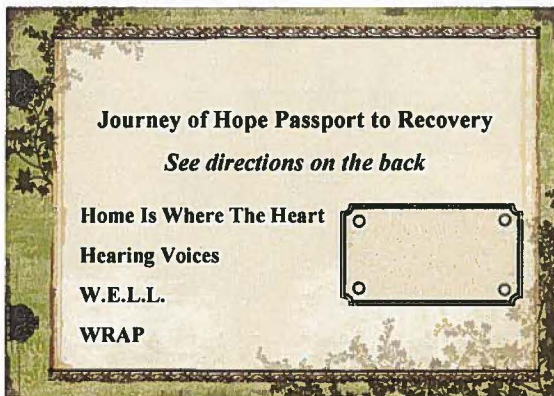
The 10 year Celebration was an absolute success to me. As we support people with the transition in life to become more independent this was a great way to acknowledge the great work everyone has done to move Recovery forward in Montgomery County. It also was great day to see such a wonderful person, (**Pam Howard**) receive the prestigious Dr. Miller Award. This is a person for me who has worked tireless days to make sure that people with all kinds of challenges have many options to regain their lives back.

The food and games were a great way for us to network and reconnect with each other on a social level. As the WRAP Coordinator for Montgomery County, I was truly blessed to be a part of this event and to be able to participate in the festivities and have a WRAP information table there. I cannot leave out the person who has done so much for our County and is making a transition of her own; so needless to say **Nancy Wieman** had an Award given in her honor called the Innovation Award. I felt that was such wonderful moment to be a part of because that was a way for the peer support world to say a special thank you to **Nancy**. I would also like to give a special thanks to **Maureen Feeny-Byrnes** and the team she worked with for working so hard to put together such an elaborate event for everyone involved with peer support to enjoy!! This to me was a success for all of us!! Happy "2014"

Thanks,
Robert D. Martin, CPS
WRAP Coordinator

I am expressing immeasurable thanks and extreme gratitude to Montgomery County for providing me with the skills to partner and empower other peers in their journey of recovery. God Bless and many thanks.

Sincerely, Tony Mallozzi, CPS."



Hunt For Your Peers!!!

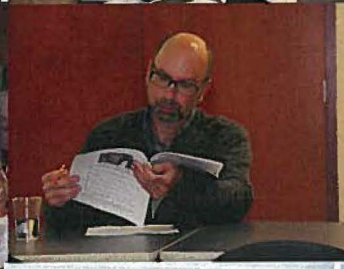
1. Someone who has gone to a movie or a play in the past month
2. Someone who has danced at a party or club in the past 2 months
3. Someone who has traveled outside the US
4. Someone who loves trains
5. Someone who has attended a mutual aid group
6. Someone who loves the ocean
7. Someone who loves the city and feels uncomfortable in rural areas
8. Someone who enjoys the mountains
9. Someone who usually sleeps less than 7 hours per night
10. Someone who enjoys rainy weather
11. Someone who wanted to become a firefighter or a police officer
12. Someone who wanted to be a religious leader
13. Someone who is proud to be a CPS
14. Someone who lives their WRAP
15. Someone who is left handed
16. Someone who is under 30 years old
17. Someone who is over 55 years old
18. Someone who is a parent
19. Someone who has graduated from college
20. Someone who has a GED
21. Someone who speaks 2 or more languages
22. Someone who hears voices
23. Someone who is part of a multi-racial family
24. Someone who is a vegetarian
25. Someone who has more than 4 siblings
26. Someone who was a girl scout
27. Someone who was an eagle scout or liked to be
28. Someone who has lost 20 or more pounds

10 Years of Peer Support



Individuality

Respect



Shared responsibility



Hope



I'M The Evidence

10 Years of Peer Support



Communication

Advocacy



Natural Supports



Self Awareness



"how one step begins a journey towards endless possibilities"



"The Reception was powerful, moving and inspiring on more levels than I can express. I am honored and grateful to be a part of and recognized by the Certified Peer Specialists of Montgomery County for volunteerism in our community. I am also continuously grateful for the opportunities to be of service as a CPS, a Certified Hearing Voices Group Facilitator and Trained WRAP Facilitator at Eagleville Hospital."

Eric Ayers, CPS



Two Phoenixes (CPS & Peer) rising together from the ashes of catastrophe.

"Besides being a mother, this is the best job I have ever had!"



You have heard me voice that many times. I am needed and wanted *because* I am a person in recovery from a serious mental illness; a co-occurring disorder; and my alma mater being Norris-town State Hospital (where I boarded for a while)!!! Little did I know that this self-disclosure would instill in someone a sense of hope. Others will experience the same sense of belonging that they are part of the human race and not just an observer.

When I became involved in the CPS Initiative in Montgomery County I knew I had arrived. Not only was I passionate about moving my peers from victim to victor, the executive county leaders were also on board with moving this initiative forward. They knew the value in building a work force of peers and supported us in achieving this daunting task. Not only did peers move from being service recipients to become service providers,

our entire service system is being transformed to embrace recovery.

We are truly blessed to have the leadership we have in Montgomery County with our proudest cheerleader being our Administrator, Eric Goldstein.

Maureen Feeny-Byrnes, CPS
Coordinator
Peer Support Services