



VASOR Success Stories

The Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services began receiving State Opioid Response (SOR) funding in 2018. SOR funding has enabled Virginia to lead the country in innovative approaches to prevention, harm reduction, treatment and recovery services for people struggling with substance use. When discussing the scope of this country's opioid crisis, it is easy to get lost in the numbers and forget the unique stories of the individuals and communities impacted by the epidemic. OMNI Institute, Virginia's research and evaluation partner, has collected stories from across Virginia to highlight the progress made and lives changed since the beginning of SOR. This report highlights some of the inspiring stories of lives saved and transformed and community support made possible through SOR funding.

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Changing Lives Through SOR

Virginia's Behavioral Health System was designed with a community-centered model. Community Services Boards (CSBs) and other funded organizations provide resources and the delivery of community-based behavioral health services to clients across Virginia. SOR funding has changed the lives of so many individuals with a substance use disorder as well as the lives of their families. The following section tells stories of people who were given the opportunity, the resources, and the support of their community to change their lives. These successes include parents regaining custody of their children, individuals seeking treatment after decades of substance use, and individuals giving back to their communities as Peer Recovery Specialists.



Client Transformations through Treatment and Recovery



Journey Back to Fatherhood CARITAS

Tyrone is the Program Coordinator for The Healing Place for Men. He has four children and is now a grandfather. "One of the best feelings I get to have is that I can show guys like me that they can make amends with their families and stay on the right path," he says. "Staying on the right path means no more interruptions that take you away from your family." Tyrone knows what it's like to lose precious time with his family because of his substance use disorder. He grew up in Richmond, VA. He says he had good mentors and stayed out of trouble through high school. In his 20s, he began drinking,

smoking, and eventually tried heroin. By this time, Tyrone had children. "I was working, but I was suffering in other ways," he says. "I definitely was not spending time with my family like I should have been." Tyrone attempted to get sober through short-term programs. Nothing stuck. Eventually, Tyrone was arrested for various drug possession and distribution charges. He spent time at Indian Creek Correctional Center, which infused a peer-driven recovery program into his daily life. After he was released, he was sober and excited. "I had a plan to continue this journey, but I struggled when I got out with employment and housing, so I returned back to selling for income and headed back down a road of destruction," he says. A friend who had been to The Healing Place, suggested Tyrone give it a try. **"What stuck with me most about the program was that I didn't have to worry about housing, food, or clothes," he said. "I could focus on me and get a more solid spiritual foundation and support finding employment."** Tyrone did that and more. As a graduate of CARITAS Works Class 59, Tyrone learned about his strengths and how he wanted to spend his life. He chose to commit to giving back every day at CARITAS.

Uncle Kyle is Back

Client of Virginia Beach CSB

"I am not using any drugs now and I enjoy being a part of my family. My nieces and nephews are saying, 'Uncle Kyle is back', and that feels better than any drug."

"I started using Percocet when I was 26 then I went to heroin and ended up with fentanyl. I went to residential [treatment] once, then an out-treatment program and AA/NA, and was able to stay clean for 90 days, then I relapsed. A friend told me about the SOR program, they were a client with SOR and were successfully working on the program. My friend inspired me to make that call. I called them and they helped me pay for my methadone at the clinic and I started going to the peer groups. Every day, I remember what the [peer recovery specialist] Charles and his counselor shared with me about sober living. They were telling the truth. I must deal with my emotions differently."

How Treatment Turned a Life Around

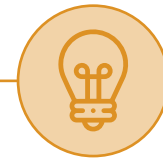
Dickenson County Behavioral Healthcare Services

Julia has been enrolled in services with Dickenson County Behavioral Health since October 2021. She has received substance use case management, individual counseling, peer recovery services, and has been enrolled in the Suboxone program. Through her dedication and hard work, Julia has been a great example of what someone can achieve in recovery. Julia was initially referred for services by her probation officer. She had her struggles at first and was deceptive at times. She did not fully trust treatment and said she "had heard bad things about it." She appeared not ready to fully commit to making the needed changes to get on the right track. **During her time in treatment, Julia has made a complete turnaround.** She has passed drug screens on a consistent basis. She has been engaged in therapy sessions and has been open about addiction and mental health struggles. Julia has worked toward and accomplished several personal goals, such as obtaining housing. Julia was approved for HUD, which allowed her to move out of public housing and into a home of her own.

