



*"Collaborating to Build and Empower Communities of Recovery."*

## McLean County Recovery-Oriented Systems of Care (ROSC) Council Meeting Minutes

*March 21, 2023*

**Date:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023

**Time:** 3:30 – 4:30 pm

**Location:** Zoom only

### **Attendees:**

**Kari Knapp** (Chestnut Health Systems), **Cat Hays** (Chestnut Health Systems), **Barb Brumleve** (Chestnut Health Systems), **Michelle Cope** (Bloomington Public Library), **Selena Nolan** (McLean County Health Dept), **Natasha Nunoo-Ponder** (Center for Human Services), **Fran Ingram** (Sangamon County ROSC), **Erika Hahn** (Omni Youth), **Marita Landreth** (McLean County FUSE Program), **MaResa** (McLean CASA), **Jenna Kearns** (Illinois Bar Foundation/Candidate for Bloomington City Council), **Kourtney Renfro** (Family Guidance Center/Sangamon County ROSC), **Stephanie Demboski** (Epiphany Catholic Church), **Sally Gambacorta** (Carle), **Anonymous** (Chestnut Health Systems)

**Guest Speaker:** **Hannah Mesouani** (YWCA McLean County)

### **Agenda:**

- Introduction
- Guest Speaker – Hannah Mesouani (YWCA McLean) - Inclusive Language Presentation
- Presentation Q&A
- Upcoming Events/Initiatives (as time allows permits)

**Recording:** If you were unable to attend today's meeting (3/21/23), please check it out on YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/W-mlrq831u8>

### **Primary Discussion:**

- Today's meeting started at 3:32 with brief introductions before Kari introduced today's guest speaker: Hannah Mesouani (YWCA McLean County) to discuss inclusive and stigma-reducing language.
- Hannah talked about words as "building blocks" and to look at them as opportunities to build bridges and create connections.
- Words matter. That is why this is important. Rights for transgender and queer folks are being repealed and restricted in recent years; there is a perception that minority groups have more rights than ever before but that is not necessarily the case, particularly relative to LGBTQIA+ community. We are lucky in Illinois but around the country we are seeing many rights revoked.



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## The Blame Game

Morality, blame, and shame are regularly attributed to the LGBTQIA individuals.

76% of Americans think substance use is a moral problem.

LGBTQ folks and those who struggle with drug dependency are placed at higher risk because of how they are mistreated and stigmatized in society.

- 1 in 5 (20%) of transgenders live in poverty; gay and transgender youths are at least twice as likely to struggle with substance use disorders than heterosexual teens. These rates are similar for adults as well. Hannah shared examples of how substances are part of "the culture" (see approx. 18:00 of recording). Other examples of challenges in the LGBTQIA+ community is much of the socialization revolves around alcohol and/or other substances. For example, there is a gay bar in town (Bistro) but not a lot of recovery and no recovery centers for LGBTQIA+.

**Gay/Lesbian**  
(not homosexual)      A person who is attracted to people of the same gender.

**Don't say:**  
homosexual  
"that's so gay!"  
"you don't look gay!"



- **Refrain from saying:** "OMG, I had no idea you were gay"; while once known as a slur, "Queer" is a good umbrella term per Hannah because it is a good "catch-all" and easier than listing the acronym every time. It is also academically accepted term, however, it's always a good idea to just ask the person you're talking with what terms they prefer. Other common past terms like "Heterosexual", "homosexual", "trans-sexual" etc. are less accepted presently because of the connotations with "sexual" and antiquated meanings.
- **Definitions: \*Note:** Below definitions came from either Hannah's presentation or the web site: [LGBTQIA+ Glossary of Terms for Health Care Teams](#).
  - **Agender:** Describes a person who identifies as having no gender, or who does not experience gender as a primary identity component
  - **Bigender:** A person whose gender identity combines two genders.



