



“Recovery and healing happen in relationship.” - PSL for the 21st Century

A Message from Patty Blum

The Importance of Practicing Gratitude in 2024

Let's make 2024 the year of gratitude and appreciation! We have gratitude for all the beauty that surrounds us, for our family, our friends, our work, and the gifts of Peer Support. The practice of gratitude is very common. A stranger may say, "Bless you" following a sneeze and the other person may then respond and say, "Thank you." This exchange demonstrates a heartfelt and brief connection between two strangers. This is the product of the practice of gratitude.

Researcher and author, Brené Brown, links the practice of gratitude with experiencing joy. She states that gratitude amplifies our joy. It is the simplest practice. There is no need to learn a script or position or even take more than a few seconds. The practice can be as simple as waking each day expressing and experiencing gratefulness for a new day and closing your day with a brief thank you for living another day.

Psychology Today points out that practicing gratitude has 7 invaluable impacts on our health, mental health and wellbeing:

1. Gratitude opens the door to more relationships.
2. Gratitude improves physical health.
3. Gratitude improves psychological health.
4. Gratitude enhances empathy and reduces aggression.
5. Grateful people sleep better.
6. Gratitude improves self-esteem.
7. Gratitude increases mental strength.

Each of these impacts also reflects Peer Support. Gratitude lightens your load yet keeps you in a place of abundance. It has no negative side effects yet seems to be infectious.

At Crestwood Recovery Resilience Solutions (CRRS), we practice gratitude as often as possible and with as many people as possible. We are truly grateful for Peer Support and want to send a huge thank you to our Peer Support Specialists who are spreading joy every day in all they do!



Inside

Page 2

Peer Support Specialist Graduate Interview
- *Gloriana Hunter*

Page 3

Hard Wired for Heart-Wiring
- *Chris Martin*

Page 4

CRRS Update



Gloriana Hunter Interview with Mary Stutzman, Peer Support Specialist, Moultrie County Counseling Center, Sullivan, Illinois.



Mary Stutzman, Peer Support Specialist

Gloriana: Would you share your overall experience in the Peer Support Learning (PSL) training?

Mary: I don't really know what I was expecting, except what I had taken from Illinois training. They have slides, you just take notes and listen, a lot of memorization. So, I didn't really know what to expect. But with the PSL course, I didn't have to try to learn and try to remember. There was constant interaction, constant hands-on, constant back-and-forth participation. I learned because we practiced it. I got the concept of what a peer support specialist is supposed to be like and what their role is like. That was imprinted by the time we were done. I learned things that I could apply to myself, and I was growing while I was also learning about my role as a peer support.

Gloriana: When you talk about learning about yourself and your role, how do they mix now, in practice?

Mary: When I talk with people, I say, "You know I'm learning too. We're all learning." I use it as a reference. "We're on the same page. We're peers."

Gloriana: What specific skills have you walked away with that changed how you work with people?

Mary: The main thing that was transforming was empowering people instead of me telling them what I think they need to do, asking them for their ideas and their input, and them coming up with their suggestions. I've done it in my personal relationships, like with my kids. I'll swallow my suggestions and ask, "What do you think? What would you like to try?" and it works!

Gloriana: Regarding rapport and communication with the people you serve, how has the training helped you do that?

Mary: It really reinforced the humanness of everybody, and that everybody wants compassion and love and to be without judgment. Approach everyone like that, and it helps a connection all the time. That was just like the theme throughout the whole workbook. This idea that what people need to heal is love and connection.

Gloriana: How has your approach to rapport building changed? What was it like before class versus now?

Mary: Even though I wasn't judgmental, or I didn't have my guard up here or there, the training showed me that I still did in areas where I didn't know there were blocks. I feel that just helped me grow in that area.

Gloriana: What would you say to someone considering enrolling in the PSL training?

Mary: It's worth it. It's so much more than a class. You learn life skills that you can apply to all of your life, whether you're at work or just doing life.

Best wishes to you Mary as you continue to bring peer support and recovery services to people in the heart of the Midwest!



By Chris Martin

A few years ago while discussing the importance of having heart to heart connections with staff in the Recovery Practices for Leaders course, a supervisor protested, “But I’m not comfortable with all those warm and fuzzy “soft” skills. The same leader later complained how his younger generation staff lacked the skills to engage and motivate the people they serve. He further lamented how the recovery groups and classes his staff facilitated were typically boring and poorly attended. **He saw it as a hardwired generational problem, not a “heart-wired” human one.**

In recovery services, what is often referred to as “soft” skills is fundamental for recovery service leaders and the staff who do the serving. Touching the hearts of staff and connecting to their feelings are what keeps them connected to the “why” of their work. We cannot ask people to check out their hearts when they clock in on their jobs. When it comes to the people we serve, it takes them being heartened and inspired which leads them to hope, positivity, and an ambition to recover. And since recovery happens in relationship, how a person feels holds that relationship together.