Medication-Assisted Treatment – The Best Decision I’ve Ever Made

Dickenson County Behavioral Healthcare Services

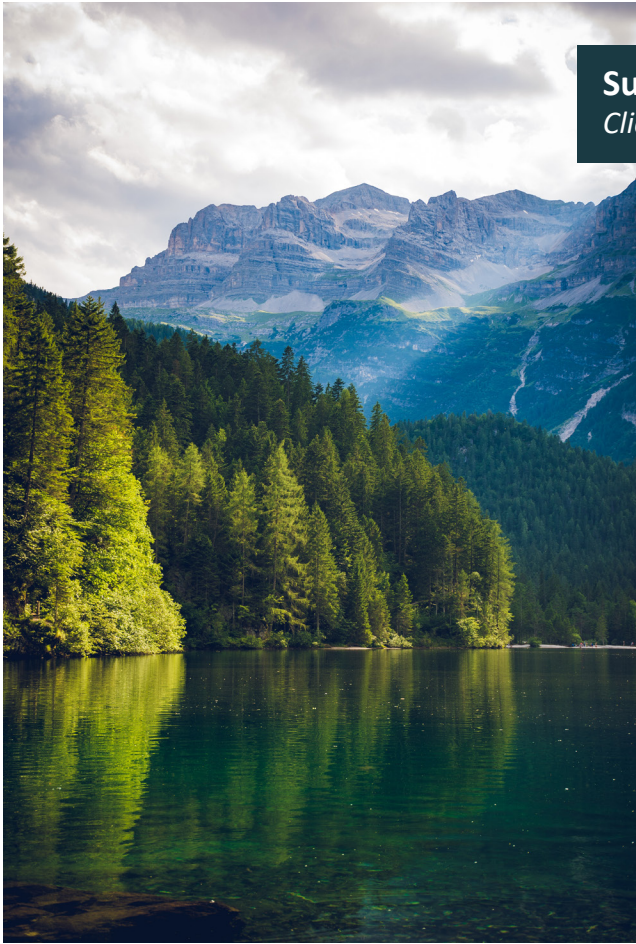
Mr. Lawrence has been enrolled in our MAT program for several months. He has made great progress during this time. Mr. Lawrence has reported improved relationships with family members and states that he feels much better physically. Mr. Lawrence reports that he "was about as bad as you could get" during active addiction. He states that he spent \$15,000 on substances in one year. He talked about [the] negative impact of his addiction on his family. He states that he once "got high and cut the power line to the house with an axe. I threw the Christmas tree out in the yard." Since beginning treatment, he reports a significant improvement in his life. He reports **"I just drove by the office and decided to turn in one day. It was one of the best decisions I ever made."** He states that he and his spouse are getting along much better. He reports selling his truck because "everyone knew it and I wanted a fresh start." Throughout his time in treatment, Mr. Lawrence has been a great example of the benefits of the MAT program. He attends all treatment appointments, is open, and continues to pass drug screens. Mr. Lawrence appears to be making strides in his personal life, mental health, and financial stability.



MAT and MOUD programs^{1,2}:

Medication-assisted treatment (MAT), sometimes referred to as Medication for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) includes medications to support people in their recovery for opioid use disorders (OUD). This program normally uses these three FDA approved drugs: buprenorphine, methadone, and naltrexone.

MAT has been shown to decrease opioid use, opioid-related overdose deaths, criminal activity, and infectious disease transmission. Throughout this report, the terms MAT and MOUD are used interchangeably depending on the terminology used in the personal narrative of each story.



Success Was Still Within My Reach

Client at Virginia Beach CSB

“ I am so thankful for the support I received from this program. They were always open to assisting me no matter what I needed.

I was able to overcome every barrier to my success with the help of this program. You all helped me maintain MAT [Medication Assisted Treatment] and stay on the path to a healthy and successful life. Without this program I would have been a tragic statistic and I would not be the father to my children that I am. Even when my Medicaid was messed up, the program helped me to believe that my success was still within my reach. I am eternally grateful to the SOR program and will recommend it to anyone in need of this kind of assistance.”

I'll Stay Clean Because of Help and Support

Client at Colonial Behavioral Health

"Before attending IOP [Intensive Outpatient Treatment], I wasn't sure I'd stay clean this go around. I had just lost my parental rights to my two boys and was in a bad place mentally. However, after I started signing in regularly (with a push from my P.O.) and actually listened to the other group members share, I became more comfortable and brutally honest with not only myself but everyone. I appreciate Mrs. Green calling 'a duck a duck' as well as the coping skills she shared. I found so much support in the group and was referred to the MAT clinic. Since being on Suboxone and attending groups along with many NA meetings, I have a positive outlook on life today. I don't have to use to get through hard times."

“ ”

I've been clean and have faith I'll stay clean because of the help and support from CBH as well as my support system. It Works If You Work It.

— Client at Colonial Behavioral Health



Employment

Drug Court Success – On the Fast Track to Graduate

Norfolk CSB

During this period, there was a female who entered into drug court and participated in [the] GPRA survey. Since enrolling in drug court she is now employed full-time, has her own transportation (does not need bus tickets, she informed us), and is on the "fast track" in drug court to graduate. She has obtained her own housing and now has a healthier support system in place.

A total of 4,939 intake GPRA surveys were completed in Virginia during the first four years of the SOR grant from 2018 – 2022. GPRA data helps us understand how SOR-funded programs are impacting individuals. For instance, with GPRA data, we can see that misuse of any opioids in the past 30 days decreased by 60% from intake (25%) to their latest assessment (9%).



GPRA^{3,4}:

The Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) is a survey tool for grant evaluation purposes, and is used to improve the quality of services provided through programs. Client-level data are collected including demographics, ICD-10 diagnostic categories, substance use and misuse, mental health and physical health functioning, and other key variables.

The Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) survey collects data from individuals receiving SOR-funded treatment services who consent to participate in the evaluation. Evaluation participants are asked to complete the GPRA survey at intake, 6-months after intake, and at discharge from services.



Suboxone Saved My Life

Loudoun County MH, SA and Developmental Services

M.P. enrolled in behavioral health treatment in June 2020 and connected to a MAT prescriber. He was consistent with his MAT intervention over 12 months. **During that time, he gained full-time employment, improved his living and recovery environment and reported that he is doing "better than he has done in a long time."** The client reported that he is looking to return to school and he is being considered for a promotion on his job. He stated, "Suboxone saved my life."