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- **Asexual:** A person who experiences little or no sexual attraction to others.
- **Aromantic:** Someone with little or no romantic attraction to other people.
- **Bisexual:** Sexual orientation that describes a person who is emotionally and physically attracted to women/females and men/males.
- **Pansexual:** Sexual orientation that describes a person who is emotionally and physically attracted to all gender identities, or whose attractions are not related to others' gender.
- **Transgender:** A person whose gender identity and sex assigned at birth do not correspond based on traditional expectations (e.g. a person assigned female sex at birth who identifies as a man; or, a person assigned male sex at birth who identifies as a woman). Transgender also can include people with gender identities outside the girl/woman and boy/man gender binary structure (i.e. gender fluid or non-binary).
- **Other general guidance (Do's and Don'ts)**
  - **Don't** presume that bi-sexual people are "hyper-sexual" (that's a television thing).
  - Don't ask if people are going to have/have had surgery.
  - Don't ask about their body.
  - Don't ask if they used to be a man/woman.
  - Don't say "I didn't know you were gay" because this implies "I didn't know you weren't normal"
  - Don't ask "are you clean or dirty?" (relative to substance use). People are not dirty because they ingest substances; they sick and need treatment, not "dirty and immoral".
  - " what percentage gay or straight someone is
  - " " Is this a phase? (again, implies a variance from "normal")
  - **Do** be open and honest about what you do or don't know about preferred language.
  - Do be open and honest about talking about it (avoiding only keeps us in shame)
  - Do use person-first language (a person is not "a criminal"; they are an individual going through legal struggles; somebody is not "an autistic"; they are an individual living with autism, and so on. Do not define people by their struggles.
  - Do try to change hearts and minds to create safe spaces for as many people as possible.
- **Do not** be afraid to correct others but preferably in a gentle, compassionate manner. Take the person to the side after a meeting, send them a gentle follow up, seek to educate sincerely rather than just look to put people on blast for intrinsic ignorance or lack of awareness.
- **Questions and Answers (39:00 of Recording):**
  - Can you speak to the usage of "Ella"? Hannah shared excitement about recreating and finding new ways to use this language. Ella is a Spanish-speaking pronoun. This writer had trouble following this topic. Please see recording approximately 39:30 for Hannah's much better explanation.
  - What pronouns come to mind when you think of pronouns? They/them was mentioned, but so were newer, emerging terminology like Fae/Faer, Zi/Zir, El/EIR (i.e. different words to signal non-gender pronouns. Some will stay and some will go from public consciousness based on usability and pragmatic factors, but the main thing is to allow people to have their names and to break away from gender-binary language (he or she).



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## Outdated and Insensitive Terms to Replace

Most people consider the following terms outdated and insensitive. We recommend replacing these words with the suggested terms provided.

Outdated term	Recommended term
Berdache	Two-spirit
Biological female/male	Assigned female/male at birth
Cross-sex hormone therapy; hormone replacement therapy	Gender-affirming hormone therapy
Disorders/differences of sex development	Intersex
Female-to-male (FTM) and Male-to-female (MTF)	Transgender man and transgender woman
Gender nonconforming	Gender non-binary
Hermaphrodite/Ambiguous genitalia	Intersex
Homosexual	Gay or lesbian
Legal name	Administrative name or Name on legal documents
Preferred name	Chosen name or Name used
Preferred pronouns	Pronouns
Sex change/Sex reassignment surgery/Gender reconstruction surgery	Gender-affirming surgery
Sexual preference/lifestyle	Sexual orientation
Transgendered	Transgender



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### **Other Updates/Reminders:**

- **Bowling Night on April 21<sup>st</sup>**



- **Tai Chi Classes by accredited instructor.** The McLean County ROSC is excited to be offering THREE Free Tai Chi Classes (say that fast 3 times) in late March and April, led by an accredited instructor. The classes are geared towards people in all forms of recovery but also open to family, friends and allies. Please note the locations for each specific date as they do vary.

Limited to 25 participants per class; Under 18 welcome with adult supervision/guardian. There are three separate classes running every Monday from April 24<sup>th</sup> to May 8<sup>th</sup> at 6pm. See ROSC Facebook for more details or click link below for details and to sign up here:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/mclean-county-rosc-free-tai-chi-classes-tickets-577841037097>

- **Professional Clothing Drive throughout month of April** (for people who could use upgraded wardrobes for job interviews, employment dress codes, court dates, weddings/funerals, etc.).



- Erika Hahn reminded the council that on **April 22<sup>nd</sup> is Drug Takeback Day** (by Omni Youth) so contact Erika Hahn ([ehahn@omni4all.org](mailto:ehahn@omni4all.org)) if you would like resources (disposal bags, fact sheets, etc.)





