



Peer Perspective March 2022

Hello, my name is Val. I'm so excited to be a part of CMMHC team as a Certified Peer Specialist! I live in gratitude every day to be of service here and in the community.

I started substance abuse at a very young age. By the time I was 15, I was drinking or getting high almost every day before school. The beginning of my sophomore year, I had the opportunity to go to treatment. It wasn't forced; no one said I had to go. I was the oldest of four so I thought it would be a nice break from my life! Lol.

It was the first time I had been told my life could be different. I was a kid who was put in grown up situations for as long as I could remember. Drugs and alcohol were embedded into my family for generations, and I wasn't easily convinced that I could be the one to "break" the cycle.

It would be years before I could truly appreciate the counselors, teachers, sponsors, and especially my foster mom who believed in me long enough for me to believe in myself. There is no doubt that I would be a different person without their unconditional love and support.

I experienced years of healthy sobriety. And my story isn't any different from others when it comes to relapsing and "going back out there." In 2018, I got a DUI (Thank God I didn't hurt anyone driving). I had lost everything I had worked for. More importantly, my family and those close to me were in constant fear for my safety and wellbeing. I went to Recovery Plus for treatment but struggled with several relapses the first year. Getting and staying sober the second time was incredibly difficult. I understand that painful/fearful reoccurring struggle.

There are different roads to recovery from alcohol and addictions. Some go to 12 step meetings; others find SMART Recovery or more spiritual based programs. All are equally important and I'm a strong advocate for WHATEVER WORKS. For me what works is attending and being active in AA on a regular basis. This is my truth: there is always HOPE. Sometimes it only takes one person to reach out their hand to offer it.

I came across this early on in my recovery:

You Choose It

You choose it every damn day. You wake up, ask yourself the same question: is it worth it? The answer is your breakfast. The answer is your functioning heart. The answer becomes your life.

It never gets easy but instead, simpler. And your answer gets louder. So, you choose it every day until it's no longer a choice. Until there is no longer a question.

Val Y.

We are the evidence; We hold the hope.