

Message from Acting Commissioner Nancy Navarretta



September is National Recovery Month, a time when we celebrate the gains made by those in recovery and raise awareness of resources for those seeking it. Recovery Month is more than just an observance, it's an opportunity to deepen our awareness and understanding of recovery while supporting those who are on the journey.

This year's theme, "Recovery is For Everyone: Every Person, Every Family, Every Community," reminds us that no one is alone on their journey through recovery. We are all in this together. This month's newsletter highlights the work DMHAS and its statewide partners do year round to promote and support treatment and recovery, the voices of a strong and proud recovery community, and resources from

our partners across the state who make recovery in all its forms possible.

COMING SOON: Peer Recovery Support Credential

DMHAS is proud to work alongside the [Connecticut Certification Board](#) and the [Yale University Program for Recovery and Community Health](#) on the development of a competency based, psychometrically sound, and legally defensible peer recovery support credential. Peer Recovery Support Specialists are persons with lived experience who support individuals with struggles pertaining to mental health, psychological trauma, or substance use.

This credential, with competencies for providing non-clinical recovery supports to individuals with substance use, mental health, and co-occurring disorders, will be for use statewide. The purpose of this credential is to standardize the knowledge and competency of peer support to individuals with substance use and co-occurring mental health disorders and reflects a commitment of the highest ethical standards for Peer Recovery Support Specialists.



NATIONAL
RECOVERY
MONTH 2021



Partnering with Stamford Police to Address Mental Health Calls

The Stamford Police Department have announced a series of new initiatives aimed at improving its response to mental health calls. The *Police Mental Health Collaboration* partners the Stamford Police Department with service providers and advocates for the improvement of mental health response and services. The *Mental Health Crisis Adaptive Patrol Response Program* has 911 dispatchers trained to identify those callers who are experiencing a mental health crisis, and are not a danger to others and are only requesting medical assistance. The dispatchers work with responders to coordinate the appropriate response with police assisting in a support role, only when needed. The City also contracted with Recovery Network of Programs, Inc. (RNP) to embed a social worker within the Stamford Police Department to assist on scene by conducting mental health assessments, coordination of care, referrals and assertive linkage for those individuals encountered who are experiencing a mental health crisis.

Stamford Police are in frequent contact with the Southwest Connecticut Mental Health System (SWCMHS) for support and referrals to help individuals get the appropriate treatment. This innovative and effective program has resulted in more than a 30 percent reduction in police involvement in mental health calls since January. DMHAS is proud to support appropriate and compassionate mental health response by collaborating with police departments statewide to assist those who are having a mental health crisis.

More information:

- [Justice for All: Stamford reimagines mental health responses as part of reform \(News 12\)](#)
- [Mayor Martin Announces Mental Health Initiatives \(City of Stamford\)](#)

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Emergency Department Recovery Coach Services

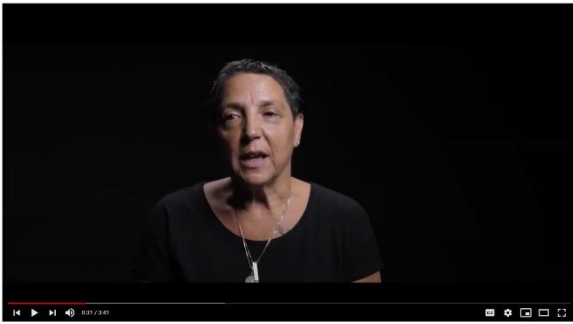
In March 2017, DMHAS funded the CT Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR) to launch a new program that sends Recovery Coaches into hospital emergency departments (EDs) to connect with individuals who arrive in the ED with opioid overdoses and other drug- and alcohol-related crises. These coaches are trained as skilled professionals who can engage patients, family members and hospital personnel, and who can carry the message of recovery and hope. They help patients find recovery resources that enable them to move from crisis into recovery.

The program currently operates in 22 Connecticut hospital EDs. Since the program's inception, CCAR Emergency Department Recovery Coaches have supported over 10,000 individuals, and 82% of those individuals with access to a phone connected to care from an Emergency Department. This astounding statistic demonstrates the power of connection when a person in recovery is able to walk alongside another person seeking recovery.

