



Livingston County ROSC Meeting Minutes

Thursday March 6th, 2025, 12-1 pm

Via Zoom

Attendees:

- John Schneider, Livingston ROSC
- Autumn Olowo, Livingston ROSC
- Kari Knapp, Livingston ROSC
- Kami Garrison, Statewide ROSC
- Bahiyyah Khalilallah, Statewide ROSC
- Teresa Diemer, IHR
- Joe Vaughn, IHR
- Becky Ballard, IHR
- Rhonda Looney, IHR
- Caitlyn Chagoya, IHR
- Clair Spires, OSF
- Sandra Beecher, Gateway Foundation
- Melissa Johnson, LifeCill
- Melissa Simmons, DRS
- Tim Jenkins, Futures Unlimited
- Abby Behrens, BrightPoint
- Taylor Hartman, LCMHB/LCCCY
- Alisa Ndorongo-Fall, DRS
- Lauren Michalski, Safe Journeys
- Tracy Wolf, Boys & Girls Club
- Chrystal Little, LivCo Heath Department
- Johanna Gonzalez, IDHS

*Note: You can review other meeting recordings at:

<https://www.youtube.com/@livingstoncountyrosc9004>

Summary:

The Livingston County ROSC Council convened to discuss community health and recovery initiatives, with a diverse group of participants from local health and support services. Autumn Olowo facilitated the meeting, beginning with introductions that highlighted the various organizations represented, including the Livingston County Mental Health Board and Safe Journeys. The primary focus was on fostering collaboration among community members involved in mental health and substance use recovery.

Autumn presented findings from a community survey conducted to assess perceptions of mental illness and substance use, which revealed significant insights. While a majority of respondents expressed respect for individuals with mental illness, there was a notable stigma towards those who use drugs. The survey also identified barriers to accessing treatment, particularly transportation challenges, and highlighted the long wait times for mental health services in the area, prompting discussions about the need for improved local resources.

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Feedback from attendees emphasized the importance of raising awareness about available community resources. Suggestions included enhancing outreach through community events and utilizing unconventional methods, such as tagging support initiatives onto sewer bills to reach a broader audience. Discussions also covered the need for capacity building within the community, emphasizing collaboration among stakeholders and the significance of existing resources like 211. Additionally, announcements were made regarding new initiatives, including a pilot program for non-emergency medical transportation and an upcoming educational event for middle school students.

Community Survey Findings Overview

- Autumn Olowo shared the results of the Livingston County ROSC community survey, which aimed to gather information on mental health and substance use recovery supports in Livingston County.
- The survey, conducted from December-February 1st, garnered 145 responses, with 86% of participants residing in Livingston County.
- Key demographic insights included age distribution, income levels, and racial/ethnic representation.

Survey Findings on Community Perceptions of Mental Health and Substance Use

- Insights from the community survey revealed a significant gap in perceptions of respect for individuals with mental illness versus those who use drugs. The survey indicated that 77.2% of respondents identified transportation as a barrier to accessing mental health and substance use treatment services.
- Additionally, there was a noted lack of awareness about available recovery resources, suggesting a need for increased community education and promotion of these services.
- Transportation was a barrier to accessing services

Discussion on Mental Health and Substance Use Services in Livingston County

- John Schneider addressed the challenges of accessing mental health services in Livingston County, emphasizing that long wait times often force individuals to seek treatment elsewhere.
- He pointed out that this is a widespread issue across the country, not just in Illinois.
- John also mentioned the importance of providing efficient and adequate services rather than merely speeding up the process.

Community Awareness and Resource Accessibility Discussion

- John facilitated a discussion on survey findings, inviting participants to share their thoughts.

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- Clare Spires expressed concern over community members' lack of awareness regarding available resources
- Teresa Diemer noted the challenge of informing the public about new opportunities.
- Tim Jenkins suggested leveraging community events for greater outreach.

Community Resource Awareness and Outreach Strategies

- Caitlin Chagoya highlighted the challenge of connecting with introverted individuals who may not participate in community events.
- Chrystal Little proposed that the messaging should focus on the availability of resources, encouraging community members to reach out for help.
- Clare Spires mentioned the importance of promoting the 211 number as a central resource for directing individuals to the appropriate services.

Discussion on Community Support Initiatives

- Clare Spires suggested incorporating community support initiatives into the sewer bill in Pontiac to maximize outreach without incurring extra costs.
- Rhonda Looney emphasized the importance of forming a committee to address substance use and mental health needs identified in community surveys.
- Melissa from LIFE CIL proposed promoting the 211 service through local businesses, especially in downtown Pontiac, to enhance visibility and accessibility.

Capacity Building for Recovery

- John Schneider outlined strategies for capacity building in recovery, focusing on raising awareness and developing support networks.
- Importance of training workshops and cross-training among agencies to enhance collaboration.
- A need to engage stakeholders, including individuals with lived experience and community organizations, to better serve various demographics.

Agency Updates

- Abby Behrens shared that the Butterfly Project is now Bright Point Mental Health and Wellness and that she will be leaving her position to become a central region prevention specialist for Prevent Child Abuse Illinois.
- Taylor from the Mental Health Board announced the release of their annual report, which will be distributed to interested agencies.
- Teresa noted that there has been no wait list for substance use assessments at IHR for over a year.



Agency Updates and Upcoming Trainings

- Tim from Futures Unlimited highlighted the availability of support services and a new pilot program for non-emergency medical transportation in Livingston County, which is currently in its early stages.
- Caitlin Chagoya discussed the Operation Snowflake event scheduled for April 19, aimed at teaching middle school students about emergency response procedures. She emphasized the collaboration with local law enforcement to reduce fear around calling 911.

* How can we better connect community members with the resources they need?

Upcoming Trainings

- **Supporting Peers Working in a Recovery Support Role**
 - PRESENTED BY: Bob Carty
 - Thursday March 20th, 2025, 12:00-1:30 pm
- **Disability Allyship: Making Our Communities Inclusive Spaces**
 - PRESENTED BY: Starkloff Disability Institute
 - Tuesday April 29th, 2025, 12-1:30 pm
 - Register at [Coalitionssupport.org/trainings](https://coalitionssupport.org/trainings)
- **Youth or Adult Mental Health First Aid**
 - Learn more: <https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/>
 - \$30 per person, usually done in a 1-day, 8-hr session

April in-person Meeting

- Thursday April 3rd from 10-11:30 am
- Dominy Memorial Library- 201 South Third Street Fairbury, Illinois
- Meeting room in the basement

Virtual Resource Guide/Social Media

- Virtual Resource Guide: <https://www.jotform.com/app/231105805739152>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/LivingstonCountyRecovers>

ROSC Contact Information

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