

The Mental Health Waiver Program

Tammy Andrews voiceover (Community Support Clinician): The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services and the Department of Social Services Teamed together to create the Mental Health Waiver which is also known as the WISE Program. We help people in the community to prevent nursing home placement or we help people that are in nursing homes to come back out into the community.... with supports.

James (client): I ended up in the nursing home because I had no place else to go. I was homeless, I was very scared.... I have brain trauma, depression, schizoaffective. To tell you the truth, I didn't think I would ever get out of the nursing home.

Rani (client): My diagnosis is schizoaffective disorder, borderline personality disorder. I was very, very sick and nobody could take care of me. I just laid in bed and slept, eat and drink and that's all I did. I've been away from home for three years now and I didn't ever.... I didn't ever, ever dream that I would get out. I never dreamed I'd get out.

Tammy Andrews voiceover (Community Support Clinician): What a waiver does is that it waives the obligation of a person to have to have services in a nursing home at that level of care and that level of care can be provided in the home instead of the nursing home. What we do is we work with a client to create a person-centered recovery plan and it is formulated in goals in different areas and each of those goals has objectives in carrying out what that client would want for themselves and within the objectives we assign people to work on those different tasks. So we offer an array of services that are fit to what a client needs and those services include: Community Support Program, Recovery Assistants, Supported Employment, Peer Supports... we also use other services such as Nursing home health aides as needed. The recovery assistant is a hybrid of three different things. What a recovery assistant does is home health aid type work, not necessarily hands on, but home health aid type work.

Rani (client):And it was very easy to go through the process with all the help that I got.... Doing dishes or washing up. I get rides... if I need to go shopping she'll go or I'll go with her. She does a lot for me... she does a real lot for me and I'm glad I have her, she's a real nice person

Tammy Andrews voiceover (Community Support Clinician): They also are like a companion. They help the client to build social skills and community skills and leisure skills.

James (client): I had to work on my attitude, my mental illness, my hygiene, staying focused... and if I'm alone, try to do things to keep me occupied. It was frustrating, but I knew I had a lot of work ahead of me and it wasn't gonna be easy.

Tammy Andrews voiceover (Community Support Clinician): Eligibility for the mental health waiver is based on 5 criteria that every client must meet.... Being over the age of 22; being on the state DSS Medicaid Title 19 program; having a serious mental

illness as defined by OBRA; having need for a nursing home level of care as defined by DSS; and voluntarily choosing to participate in the program. Once the client is in their new home, we continue to follow the client from the time that they're on our waiver until the time that they may actually meet all of their goals and hope to be able to come off the waiver. Most of the reactions from all of the clients are that they are very pleased with the services and with the program.

James (client): When I first heard about the program I started thinking I was in programs like this mostly all my life and what good can I get out of it. The other programs I never got anything good out them. When I finally got out of the nursing home and got involved in the program, I started to feel better about myself, I started to trust the people in my program.... I was glad that I stuck with it.

Rani (client): It's so good to be home and I'm so glad that I had this opportunity. It's the best thing that ever happened to me and I owe it all to the WISE program and Money Follows the Person and I couldn't have asked for any better help in getting out.