



**COMMUNITY
SUPPORT
SERVICES**

LIFE CHAT

A publication spotlighting CSS clients

November 2023

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RAC members share their experiences, words of wisdom

If you're a client at CSS, perhaps you've heard the term RAC before. What is RAC?

RAC is short for Recovery Advisory Council, a group of clients and family members who work to continuously improve the services provided by Community Support Services, leading to better client satisfaction. The group meets six times per year.

Formed in 2014, the RAC encourages members to provide valuable feedback, recommendations and ideas on a broad range of topics and events.

Current RAC facilitators Michelle Mace and Tina Lanzy asked RAC members to share a bit about themselves and their experiences with the group.

James joined the group because he believed it was, "very necessary to be involved in the actual advisory process of an organization that is primarily responsible for my physical and emotional health."

In addition to enjoying his RAC participation, James has had good experiences in CSS' music therapy group and has been pleased with how his care plan has been discussed with him. His favorite saying is

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We want to hear from you!

For details about the Recovery Advisory Council (RAC) or to contribute your artwork or recovery story to *Life Chat*, call 330-253-9388 and dial 407 for Michelle Mace or 133 for Tina Lanzy.



RAC members took a moment for a photograph at the most-recent meeting, joined by co-facilitator Tina Lanzy (center, back row).

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one he said is attributed to the late singer David Bowie: “Temper your actions/speech within an ‘attitude of gratitude’ and ‘accommodate your past.’”

When it comes to self-care, James explains that “being there for yourself” is important and it has the benefit of helping others, too.

“It’s considered selfish but a requirement for a successful life/proper foundation to be able to help anyone else, if you know yourself,” he said.



For **Angie**, being a part of RAC was a good way to advocate for herself and her peers. She considers others when it comes to her favorite saying, too: “When we replace ‘I’ with ‘we,’ ‘illness’ becomes ‘wellness.’”

Taking time out for self-care means embracing her senses, Angie said.

“When I am very stressed and need a mental time out, I enjoy a nice bath that embraces mindfulness of the five senses,” she shared. “I feel the warm water, use aromatherapy, listen to soft music and usually have a cold drink or chocolate candy. For visual stimulation and relaxation, I turn out the lights and use candles.”

For **Daniel**, self-care means exercising, reading, researching and socializing. He describes himself as creative and outspoken and believes his business

degrees help him provide useful knowledge at RAC meetings. His experiences at CSS have changed his life for the better, he said.

“The first time I came to CSS, I feared all the new changes in my life. I was angry at that point in my life,” he said. “A nurse who was assigned to me showed me kindness, and she changed my disposition from that point on.”

Derwin, one of the newest RAC members, finds that taking a walk is a good self-care tactic that helps him clear his mind. He’s found help through his case manager at CSS and shares that “It is a great thing to do something others say can’t be done.”

Jerri has found RAC to be a great way to encourage others and to “give back and help show a path to recovery as I was once shown.”

As a client in CSS’ Supported Employment program, Jerri came to realize “I have a skill set that I never thought to explore.” That led to her becoming a recovery specialist with CSS. She shares a tip that emphasizes the importance of celebrating accomplishments, no matter how small.

“Having a daily hygiene routine that runs on autopilot— This is helpful when depression makes getting out of bed a struggle,” she said. “When my routine became just like breathing, I could feel accomplishment, even if all I did was get out of bed, shower and get dressed.”

When it comes to sharing words of wisdom, she has a saying that could apply to anyone in treatment: “I am so much more than my diagnoses. They do not define me!”

“I must take care of the operator of my life (me), because I am the most important person in my life.”
- Daniel

Be a part of the Recovery Advisory Council (RAC)

Were you inspired after reading about our RAC members? We’d love to have you join the group!

RAC members can be clients or family members of clients who are willing to share their feedback, help identify areas where CSS can improve, help guide changes and interact with other clients and family members.

The group meets from 10:30 a.m. to noon six times per year at 150 Cross St. The next scheduled meeting date is Dec. 14.

If you’re interested in joining, call 330-996-9141 and ask for Michelle Mace (extension 407) or Tina Lanzy (extension 133), the co-leaders of the group.

