

Senate Committee: Ballot Measure 110

Chair Prozanski and Vice Chair Thatcher. My name is Brett. I am currently an incarcerated young man within the Oregon Youth Authority in Woodburn. I am also a Certified Recovery Mentor II to which I have obtained during my incarceration. I am privileged enough to be included as a participant within the Ballot Measure 110 Juvenile Implementation Committee along with Molly Rodgers from Wasco County Juvenile Department. In this testimony, I feel that it is important for me to explain and attempt to portray the importance of this Ballot Measure for Juveniles to receive treatment that is Culturally aware, Supportive and Inclusive. With that being said, I have three main topics I would like to address. Certified Recovery Mentors and Peer Recovery Specialists and their importance to the Recovery support process and ballot measure 110 implementation success, Cultural Accountability and Support, lastly Family Engagement and Support.

For context, I would like to explain what a Certified Recovery Mentor and Peer Recovery Specialists is. Recovery mentors are staff members who have experienced a variety of challenges with substance use disorders, co-occurring disorders and has made their journey from illness to wellness. Similar to the people they serve, they have decided to share their success and knowledge through experience and mentorship to help others achieve their own success. A peer Recovery Specialist is also a person with lived experience through challenges, but has gone through continuing education, experience hours, and has taken a national test determining their education and knowledge qualifying them as professional staff. The Mental Health and Addiction Certification Board of Oregon has offered programs here within the Oregon Youth Authority that have given numerous young men and women the opportunity to share their experience and lend a hand to those who are willing to face their own shortcomings.

In being a CRM I was able to be the bridge in a gap of our treatment world. I was trusted because I knew what they were feeling. I knew what the ideations to use looked and felt like. I knew ways to effectively manage their feelings and emotions around what was happening for these youth because I had experienced them myself. I was proof that Recovery was not only possible, but it is enjoyable and fruitful. The fact of the matter is youth need to know that it's not just okay to be hurt and struggling, but that your peers support you and recovery isn't something impossible to achieve. Young people are more willing to talk to someone who they can relate to, not just someone who tells them what and where they are failing. It is imperative for youth to have the opportunity to speak to someone during that first point of contact or receiving a PCS violation, someone who knows what they are going through and is simply willing to assist them when they are ready. The CRM and Peer Specialists positions are key components to what youth may or may not choose to do in their following steps in these encounters.

As CRM's we have a vast and deep variety in skill set. There are many walks of life whom participate and have taken the opportunity to better themselves within our program. With this we have learned how incredibly important it is to further assist in finding those individuals who

can best support a young person through their recovery. This is where being culturally accountable and responsible comes in for us. It is our responsibility to allocate resources for those who are in need of treatment. We need to make resources available to people in their own communities. We need treatment facilities in rural areas who have been recently deeply neglected from some of these resources. We need individuals in the community achieving groundwork and putting focus to targeted areas that have a high drug influence or have traditionally not had access to culturally specific treatment.

A further focus for support is to continue to pursue family engagement and conversation around substance use and treatment within families. Young people aren't sure how to communicate with the higher figures in their lives, so of course instead of furthering the sense of failure they don't engage altogether. Unfortunately, this isn't something that will be fixed instantly or permanently. However, by pursuing family engagement and reinforcing recovery, youth will begin to feel that they are supported, loved, and that they matter. Having a parent participate in program planning can mean the world to some and for others it may not work for them. However, this is our duty as professionals to accommodate and provide these resources to families and the young people involved to give the best chance at recovery and holistic lifestyles for their futures.

In bringing this all to an end, as a community and as people who are willing to influence a change please consider the resources and access to treatment for all individuals. I thank all of you for the time to share my testimony and personal experience through this committee. The opportunity and insight have been incredible. I look forward to helping with anything further that might better prepare the next generation for success, sobriety, and happiness.

Thank You.