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- Stephanie Demboski provided an update about a faith-based developmental class being offered soon--**ALPHA** (alternatives to spiritual wellness) – an 11-week faith-based program that introduces attendees to spiritual pathways and (from Holy Trinity church in London who has worked with many prison inmates throughout the globe, with overall positive results). **The class is FREE and free childcare is also offered to those who attend the classes.** Please contact Stephanie ([stephanie.demboski@epiphanyparish.com](mailto:stephanie.demboski@epiphanyparish.com)) if you're interested in registering. It starts April 12<sup>th</sup> and runs through mid-June (at Normal location of Little Jewels; more info to come via email).
- Marita Landreth shared that JOLT Harm Reduction in Peoria (Harm Reduction non-profit) has recently hired a Bloomington Liaison for outreach to McLean County.

#### **Next Meeting/Contact Info:**

- Flyers created on ROSC social media for Bowling Nights, Tai Chi classes, and Professional Clothing Drive. Kari clarified the Tai Chi classes are very low impact, geared for beginners, and taught by a PLE (Person w/ Lived Experience) certified in teaching Tai Chi.
- Please contact Cat or Kari (or via gmail account) if you are interested in joining the Events Planning Committee, helping to form any additional sub-committees, updates/events you would like shared on our social media as cross-promotion, or anything else relevant to recovery-oriented services.
- Reminder from last month: Please contact Randi if you are in need of additional Narcan medication.
- Meeting adjourned at 4:25pm.
- **Next Meeting: Guest Speakers – Mathias Pope, Thrive Housing, and McLean County Re-Entry Council**
  - a. Tuesday, April 18, 2023, at 3:30 pm (Virtual for now, but we would like to start moving more to in person if there is support for it). Mathias Pope will be speaking to the council about basic financial planning and literacy. The McLean Re-Entry Council will also present about their services and resources. Thrive Housing will present of the need for fair housing in McLean County.
- Contact Info:
  - a. Kari
    - Kari Knapp, Email: [kmknapp@chestnut.org](mailto:kmknapp@chestnut.org)
    - Cell: 309.391.1802
  - b. Cat Hays
    - Email: [cmhays@chestnut.org](mailto:cmhays@chestnut.org)
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**McLean ROSC Team Contact Info**

- ▶ Cat Hays, Recovery Specialist – [cmhays@chestnut.org](mailto:cmhays@chestnut.org)
- ▶ Kari Knapp, Community Outreach Coordinator – [kmknapp@chestnut.org](mailto:kmknapp@chestnut.org)
- ▶ Barb Brumleve, Community Health Specialist – [babrumsleve@chestnut.org](mailto:babrumsleve@chestnut.org)
- ▶ McLean County ROSC Team – [McLeanCoROSC@gmail.com](mailto:McLeanCoROSC@gmail.com)

**Background/ROSC Summary:** *\*From February 2023 Council Meeting*

- ROSC definition for any new council attendees. See below.

**ROSC Refresher – Definition**

- ▶ “A group of volunteers who work together to build and coordinate a network of community-based services and supports for those at risk for those struggling with, or at risk of, substance use, mental health, and/or co-occurring disorders (SUD/MH/COD).”

- **Mission:** *“Collaborating to Build and Empower Communities of Recovery”*
  - Includes an emphasis on holistic recovery services and solutions and supporting multiple pathways of recovery.
- **Core Values:** Person-centered and strength-based approach; a journey that draws upon capital and resiliency of local recovery communities; multiple pathways so no “one size fits all” approach for everyone. Each pathway is as unique as the person walking that same journey. Progress over perfection (“recovery is a lifelong journey, not a singular destination”). Maintain and reflect an authentic voice of the recovery community (mental health, re-entry, substance use disorders, etc.).



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## ROSC Refresher – Core Values

Person-Centered Approach

Strength-Based Approach

Multiple Pathways to Recovery

Recovery Happens in the Community

Progress Over Perfection

Authentic to the Voice of the Recovery Community

- **Primary Goals:** Identify and fill unmet needs in the community; a robust and diverse council (with active community members); Education and awareness to the public at large (to reduce stigma inherent to substance use disorders; it is a disease and not a simple question of morality); Support and organize pro-social and sober recreation opportunities; Evolve into a Recovery Community Organization (RCO), which is basically a 501-c3 nonprofit organization that would "own" and sustain and grow the ROSC.
- **Recovery Happens in the Community:** This is the reason we're here. We are hoping that if the public agrees there is a substance use epidemic harming our community, then hopefully we also want to be part of the solution while improving the overall health and productivity of our community. Recovery is not just possible but it is 100% achievable.
- **More Information:** Cat reviewed a couple [QR Codes](#) that will take users to a site with more information about the McLean County ROSC.

## ROSC Refresher – ROSC as a Resource

