



AMTC

MARCH/APRIL 2022

News

Our clients are expanding their reach and services to impact as many people as possible. They are going the extra mile to help people get back on their feet.

— ANGELA TURNER

AMTC News

Joshua Becker, Writer & Editor

4465 N. Oakland Avenue
Suite 200

Milwaukee, WI 53211
Phone: (414) 316-4530
Fax: (414) 316-4545

AMTCASSOCIATES.COM

EXPANSION Now More Than Ever

At AMTC & Associates, we remain optimistic and grateful, despite what we've all experienced during these past few years. Through it all, our clients continue an outpouring of love and support for their program participants. They are expanding their reach and services to impact as many people as possible: individuals, families, and communities. The ripple effects of COVID, financial instability, rising crime, and more have left many shaken, so AMTC clients are going the extra mile to help people get back on their feet. In this newsletter, we highlight three organizations taking decisive steps to help individuals and families overcome adversity and find stability.

The first article highlights the **Northern Ohio Recovery Association (NORA)**. Traditionally a substance abuse agency focusing on recovery services, NORA is expanding its reach to adults and adolescents through new mental health initiatives in Cleveland, Ohio. The second article focuses on how **Peacemakers Family Center** builds resilience in youth who reside in Miami-Dade County, Florida. Among many strategies, youth are taught to

think before reacting, incorporating mindfulness as a tactic for improving their lives. The third article centers on how **Mission West Virginia (MWV)** reaches more people through youth resource coordination. Through the addition of a Youth Resource Coordinator, youth receive one-on-one support, group presentations, and webinars on self-help, dangers of social media, mental health, suicide prevention, and much more.

In addition to these articles, this newsletter contains some helpful tips for identifying youth risk behaviors and how to respond when individuals express stress and negative talk.

Wishing you good health and resilience,

Angela M. Turner

Angela Turner
Principal





Frontline workers were heroes during the height of the pandemic, charging ahead to alleviate anguish in the wake of COVID-19, along with combating societal challenges. An AMTC client that continues to make a significant impact is the **Northern Ohio Recovery Association (NORA)**, using the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHC) model. The CCBHC has garnered lots of attention lately. In President Joe Biden’s most recent State of the Union Address, he emphasized the



Bianca Griffin, NORA Program Director

need to expand the availability of evidence-based community mental health services.¹ That’s just what NORA is doing.

“Historically,” explained NORA Program Director Bianca Griffin, “NORA has been a substance abuse agency that focuses on recovery services....” Already providing a wide

array of services for substance abuse, NORA recognized the need to reach more people in the face of “an unprecedented mental health crisis... Even before the pandemic, rates of depression and anxiety were inching higher. But the grief, trauma, and physical isolation of the last two years have driven Americans to a breaking point.”¹

Thanks to a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, NORA expanded its services to serve more people through two new mental health services:

- **Assertive Community Treatment (ACT):** Serving severely mentally ill adults diagnosed with bipolar disorder or schizophrenia.
- **Intensive Home-Based Therapy (IHBT):** Serving adolescents with a history of involvement in either the juvenile justice system or children’s family services in conjunction with substance-use disorders.

Both programs utilize separate, evidence-based curricula and

support from qualified clinicians, peer support specialists, care coordinators, and others. NORA also has a recovery facility and a residential facility. In addition to serving registered NORA participants, Griffin emphasized the importance of serving the broader community, through community-wide food banks and informing more people about their services through community outreach programs and radio ads.

Located in the most distressed parts of Cleveland, “We meet the client where they are...,” said Griffin, “not just to have recovery services— but to help them meet their everyday needs.”

¹ “FACT SHEET: President Biden to Announce Strategy to Address Our National Mental Health Crisis, As Part of Unity Agenda in his First State of the Union,” The White House, March 1, 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/03/01/fact-sheet-president-biden-to-announce-strategy-to-address-our-national-mental-health-crisis-as-part-of-unity-agenda-in-his-first-state-of-the-union/>.

Peacemakers Redefines The Three Rs

Reflection. Reaction. Resilience. When one thinks of “The Three Rs,” these might not come to mind, but for Karen Johnson, a licensed mental health counselor and Director of Mental Health Services for **Peacemakers Family Center**, these attributes are essential. Johnson and a dedicated team holistically support youth in kindergarten through twelfth grade, along with their families, in Miami-Dade County, Florida.

The goal of Peacemakers is to move individuals from instability to self-sufficiency by offering an array of programs and services. Among its many offerings, Peacemakers delivers *Mind Matters*, an evidence-based curriculum focused on overcoming trauma. “It helps youth and adolescents to overcome adversity and build resilience,” said Johnson.

