



Weekly Highlight



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Please share the Recovery to Practice (RTP) Weekly Highlights with your colleagues, clients, friends and family! If you are having trouble printing or viewing the RTP Weekly Highlight in its entirety, please refer to the attached PDF.

To access the RTP Weekly Highlights and other RTP materials please visit:

<http://www.dsgonline.com/rtp/resources.html>

PERSONAL STORIES OF RECOVERY

My name is José Flores. I presently am employed by Mental Health America in Huntington Park, Calif., under the nonprofit agency Project Return Peer Support Network.

My story is one of recovery from childhood.

Born in poverty in Texas—very far south, near the Mexican border—I was the first of my mom's six children between her two marriages. My father also remarried and had four other children. Life was difficult. I started hearing voices at age 4 or 5. My recovery started in the 1980s after I was hurt on the job. They diagnosed me with an abnormal brain wave, and later with schizophrenia.

Working in the mental health field, I have had the opportunity to learn and grow with professionals. Learning to manage my symptoms is always a priority, and I have been able to do so for the past 20 years. By "grow," I mean I have utilized the tools available to regain my life and maintain a job. To work on real estate. To perform in plays. To reach out to people who more and more are being able to put time and effort into my life. Thank you, Everyone.

—José Flores, Peer Supporter, El Centrito De Apoyo

I just read an article on recovery about a man who lived in his room, isolating himself for 20 years. I found it both very touching and very sad. The article made me really have a lot of empathy for this man. And it got me thinking about my clients and how many barriers there are to getting them into the office and to helping them with their benefits and whatever else they may need to survive.

I myself was first hospitalized and put on medication when I was 18, in 1997. I struggled to graduate from college and have a normal life.

I would say that the latest area of recovery for me took place in 2007. That was when I started working full time for Baltic Street AEH, Inc. I began as an administrative assistant and have worked as a peer advocate since July 2009. I really feel happy here. I feel I can relate to others and be myself. The work I do gives me meaning and purpose. I try to pass the tools that I have acquired on to my clients.

I think working full time is best for me because it keeps me busy and keeps me on a healthy sleep/wake cycle.

It is my goal to become a Certified Psychiatric Rehabilitation Practitioner. I would also like to get my master's degree in a related helping field. In my spare time, I enjoy journaling, attending cultural events, socializing with friends and family, and going for scenic walks. I am also a board member of City Voices, Inc.

—Melissa Farrell, Peer Advocate, Staten Island Peer Advocacy Center

The Recovery to Practice (RTP) Resource Center wants to hear from you too!

We invite you to submit personal stories that describe recovery experiences. To submit personal stories or other recovery resources, please contact Stephanie Bernstein, M.S.W., at 1-877-584-8535 or email RecoveryToPractice@dsgonline.com.

We welcome your views, comments, suggestions and inquiries.

For more information on this topic or any other recovery topics, please contact the *Recovery to Practice* Resource Center at 1-877-584-8535 or email RecoveryToPractice@dsgonline.com

The views, opinions, and content of this Weekly Highlight are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views, opinions, or policies of SAMHSA or HHS.