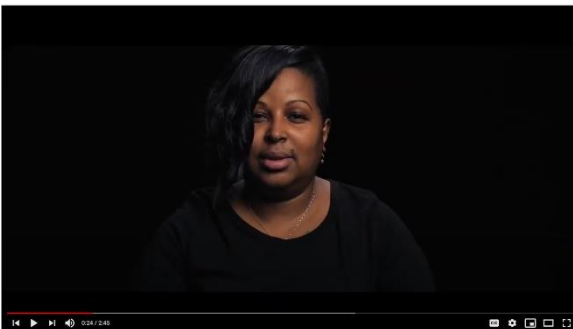
For more information, please visit [DMHAS Emergency Department Recovery Coach Services](#) or [CCAR Recovery Coaching Programs](#).

Recovery Storytelling

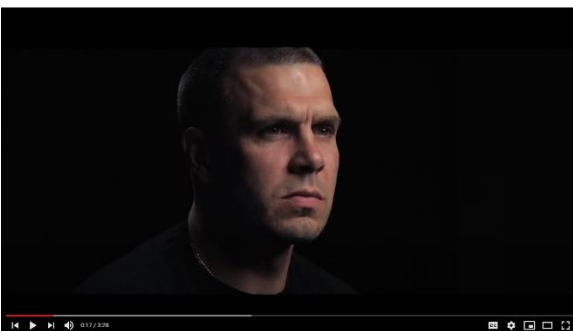
Recovery Storytelling is a powerful tool for advocacy and a pathway of change, growth and recovery. It can enhance and strengthen individual and community recovery, using creativity to unlock new perspectives about ourselves and helping build connections inside and outside of recovery. CCAR'S Recovery Storytelling series highlights recovery from a variety of perspectives and viewpoints—all of them moving and inspiring. To view the full series, visit [CCAR's YouTube channel](#).



Rita's story is a powerful example of truly living one's recovery and the sometimes bittersweet gifts we receive as a result. We regain the ability to feel and to process pain in a healthy way. We are gifted with the ability to truly be present for each moment of our life -- the happy ones and the saddest ones.



CCAR Emergency Department Recovery Coach, Carmen B., talks about the history of generational substance abuse and gives us a concise picture of the journey from addiction to recovery and the gifts we receive as a result.



CCAR Emergency Department Recovery Coach, Kevin S., provides us with a gripping account of awakening from a devastating opiate overdose. Kevin shares how connection, support, and ironclad willingness drove him to stand from that hospital bed and walk into a life of recovery.



Michael tells a story that skillfully portrays a vicious cycle of substance abuse, homelessness, and incarceration. No matter what cycle of misery our use has us caught in, recovery is the tool with which we break it. Whether it be in a voluntary treatment setting or a 12-step meeting in a prison basement, recovery is always possible.

Recovery Resources



Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR) is a centralized resource in Connecticut for all things recovery. CCAR helps people navigate the recovery community by connecting them with others in recovery and providing access to area support services.

Along with organizing the recovery community (people in recovery, family members, friends and allies) to put a face on recovery and provide recovery support services, CCAR also promotes recovery from alcohol and other drug addiction through advocacy, education and service. CCAR strives to end discrimination surrounding addiction and recovery, open new doors and remove barriers to recovery, maintain and sustain recovery regardless of the pathway, all the while ensuring that all people in recovery, and people seeking recovery, are treated with dignity and respect.

For more information about CCAR services and supports please visit <https://ccar.us/>



NAMI Connecticut offers statewide support to a diverse network of peer-led support groups that serve family members, parents/caregivers of children and adolescents with behavioral health concerns and persons living with mental illness. Facilitated by people with lived experience, these support groups are available throughout the state, are completely confidential and are peer-led.

One such group, the [Young Adult SMART Recovery Group](#), is a network of young people who provide a safe place for support and guidance for individuals struggling with addiction to learn new skills and outlets to cope in times of distress.

For more information about NAMI support groups, please visit <https://namict.org/find-support/affiliates-and-support-groups/>



Advocacy Unlimited (AU) provides education, advocacy and support through non-clinical and holistic engagement. As a peer run organization, AU staff uses their direct lived experience navigating mental health, addiction, and trauma to promote individual growth, human rights, and systems transformation. Advocacy Unlimited programs help people recover, achieve wellness, and integrate consumers of mental health and addiction services into community life.

AU provides information and education about wellness alternatives which can work alongside- or sometimes completely eliminate the need for- medication.

For more information about Advocacy Unlimited programs and services, visit advocacyunlimited.org.