It turns out that recovery services is not the only field in which “soft” skills is a required competency. This skill is increasingly being valued in the business world. According to the prestigious Stanford Global School of Business (GSB) the course called “Interpersonal Dynamics, has been voted the most popular elective for 45 years running [on the campus]. For years this course has been transforming the lives of our students, helping them unlock their true leadership potential.”¹

Global business students understand that **heart to heart relating through empathy, sentiment, affirmation, and vulnerability create connection**. And this connection, when powered by inspiration, will lead to aspiration and

outcomes. In recovery services when leaders pay attention and intention to their “heart-wiring,” then their staff will replicate those same “soft” skills and ways of being with the people they serve. Our outcomes will then be recovery and resilience in the people we serve... and perhaps also in us.

1. Stanford Graduate School of Business. Interpersonal Dynamics. Retrieved on December 4, 2013 from <https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/experience/learning/leadership/interpersonal-dynamics>



It’s a small world and the behavioral health world may be even smaller. On December 4th & 5th, Chris Martin was representing Crestwood’s RRS Team at the **Community Behavioral Health Association (CBHA) conference in Chicago Illinois**. Chris was sharing about CRRS training products and our upcoming Recovery Practices for Leaders Bootcamp scheduled for March 6, 7 and 8, 2024 at the Peer Employment Learning Center in San Diego. Amy Rosa from an organization called MOOTIVO came over to the table and shared that she was so thankful for Crestwood’s Internship Program. Amy works closely with Cindy Mataraso for her California intern placements at Crestwood. Great work, Cindy, for making a world of difference!

Viva la Evolution!

A new podcast on Growth, Resilience, and Transformation

- ◆ Promote the recovery process with individuals and teams.
- ◆ Shift your organization’s culture to a recovery focus that builds resilience.
- ◆ Listen to interviews with important leaders in the recovery field and hear from people who are in recovery and how they got there.
- ◆ Discover unique ways peer support specialists can support your team and enhance recovery service outcomes.

Join The Conversation!



It is with much **love, inspiration, and hope** that I **welcome you all and our community of Peer Support Specialists into this New Year!**

At Crestwood Recovery Resilience Solutions (CRRS), we are sliding into 2024 with deliberate momentum and intention. Our first three scheduled online classes are already at capacity with those eager to achieve their State certification to **become Certified Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists (CMPSS)**. We also have two scheduled onsite Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist (MC PSS) certification trainings in Orange County starting at the end of January and running through February, along with Peer Employment Learning Center (PELC) work that we are coordinating and facilitating within Crestwood Behavioral Health, Inc.

In addition to the MC PSS Certification and PELC training events, CRRS will be working closely with the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health Crisis Care Mobilization Unit (CCMU) through the CCMU Training Academy, providing Recovery Response training, as well as training in Recovery Practices for Leaders; Recovery Practices for Organizations; Resilient Culture Playbook; Welcoming (In-Take); Suicide Peer-vention; and Reconciliation.

We are also excited to share with you all that our **Recovery Practices for Leaders Bootcamp will be held March 6-8 in San Diego, CA**. We look forward to hosting this amazing three-day workshop, which includes a dinner and presentation out on the town with two nationally renowned leaders in the Recovery and Peer movement.



It is also important to take a moment in gratitude to celebrate all the successes of our program participants in 2023! We are so grateful for all

the extraordinary individuals we have the privilege of working alongside through our facilitated learning experiences, our mutual and life-long learning opportunities, and the pure human connections that we get from it all. We also celebrate all our Crestwood campuses and their outstanding leadership, team members, and especially our persons served who demonstrate each day that Recovery and Resilience work, that hopes and dreams are alive and happening, and that we can inspire each other to be our better selves every day!

Crestwood Recovery Resilience Solutions wishes you all a bright and promising New Year!

-Jim Ritchie, CRRS Director of Operations

Recovery Practices for Leaders Bootcamp



Re-imagining Recovery Service Leadership for the 21st Century

Tuition: \$1,500 per person, or \$1,200 per person for agencies that register three or more people.

Join us **March 6-8, 2024** for a fun, exciting, and engaging action packed three-day professional recovery leadership development workshop in beautiful San Diego, CA. Crestwood's international Recovery Resilience Solutions Team ensures you will:

Restore, re-energize, and re-ignite the passion for your work as a recovery service leader.

Gain certification as a Resilient Culture Playbook Coach.

Receive confidential/ anonymous 180 feedback from your direct reporting staff on your recovery leadership skills.

17 Continuing Education (CE) units authorized by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and Board of Registered Nursing (BRN)

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RPLBootcampPreRegistration>

- Pre-workshop assignment to customize your learning experience
- Post-workshop technical support at 30, 60 and 90 days

Contact Us to Register

Jim Ritchie | James.Ritchie@cbhi.net
209.313.4511

[RecoveryResilienceSolutions.com](https://www.RecoveryResilienceSolutions.com)

When: March 6, 7, & 8, 2024 | 8:30AM - 5:00PM

Where: The Peer Employment Learning Center at 4085 Colts Way, San Diego, CA 92115