We hope to see you in December!





HOLIDAY HELP

Need assistance with food or toys this holiday season? Check out this list for free local meals and holiday giveaways.

THANKSGIVING:

- **Thanksgiving meal** - 6 p.m. Nov. 14, First Faith Development, 790 Easter Ave., Akron. Enter Door 3.
- **Thanksgiving meal** - 6:30 p.m. Nov. 23, Haven of Rest Ministries, 175 East Market St., Akron.
- **Thanksgiving to-go meals** - Drive-through service, 6 to 7:30 p.m. Nov. 22, Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, 129 S. Union St., Akron. Each packaged dinner includes four servings of turkey, potatoes, stuffing and a vegetable, fully cooked and offered in a foil pan for reheating.
- **Community Thanksgiving dinner** - 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Nov. 23, Bill Denton Outreach Center, 490 E. South St., Akron.
- **Thanksgiving meal, scarf/hat/glove giveaway** - 2 to 4 p.m. Nov. 18, New Beginnings Outreach Ministries Church, 929 Wooster Road, Barberton. Meals available to go. Phone: 234-678-8476.



CHRISTMAS:

- **Toys for Tots** - Gifts for children age 14 and younger. Apply from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday-Thursday at First Faith Development Corp., 790 Easter Ave., Akron. **Required:** Photo ID and Social Security number for the adult; birth certificate and Social Security number for each child being signed up. If applicant has children that are not theirs, applicant must bring proof the child is in the applicant's care. Does not assist households that have signed up with other local toy donations. Info: Call 330-252-0671 or visit www.toysfortots.org.
- **"Happy Birthday, Jesus" Party** - 2 to 4 p.m. Dec. 2 at Haven of Rest Ministries, 175 E. Market St., Akron. Party with puppets, costumed characters, gifts and refreshments. Gifts for registered Akron children up to age 12, accompanied by a parent or guardian. Siblings age 13+ may attend but will not receive a gift. **Register by Nov. 17;** call 330-535-1563 and ask for David John.
- **Christmas lunch, dinner** - Holiday dinner and a gift bag with personal care items (while supplies last), Haven of Rest Ministries, 175 E. Market St., Akron. **Registration required.** Lunch registration starts at 10:15 a.m.; lunch starts at noon. Dinner registration starts at 5:30 p.m.; dinner starting at 6:30 p.m. Phone: 330-535-1563.
- **Christmas food baskets** - Drive through, Dec. 9, starting at 9 a.m. (while supplies last), 340 South St., Akron. Limit of three households per vehicle. Photo ID required. Hosted by Akron Bible Church. Phone: 330-376-5673.
- **Toy assistance** - Sign up at 11 a.m. Nov. 25 at Akron Bible Church, 783 Brown St., Akron. Required: photo ID and proof of child custody.

MENTAL HEALTH TIPS TO SURVIVE THE HOLIDAYS



Try to stick to a normal sleep pattern.

Be mindful of your alcohol use.



Reach out if you're lonely or overwhelmed.

Keep a budget & stick to it.



Make healthy food choices.

Have compassion for yourself & others, be kind!



Exercise & keep active, get some fresh air





COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES

150 CROSS ST., AKRON, OH 44311

We want your feedback!

CSS depends on client feedback to find out what we're doing right and learn what we can improve on.

If you are a CSS client, please take a moment to fill out our satisfaction survey. Just scan the QR code below with your phone, and you'll be taken to a website where you can fill out the survey.

Thank you!



Mission Statement

Community Support Services: Helping you achieve a healthy mind and body while supporting you to live and work in your community.

Recovery Definition

Recovery is the continuous process of empowering an individual so he or she may live a satisfying and contributing life. It is a shared responsibility among the individual, the treatment staff, family, friends, and the community to:

- Discover or rediscover strengths and abilities
- Pursue personal goals
- Develop a sense of self-identity that allows the person to grow beyond his or her diagnosis

The Recovery Advisory Council is a collaborative effort with clients & family members to continuously improve the satisfaction of services for all Community Support Services clients.

