



OLYMPIC HEALTH & RECOVERY SERVICES



Olympic Health & Recovery Services Peer Counselors: A message of Hope and Recovery from Mental Health or Addiction

Imagine someone you love is recovering from a mental health issue and/or addiction, and is being released from a hospital, treatment center, or jail. What happens next? Without the right support system they could relapse into their addiction, have increased symptoms of mental illness, or worse. Olympic Health & Recovery Services (OHR) Peer Support Services assists people in Thurston and Mason County stay in their community by helping with their release and teaching them skills for independence. Beginning in March 2017, peer services have seen over 115 people through 3 different programs:

Peer Bridgers: assist people being released from Western State Hospital. Since the program began in March 2017, Peer Bridgers have already helped 34 program participants return to their community.

Housing and Recovery through Peer Services (HARPS) Peer Counselors: focus on assisting program participants with finding housing upon their release from mental health hospitals or residential substance use treatment centers. HARPS is funded by a grant and is currently serving 70 program participants.

Trueblood Peer Counselors: assist eligible program participants who are being released from Thurston County Corrections Facility access community resources such as housing, employment, and other basic needs. The Trueblood program is funded by a grant that began March of 2018, has assessed more than 60 clients, and Peers have served 11 program participants.

These programs all have one common goal: to ensure a successful and sustainable return into the community.

After an extensive training and certification period, OHR Peer Counselors work one-on-one with a program participant to help them obtain housing, employment, medical care, transportation, and more. Peer Counselors life experience allows them to relate to their program participants on a different level than they may have experienced before in other settings. “We show them through lived experience that hope and recovery is possible for anyone,” said ReDonda Gibbons, OHR Peer Bridger. “It can be scary for them to transition when all someone has known, for years, is life in the hospital.”

Peer Support Services are an important part of mental health and addiction services for the community. Peer Support Services reduce:

- people returning to jail
- cost to taxpayers and the criminal justice system
- homelessness
- impact to emergency rooms and hospitalization services
- increases hope and the chance for recovery

For more information, contact:

Thurston-Mason Behavioral Health Organization/Olympic Health and Recovery Services

(360) 763-5828

www.tmbho.org