Finding Housing



Becoming a Recovery House Manager after 30 Years of Substance Use

Richmond Behavioral Health Authority

W.P. is a client in our office-based opioid treatment program. She started using drugs at age 15, and continued use until age 48. In addition to substance use disorders, she also deals with multiple sclerosis, anxiety, and PTSD. She entered rehab following an arrest, but was not serious about recovery at that time. A year later, she returned to rehab, and was ready to commit. With the help of rehab, NA meetings, her recovery house, sponsor, therapist, and other providers, she has been sober for one year now. She credits her great relationship with her providers, and says she feels she can be honest with them to receive the help she needs. She says the hardest part of her recovery was experiencing her emotions without drugs, and she would not have been able to get through it without the support and treatment she received. **She has lived in a recovery house for 10 months now, and was recently offered the position of house manager.** She is excited to take on this new role, and says she is looking forward to helping other people. "This is the furthest place I thought I would ever be."

Affording Housing for her Family

Blue Ridge Behavioral Healthcare

Our Project Link program has recently graduated a client who has been involved with the program for three years. **She has successfully completed the program [and is] able to afford adequate housing for herself and her three-year-old child she regained custody of, due to her progress in recovery.** She received support from our SOR-funded Peer Recovery Support Specialist.



Regaining Custody of Children

Excited to Live with Dad Again

New River Valley CSB

A client that has been in [and] out of our program re-entered our [program] over the summer. **He now completed IOP, has a stable job, just moved into [a] three-bedroom apartment so his two kids can move back in with him.** Him and his children are so excited to live together again!!!



I Have My Daughter Back

Client at Richmond Behavioral Health Authority

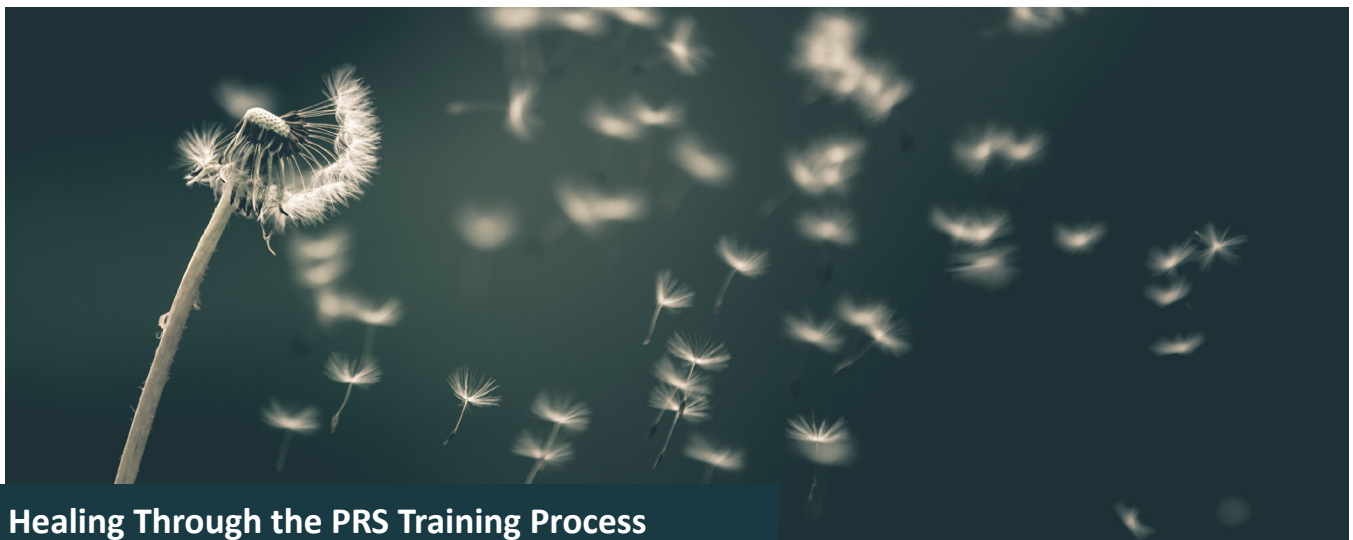
“ Recovery is amazing. I hear my daughter laugh now and it’s the greatest song. I see her smile and it’s as if it’s the first time every time.

I cannot thank the staff at RBHA enough for being so compassionate and caring and just finding a career to help people like me. The help I received has changed my life for the better. They taught me some life skills I never thought I was capable of. They helped me raise my daughter and make us understand each other from a better point of view. I started there as an angry, terrified victim. I took every word of advice as it came from the heavens and that was the best thing I could ever do. Because of them, I’m in line to have a place of my own, I have my daughter back, and I have an incredible job. I have come to see obstacles as another way for me to make my daughter and myself so proud. My stay at RBHA was an incredible one. I’m so lucky to have the amazing support of these incredible women and continue to make them proud. They’ve unleashed dreams I cannot wait to start to bring to life.”



Becoming a Certified Peer Support Specialist

Virginia Department of Corrections leads a transformative SOR-funded program, bringing the 72-hour Peer Recovery Specialist (PRS) training to jails and prisons. In this powerful training, participants learn how their own living experiences can help support others in recovery. The following stories are from graduates of the PRS Training at Green Rock Correctional Center.



Healing Through the PRS Training Process

PRS Training Graduate, Green Rock Correctional Center

“To describe the type of impact that PRS training has had on me is not easy. This training has become part of a healing process for me that is long overdue. It has become in tune with my motto that ‘the hardest fight of your life is for your life’. The things that I have learned are infinite. The coping techniques, strength building, resilience, communication skills, hope, all important tools for successful recovery.”

Changing Lives Through Peer Support During a Life Sentence

PRS Training Graduate, Green Rock Correctional Center

“I feel energized, and excited about the direction of using people who have recovered to help those who desire to recover. To be a PRS means a great deal to me. Even if I do not ever get to have this as a career on the outside of prison. I have a life sentence for taking a life. I have caused a lot of pain in my past with the victim’s family and my own. One day I would like to get out and help kids not make the mistakes I made, not hurt others or themselves. But if, in the end, my future is only conducted within these fences...I will still keep up the good fight, still help those who want the help, and create a stronger humanity, one person at a time. Not such a bad life sentence at all.”