Building resilience starts with reflection. We cannot always control what happens to us, but we can control our reactions. “There’s a big component of mindfulness inside *Mind Matters*... we can be very reactive to situations in our lives, and if our mind slows down... we may make different decisions.” *Mind Matters* teaches youth to manage feelings and monitor behaviors rather than react impulsively. The results: “We’ve seen youth with improved sleep habits, decreased anxiety, and overall feelings of wellness in their lives, and hopefulness,” said Johnson.

Success starts by being ahead of the curve. Peacemakers was invested in mindfulness before it became a trend. The program partners with service providers throughout South Florida and links them to *Mind Matters*—leveraging the curriculum for all.

Success means genuinely listening to others’ needs. For example, when asked how to reach someone reluctant to participate in a program, Johnson responded, “It’s hard to be indifferent to someone helping you. If you’re a perceived priority, you are more receptive to receiving the services Peacemakers offers.”

“It’s hard to be indifferent to someone helping you. If you’re a perceived priority, you are more receptive to receiving the services Peacemakers offers.”

– KAREN JOHNSON



Karen Johnson,
Director of Mental
Health Services,
Peacemakers Family
Center

Handling the NEGATIVE TALK of Others

Follow these tips for handling the negative talk / stress of others:

- **Let it go.**
It's important to be supportive of friends and family, but sometimes you just can't help them. Don't worry about what you can't change.
- **Don't make it personal.**
It's easy to get wrapped up in helping others, but don't take on someone else's stress as your own.
- **Share.**
Let the person know some positive ways they could solve their problem or cope with the stress. Also share with them when their negative self-talk or stress becomes too overwhelming for you.
- **Take a break.**
It's okay to give yourself some space from others who are negative or stressed.

Source: Karen Johnson,
Peacemakers Family Center



Mission West Virginia DELIVERS

No one is turned down; **Mission West Virginia (MWV)** delivers wherever there's a need. "We go into any middle or high school that wants us," said Autumn Wagoner, a licensed social worker and MWV Youth Resource Coordinator. She supports students struggling with mental health, self-esteem, bullying, trauma, managing emotions, and more—in-person across eight counties. That's not all. Wagoner delivers presentations and webinars as another way for MWV to expand its reach.

Wagoner supports MWV educators who deliver evidence-based curricula in schools. Lessons center on many facets of healthy interpersonal relationships. Through discussions and hands-on activities, students learn that decisions have consequences. Although the topic of sex is addressed, a misconception is that students are taught it's safe to have sex as long as they use protection. Abstinence is the only surefire way of prevention, but how does a person and that person's

partner stay safe if they go ahead with that big decision?

Healthy relationship education is just one service MWV provides. Other services include foster care, adoption, and supporting relatives who have taken on the role of primary caregiver for children in their families.

The rise of trauma is certainly felt across West Virginia. "We're seeing a huge uptick in students engaging in self-harm as a way of coping," said Wagoner, which is why she recently delivered a webinar about it. Her highly-attended presentations and webinars include mental health, coping skills, suicide prevention, the dangers of social media, and more. They have been so well received that federal grant awarding agencies asked her to present at federal conferences.

While these venues allow MWV to educate on a large scale, "My biggest role is working with students one-on-one, acting as that trusted adult, being there, and listening to everything they're going through."



Autumn Wagoner,
MWV Youth Resource
Coordinator

"My biggest role is working with students one-on-one, acting as that trusted adult, being there, and listening to everything they're going through."

What You Need to Know about SELF-HARM

WHAT Is Self-Harm?

- Hurting oneself on purpose
 - ▶ Not a suicide attempt
- Also called self-injury or non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI)
- The most frequent sites of self-injury: hands, wrists, stomach and thighs; may be done anywhere on the body
- NOT mental illness, but more common in those dealing with depression, anxiety, trauma, or eating disorders
- An unhealthy way to cope with emotional pain, intense anger and frustration

WHY Do People Self-Harm?

- Everyone needs a way to cope with their emotions
- People who self-harm have turned to hurting themselves as their coping mechanism
- They might self-harm to:
 - ▶ Process negative feelings
 - ▶ Distract from negative feelings
 - ▶ Feel something physical, particularly if feeling numb
 - ▶ Gain a sense of control over their lives
 - ▶ Punish themselves for things they think they've done wrong
 - ▶ Express emotions they are embarrassed to show

Source: Autumn Wagoner, Mission West Virginia