

PEER PERSPECTIVE



The Start of a Million Other Journeys

Have you ever started from scratch? All our experiences or journeys start from the beginning, or as some say, working your way from the bottom up. My journey through my restaurant and service career, my recovery journey, and even my journey to become a mental health provider had to start somewhere near the bottom, and I worked my way up.

My journey as a mental health provider started by working as support staff for the first couple of months at CMMHC, which is not the bottom but a beginning, and it is where I got my foot in the door to the start of my new career. Three months later, they offered me a position as a Certified Peer Support Specialist. It wasn't until I had completed extensive training, years of clinical hours, and countless learning experiences that I earned the status of Mental Health Practitioner. During my time at CMMHC, I have worked in six different programs within the agency and continue to work my way "up."

I am telling you all this because this year I am starting from scratch again. I have found that new path and a new beginning of a continuing journey. I have made it this far on a G.E.D. and life experience, and I have come as far as I can without a college education. At forty-four, I am venturing out to start my first semester of college. I know it's going to be a long journey, but once again I am starting from scratch and working my way toward the degree I want to attain. What I've learned from past journeys is that it's worth it.

We all must start somewhere, and it will happen numerous times in our lives. You may be nervous, excited, scared, or eager, among other feelings, but if you look back at other beginnings, and other journeys, and see how far you've come. It will help you to see how far you can go, even when life doesn't go exactly as planned. Finding that new starting point of your new journey is never out of reach.

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We are the evidence; we hold the hope.