Not Ready to Leave Until I Became a PRS *PRS Training Graduate, Green Rock Correctional Center*

“ My recovery journey has landed me in a position to where I can use this training to really help, support, and empower others when needed. This has been the positive in my negative that I was looking for for being incarcerated. Once I knew about the PRS training, this may sound crazy but I wasn't gonna be ready to go home until I got it.”

Learning to Be A Peer Supporter Prepares Me For Battle

PRS Training Graduate, Green Rock Correctional Center

“ The importance of who I am and who I could be as a Peer Recovery Specialist is about to be manifested. The power of addiction was always known, but my Peer Recovery Specialist training shows me that recovery is more powerful. I'm equipped with the training manual and privileged to use it for arsenal in life's war against mental health and substance use challenges, and learning to be a peer supporter prepares me for battle, but the application of what I've learned gone win the war. With my lived experiences, being trained by the best, what I've learned and continuing to learn, yes I am ready!”

My Goal as a PRS is Simple, to Fight the Dreaded Disease that Tried to Take My Life

PRS Training Graduate, Green Rock Correctional Center

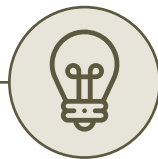
“ The impact this training has had on me is immeasurable, to not only experience substance use but also be trained as a pillar of support for those who still struggle cannot be overstated. As I've navigated this training, I'm reminded of the days I struggled and wondered, 'What if I had a peer recovery specialist in my life?' I'm certain I would have had a chance to succeed. It is evident that my family and friends loved me, but they could not understand what I was going through; substance use begins with the power of choice, but then you are so crippled by this disease that power seems to no longer be yours to claim. As a PRS, I am empowered to help my peers reclaim the agency in their lives by respecting their 'dignity of risk', nothing ventured, nothing gained, this is what speaks to me. My goal as a PRS is simple, to fight the dreaded disease that tried to take my life and led me to take the life of someone else of which I had no right. The self-deception has now been replaced with self-disclosure, a key component of PRS training. I will utilize this training to show my peers that drugs and alcohol only have the power we relinquish to it, and we may always be in recovery, but we can always be victorious in this fight. Amazingly enough, as I pursued my calling over these 21 years, my calling found me.”



Connecting with the Community as a Peer Recovery Specialist

Western Tidewater CSB

During this past quarter the **WTCSB SOR team has worked hard on strategic wraparound services, which involves showing clients the importance of engaging in all services of treatment and how full engagement is the most proven way for an individual to be successful.** Within this quarter one of our consistent clients who was involved in receiving peer support, case management, outpatient services, and group has been able to graduate from the program successfully and recently began Peer Recovery Support Certification Training with our peer to become a peer support specialist himself. The WTCSB SOR team continues to find innovative ways to connect with the community and our clientele.



Wraparound services:

Wraparound services often bring together multiple services or systems to address the comprehensive needs of the person. These include case management, transportation, and childcare for treatment appointments. Wraparound services make recovery more possible and accessible.

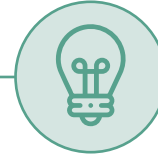


Creating Community



Using SOR Funds to Address Community Needs *Rappahannock Area CSB*

SOR funded staff have increased efforts to outreach [to] individuals in the community. Case managers have been trained in dispensing Narcan and are able to keep a supply on hand for all incoming individuals. Therapists have implemented a phased system for Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) groups to help individuals progress in the program and encourage the building of a support system outside of the agency. Peers have attended local community events, bringing awareness to OUD and the support available in the community. Additionally, SOR staff have begun the process of having a case manager and a substance use therapist working directly in the Rappahannock Regional Jail to help facilitate a warm handoff to RACSB.



Narcan⁵:

Narcan, also known as naloxone, is a medication used to rapidly reverse a life-threatening opioid overdose. It works by temporarily blocking the effects of opioids that depress the respiratory system, allowing the individual to breathe again. Anyone who has received a short training on the use of naloxone can carry or administer it to an individual experiencing an overdose. More than 53,000 naloxone kits have been distributed during the first four years of the SOR grant. Kits are distributed to a variety of partners, including local health departments CSBs, harm reduction sites, and law enforcement agencies.

Warm Handoff:

Warm Handoff is the process of transferring an individual from a case manager and substance use therapist to a community provider or in this case a community services board (CSB). This process involves meetings to coordinate the transfer of responsibility for the individual's ongoing care and continuing treatment and services. Going into treatment can be an overwhelming and scary process, and a warm handoff can ease the transition.

Justice-Based Services:

SOR-funding has financed treatment and recovery services in justice-based settings across Virginia, including jails, recovery courts, and Department of Corrections (DOC) facilities. Thousands of people have received SOR-funded services while in justice settings.



Peer Support Specialists Building Community

Community Health Center of New River Valley

“In May 2022 our Peer Recovery Program began organizing peer-led social events in the community. Patients have consistently reported difficulty finding opportunities and places to socialize in a way that was supportive to their recovery journeys. The Peer Recovery Team at the Community Health Center of the New River Valley has hosted two community [peer social events] this year: a "Bowling Social" at a local bowling alley for our patients and a "Recovery Cookout" at a local park. The CHCNRV provided food, drinks, and games for the patients including tie dye t-shirts, Recovery Jenga, and Recovery Bingo. **The feedback from the peer social events has been overwhelmingly positive and patients have reported significant benefit in building their community support network.** Our Peer team is planning a third event for the fall at a local pumpkin farm.”

Honoring those Who Walked the Hard Road to Recovery

CARITAS

Last week was a good one! On Thursday, **250 hearts and souls joined us for our annual The Healing Place Alumni Ceremony.** It's the first time we've joined together in full force since the pandemic to cheer on men and our first women who have become alumni of The Healing Place. We honored those who have walked the hard road to long-term recovery and those who were gone too soon. Many special words were shared about our President & CEO Karen Stanley. One alumnus accepted his coin all the way from Iraq! We also honored our community partners, donors, volunteers, and staff who make it all possible. We honored these special few for their exceptional support of our mission.

Promoting Youth Leadership

Alexandria / Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition of Alexandria

In August 2020, the Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition of Alexandria (SAPCA) collaborated with the Alexandria Campaign on Adolescent Pregnancy (ACAP) to host a free, virtual Youth Leadership Conference to train young leaders and connect them with opportunities to become more civically engaged in the Alexandria community. To facilitate youth-adult partnerships, the last day of the conference included an afternoon networking session with over 30 Alexandria community leaders.

Nearly 90 high school students attended the conference. After the conference, youth participants received updates throughout the year about internships, volunteer and leadership opportunities, and other ways to get involved in the Alexandria community.

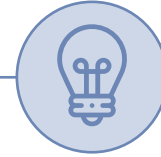


Prevention Community Events

Providing Narcan to the Community

Rappahannock Area CSB

In the last quarter, our MAT clinicians, including therapists, case managers and peers, have attended community events where they discuss the MAT Program and other services available at the RACSB. Additionally, the clinicians were able to facilitate rapid REVIVE! trainings to those in the community and allow them to walk away with free Narcan. At the last community event, Pride Event, all the available Narcan was dispensed to the community with contact information for emergency services and RACSB. **Our case managers are trained to train others on how to use Narcan and can dispense to all incoming MAT clients, as well as anyone else in the community that would like a prescription.**



REVIVE! Trainings:

REVIVE! is the statewide opioid overdose and naloxone education program for Virginia. REVIVE! training is offered to community members, health professionals, law enforcement, emergency medical services, and others interested in preventing and reducing opioid overdoses.

Inaugural 5 Bridges to Wellness Fair

Mount Rogers CSB

Mount Rogers Community Services hosted our first 5 Bridges to Wellness Fair. We had over 74 vendors set up to disseminate information to participants. Over 1500 participants come through that day. The vendors were set up within each bridge. At the registration table, each participant received information about each bridge and how to access them. We offered elements from the program throughout the day. We also had lived-experience speakers at the beginning of the fair and at lunch. Town buses made it a stop for their routes that day. We also had schools bring students to the event.

Partnering with Schools for Suicide Prevention Events

Chesterfield County CSB

Chesterfield Prevention Services Staff taught 250 Signs of Suicide [SOS] Lessons in a total of 20 county middle and high schools between September and November 2021, reaching 6,450 students. Chesterfield County Public Schools Mental Health Support Services staff gave the following feedback: "School helping professionals were impressed with your team's attitude throughout the SOS Season, especially since they seemed just as excited to teach on the last day as they were on the first day. The school personnel were anxious about teaching and felt a huge sense of relief when Prevention [staff] walked through the doors to teach the lessons. The whole Prevention team was very pleasant and relaxed, which helped the school counseling team feel more at ease. By Prevention teaching the lessons, the counselors were able to focus their energy on 1-on-1 [meetings] with the students."



Connecting to the Latino Community *Substance Abuse Free Environment (SAFE)*

The Latino Coalition of Substance Abuse Free Environment, Inc. (SAFE) in Chesterfield, VA held a “Three Kings” or “El Juguetazo” event... where they distributed SAFE educational resources on opioids in Spanish. The event is held annually, and is coordinated by SAFE’s Latino Coalition Coordinator, along with several community partners. From the organizer of the event: “The event is a family festival, where families come together and where all children leave with happy smiles. Each child receives a minimum of one toy/gift from the three kings. This event also lends the opportunity for service providers to disseminate information about their services, programs, and initiatives, as well as a host of

fun activities for the families in attendance. The event grew out of a need to have a gift giving program for children whose families face barriers preventing them from receiving gifts during the holiday season. Such barriers include but are not limited to language, documentation, citizenship status, or income.” Approximately 3,000 children received new toys and the event’s popularity keeps increasing. The event has been hosted at the L.C. Bird High School in Chesterfield County for the last several years, but because of COVID-19 and new logistics, it was at the county Fairgrounds in 2021. It is open to everybody, but the target audience was mainly Latino Spanish-speaking families with children 0-16 years old. El Juguetazo enriches our community by cultivating understanding and mutual respect as participants recognize cultural similarities and embrace cultural differences. It is estimated that the event reached approximately 6,500 people directly. It is estimated more than 50,000 people were reached indirectly because of the radio shows, publicity, social media, etc., related to this event. The event was considered a huge success. More than 1,500 family vehicles waited patiently in line for almost 3 hours to receive their children’s toys and SAFE’s opioid and other prevention resources. More than 20,000 toys and 2,900 opioid prevention and educational resources/print materials were handed out during the event in its 17th year.

Purchasing Medication Drop-boxes for the Community

Danville-Pittsylvania Community Services/Regional Alliance for Substance Abuse Prevention (RASAP):

RASAP used part of our SOR grant funding to purchase two additional permanent medication drop-boxes. We partnered with the Federally Qualified Health Care Center, Piedmont Access to Health Service (PATHS), to house these boxes. The first box is located within the PATHS Pharmacy in Danville; the second is at the pharmacy within the Community Medical Center in Chatham (Pittsylvania County). Both boxes are accessible during normal business hours to both patients and the general community.

Cumberland Mountain Community Services:

To date we have trained 831 community individuals face to face in REVIVE! and provided Narcan nasal spray at Feeding America and faith-based recovery feeding lines! Individuals also received prevention care bags containing recovery information, parenting handbooks, Deterra [drug deactivation kits], lock boxes, Timer Cap bottles, gunlocks, suicide prevention materials, masks, hand sanitizer and various giveaways. Lock boxes (1,500), Timer caps (2,500) and prevention resources bags were also disseminated at schools, Department of Social Services, churches, faith based coalition outdoor fishing events, police departments, health expos, Mental Health First Aid and ACE trainings and medication-assisted programs.



Prevention Media Campaigns

Limit Access, Reduce Misuse: Increasing Awareness of Over-the-Counter Medication Misuse

Chesterfield County CSB

Chesterfield County Prevention participated in an Over-the-Counter (OTC) Medication Regional Media Campaign. The goals of the campaign were: increasing awareness with parents and caregivers about the risks associated with misusing over-the-counter medications; encouraging parents and caregivers to secure all medications, including OTC medicines; and encouraging parents and caregivers to talk to their children about OTC medication safety.

“ *Limit Access, Reduce misuse*” was a geographically focused turnkey campaign targeting Chesterfield County. The campaign garnered 120,645 TV impressions and 44,156 impressions from digital streaming services.

— *Chesterfield County CSB*



Drive-thru REVIVE! Trainings

Blue Ridge Behavioral Healthcare

Our Peer Recovery staff have been involved in community REVIVE! trainings. During this quarter, they along with other community providers have provided outdoor REVIVE! trainings to reach people at community events.

Our Peers hosted a Drive-thru REVIVE! training at our agency to bring awareness to Overdose Awareness Day.

— *Blue Ridge Behavioral Healthcare*

Take Them Back: Educating the Community about Locking Up and Disposing Medications Properly

Blue Ridge Behavioral Healthcare

The Roanoke Area Youth Substance Abuse Coalition (RAYSAC) educated all Blue Ridge staff about locking up medications and disposing of them properly. **In this 4-week campaign RAYSAC distributed 60 lock boxes, 47 lock bags, 40 pill pods and 26 medication disposal kits.** The messages included directing people to [the] TakeThemBack.org website for locations of permanent medication disposal sites in the Roanoke Valley. Comments from staff included: "I have grandchildren that come to my home to visit, and I want to keep them safe!"; "[I'm] hoping for sets for 3 family households and 2 sets of grandparents with small children and a troubled teen"; "Ordering for MAT, would use to give out to clients in need of items."

Improving the Behavioral Health System

SOR funding has allowed CSBs a unique opportunity to build capacity and provide additional services to their clients. From hiring Peer Recovery Specialists to providing housing for new mothers, SOR funding has allowed these agencies to dream big and implement ambitious plans to improve their communities. This section showcases the multitude of ways the system has changed thanks to SOR.



Expansion Of Services



Primary Care Services Have Been Instrumental

Highlands CSB

Our agency is proud that we have begun to utilize primary care services for our consumers enrolled in case management and medication-assisted treatment services. **Primary Care has been instrumental to those consumers who have lacked this valuable resource in the past. With our service they are able to receive care in a friendly, familiar environment.** Once they have received their initial physical, checkup, and blood work, primary care providers in the community are more willing to enroll them in permanent care. This allows the consumer to be treated for ongoing medical concerns, such as hepatitis C, with a provider who can continue to care for their physical health on an ongoing basis. We look forward to continuing to expand this valuable service and are so grateful to SOR for providing the funding to make it possible.

Training Seven New Peer Recovery Specialists

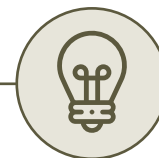
Goochland/Powhatan CSB

[Our] Recovery Coordinator trained seven new Peer Recovery Specialist (PRS) candidates this quarter, with two from our catchment area. Another PRS training begins at the end of July. Our agency has recently added a new MAT Prescriber, and the search for an SUD Clinician continues.

Contingency Management Increasing Client Engagement

Valley CSB

During this quarter our office-based opioid treatment program began providing contingency management. **This has been used to support participation in therapy, completion of necessary assessments and GPRA survey follow-ups.** While this is still fairly new to us, we have seen an increase in client engagement in these services since offering contingency management.



Contingency Management⁶:

A therapeutic technique used in Opioid Use Disorders (OUD) and stimulant use disorders (SUD) to support adherence to treatment. Contingency management provides incentives to patients contingent upon treatment attendance and/or verified drug abstinence to increase the likelihood of these behaviors. Contingency management interventions can be customized to address patient preferences or program needs, such as what type of resources are available.



Peer Recovery Specialists Making Lasting Impacts

Chesterfield County CSB

In this last quarter a new Peer Recovery Specialist was hired in the Mobile Integrated Health Unit - filling a long vacancy. Since day one, Laine has been making impacts on the community. His lived experience and networking capabilities have transformed the program in a short period of time. **He is reaching folks at a greater rate [than] previously experienced in the program and is successfully linking individuals with recovery housing and treatment.** He is identifying gaps in services and the community and is generating new ideas to help tackle this epidemic. While his time with [us] has been short, his impact has been great and we are thrilled to see where we grow with him on our team!

Improving the Wellness of Mothers and their Babies

Piedmont CSB

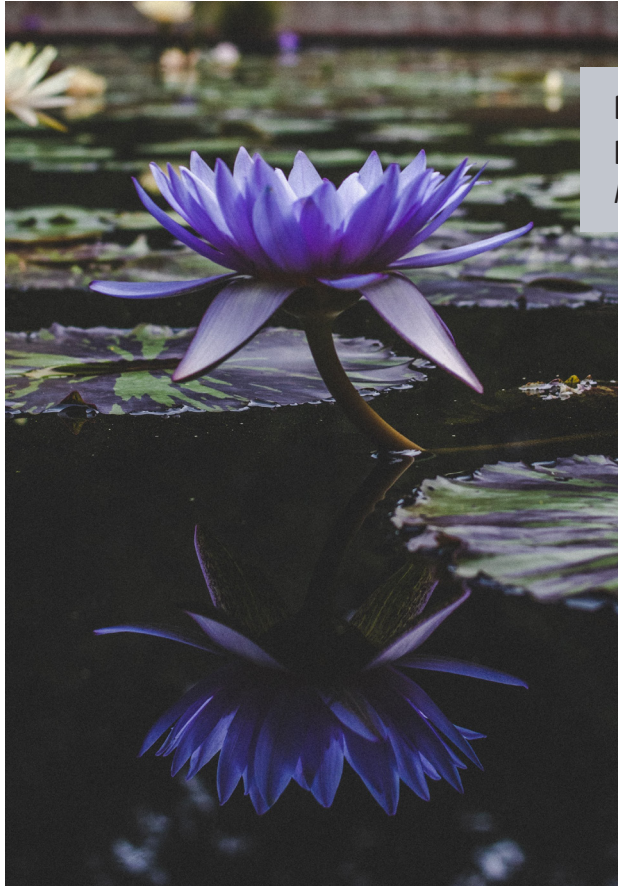
PEARL (Peer Empowered Addiction and Recovery Living) Program has been able to hire three peer recovery specialists (PRS) for the PEARL Program for Pregnant and Parenting Women. During this last quarter we hired a PRS Leadership position over the Grace House (Recovery Residence of the PEARL Program). We currently house four mothers; three have infants (one with twins!!), and one pregnant mother.

This program has successfully created partnerships with local OBGYN care, education, faith networks, and support groups. The program is focusing on the overall wellness and recovery of the mothers and their infants.

— Piedmont CSB



Housing



Providing Housing for Clients Experiencing Homelessness

Norfolk CSB

The Norfolk CSB is happy to report that we were able to open our Peer Recovery Drop-in Center again in September. Many consumers are able to stop by for a visit and watch some TV or a movie, play a game or meet one-on-one with a Peer if they'd like while enjoying a cup of coffee at the same time. Our Peer center is open every day during the week and during football season, we open on Sundays to watch the first NFL game of the day. This is topped off at the end of the season with a Super Bowl Party in February.

Recovery Housing for Pregnant and Postpartum Women with a SUD

Piedmont CSB

The Grace House is a Recovery Residence operated by Piedmont Community Services. This recovery housing is made available to pregnant and postpartum women with a SUD. **The entire program is made possible by SOR funding.** This is the first quarter that the Grace House has been operating in full capacity. We have seen growth in the program as well as recovery capital built by the women at Grace House. This quarter the Grace House team (residents and PRS) helped two babies to transition back to the care and visitation of their mothers.



Involvement In Justice Settings



Building Relationships at a Pre-Release Resource Fair

Rappahannock-Rapidan CSB

We've had a staff member who works regularly with one of the probation offices and was able to build a relationship with some individuals out of the state prison in our area. This led to peers coming to a pre-release resource fair for individuals returning to the community within 30 days. We had multiple individuals from that resource fair come into our drop-in center, enroll in peer recovery services, and get connected with resources and care. We used a blend of funding to create harm reduction kits with Narcan, fentanyl test strips, and an array of harm reduction items... that we've been regularly distributing. We

had a community member over the course of the last few months come in and ask for a Harm Reduction Kit. She spoke with the same certified peer recovery specialist (CPRS) each time. In late June she called and requested support with entering detox. The peer supported her entrance to detox, provided transportation, [and] worked with her as she had completed detox. The CPRS then supported her entry into residential treatment that included Medication Assisted Recovery. The CPRS is currently in contact with her in residential treatment and is supporting her in transferring to long-term residential treatment and recovery housing.

Ready to Change and Not Giving Up on Himself

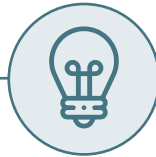
Norfolk CSB

[Our client] is a success story because he was willing to participate in treatment and eager for change in his life. He is a drug court participant. At the time he completed the GPRA survey, he was awaiting transportation to be set up as well as transitioning from jail. GPRA participation verbalized how "the bus tickets and laundry card incentives have allowed him comfort and less stress in knowing he is being assisted along his healing journey." **He reported that he enjoyed taking the survey and the questions that were asked because it allowed him to think about his life in a deeper way.** He also stated to the MAT Care Coordinator that he is "ready to change, and he is not giving up in himself no matter how hard." He continues to be an active participant in his treatment and has shown up to all his scheduled appointments. He verbalized also how thankful he is to be able to wash his clothes while he stays in a shelter and able to get there with the bus tickets as well as to all of his required appointments, including drug court.

Providing MAT Services in a Regional Jail

Hanover CSB

Hanover CSB completed our first year at Pamunkey Regional Jail (PRJ) with a SOR-funded peer embedded in the jail to discuss receiving Vivitrol with interested inmates. Twelve individuals received an injection at PRJ this fiscal year, as well as a resource bag which contains Narcan and other resources at their release. We have also recently partnered with [Opportunities, Alternatives & Resources] (OAR) to deliver resource bags to inmates releasing to homelessness. We began hosting an on-site NA meeting, hosted by our SOR-funded peer, in April 2022. It has a close cohort of members and is one of only 2-3 NA meetings in the Hanover area.



Vivitrol ⁷:

VIVITROL is a prescription injectable medicine used to prevent relapse to opioid dependence, after opioid detoxification and treat alcohol dependence.

Providing Support and Resources to Opiate Users in the Adult Detention Center

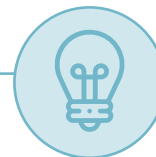
Prince William County CSB

At Prince William CSB, the SOR team recently started a program where a peer support specialist goes into the adult detention center to speak with inmates who are opiate users and about to be released after a brief incarceration. The peer offers support, describes services that are available, and tries to coordinate MAT post release. This new program that Prince William County has added allows SOR Peers to reach more county residents than previously which benefits the community, because more people are aware of the services they can obtain through the county which allows individuals struggling with opioids and stimulants abuse to access services to help aid and maintain their recovery.

Teaching the 5 Bridges Program at a Local Jail

Chesterfield County CSB

We are currently teaching the 5 Bridges program to the men and women in the HARP Program located at the Chesterfield County Jail. We have taught four men's groups and three women's groups, totaling almost 70 participants. We have received extremely positive feedback and evaluation forms. The participants really look forward to attending the classes and are very engaging. We hope to offer the classes year-round, when new clients enter into the HARP Program.



HARP Program⁸:

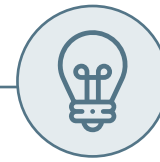
Helping Addicts Recover Progressively (formerly known as the Heroin Addiction Recover Program) (HARP) is a jail-based two-phase program that incorporates therapeutic, medical, and educational approaches. These approaches challenge the individual to discover the tools needed to shape their road to recovery. The HARP model recognizes the multifaceted nature of recovery and is built upon the foundation that addiction is a disease.



Starting Her Life Again with Her New Baby Girl

Henrico Area Mental and Developmental Services

An individual served by the program was incarcerated and pregnant at time of program admission. She had no natural supports; no money, she was homeless and hopeless. Had she been sentenced to her guidelines, [it] would have meant giving birth while incarcerated and losing custody of her child. As a participant in SUDP she was afforded the opportunity to be bonded into a women and children's residential program. She gave birth to a healthy baby girl. She received the tools she needed to maintain her sobriety and parent, and she successfully completed residential treatment. Over the course of the past year, with the support of SUDP programming, she obtained an apartment in a newly constructed apartment complex. She is starting her new life with the resources, recovery capital and natural supports she will need to reach her goals of becoming a CPRS and giving back to others.



Substance Use Diversion Program (SUDP):

Diversion programs are normally performed by law enforcement and other emergency service providers who respond to people with mental and substance use disorders. Diversion programs connect individuals to treatment instead of criminal sanctions and are used frequently to address problems associated with substance use.

Recovery Capital:

Recovery capital is the characteristics and assets that a person develops on the recovery journey from a substance use disorder. The BARC-10 (Brief Assessment of Recovery Capital) is a validated questionnaire that assesses an individual's recovery capital through 10 questions that measure 10 domains of recovery capital. These domains include Substance Use & Sobriety, Social Support, Global Physical Health, Coping & Life Functioning, Housing Status, and more.

Bringing Peer Services to a Regional Jail

Northwestern CSB

NWCS is doing peer trainings (with inmates) at Northwestern Regional Adult Detention Center regional jail and is working with the jail staff at bringing peer services into the regional jail (groups/facilitation with jail staff, re-entry etc.). [We are] still meeting and planning with jail staff but the jail is very open to such services and having peer involvement.



Reducing Access to Substances and Unused Medications

Developing Harm Reduction Kits for the Community

Harrisonburg-Rockingham CSB

In the past few months, our [prevention] program has been collaborating more intentionally with our treatment/recovery teams here at the HRC SB to meet our community's needs surrounding SUDs and specifically opioid use. Our Peers teams consulted with the prevention program as they developed a Harm Reduction Kit for our clients and community members. We have also collaborated with the leader of our Peers program to renew our contract with VDH to receive Narcan. Developing this relationship with our treatment/recovery [team]- where we share ideas, updates, and resources- has allowed us to maximize our resources and reach in the community while still ensuring we "stay in our lanes". Additionally, there has been an internal push to ensure that our treatment and recovery staff are trained in REVIVE! So far, we have trained Peers, MH Case Managers, Outpatient Clinicians, Residential, and Permanent Support Housing staff at HRC SB.



Advocacy

Hosting a Youth Coalition Legislative Roundtable

Blue Ridge Behavioral Healthcare

Roanoke Area Youth Substance Abuse Coalition (RAYSAC) was able to hold its 2021 Legislative Roundtable virtually. Our keynote speakers included "Tall Cop" Jermaine Galloway and his program "High in Plain Sight", and Tim Lucas, a local pharmacist and chapter president for the Virginia Pharmacists Association. We had over 50 attendees from a range of leadership in the Roanoke area, including members from the office of Senator Tim Kaine and Virginia Delegate Sam Rasoul. Our theme for 2021 was Over-the-Counter Medication Misuse and Abuse, including new trends in tobacco shops and convenience stores, and youth access and regulation to these items. We also disseminated several [educational] handouts regarding street terms for over-the-counter drugs and various trends for youth in our area.

End Notes

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