



Southland Recovery Coalition ROSC Council Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: 5/28/2025 9:30 AM to 10:30 AM

LOCATION: Zoom

PRESENTER(S): Yvonne M. Orr-Blake, Meeting Facilitator

TOPIC: Community Impact: What does it really look like?

ATTENDEES		AFFILIATION	ATTENDEES		AFFILIATION
1	Angelia F. Smith	Cornerstone, Lead Partner Agency	12	Eula Burge	Proactive Community Services
2	Yvonne M. Orr-Blake	ICSC, Partner Agency	13	Souheir Rahman	Together We Cope
3	Kathryn Straniero	Together We Cope, Partner Agency	14	Elena Rivera	Family Guidance
4	Capucine McGinnis	Cornerstone, Workforce Coor	15	Denise Jones	Tender Touch Inc.
5	Kamil Walton	Cornerstone, Deputy Director	16	Ed Boone	West Side ROSC
6	April Thompson	HHI, Cornerstone	17	Denise Holman	Opioid Health Educator, CCDPH
7	Leonard Noble	Cornerstone, Workforce Dev Dir	18	Kenneth Bell	Region I TA, Statewide ROSC
8	Lamont Wallace	PLE, Comm Nav, Cornerstone; ICSC	19	Yasmeen Hismeh	Together We Cope
9	Sherri Keyes	Family Guidance Center, Prog Mgr	20	Katie Huffman	Together We Cope
10	Johanna Gonzalez	ROSC Coord, IDHS	21	Neesha Stringfellow	Will County Grundy ROSC
11	Michael Ferguson	Family Guidance Center, Prog Mgr	22	Denise Holman	Opioid Health Educator, CCDPH

MEETING SUMMARY: Southland Recovery Coalition ROSC Council Meeting

The meeting began with organizational updates including a name change announcement and introductions of new leadership. The group discussed various community impact activities and engagement strategies, with participants sharing their experiences and approaches to outreach and awareness raising. The conversation ended with updates on upcoming events, mental health initiatives, and the celebration of personal milestones, while emphasizing the importance of mindful storytelling and community engagement. Ms. Smith shared that due to the weather and internet/power issues and being unable to join in on time.

Indigenous Center Name Change Announcement

The meeting began with Yvonne Orr-Blake from the Indigenous Community Service Center announcing a name change to Build, Engage and Empower Community Development Corporation (BEE CDC) effective July 1st. She introduced Kathy Straniero, the Executive Director of Together We Cope. The meeting faced some technical difficulties, with Smith from Cornerstone experiencing internet and power issues and being unable to use her audio.

Community Impact and Engagement Strategies

The meeting focused on discussing community impact and engagement activities throughout the year. Participants shared their experiences, including in-person events, outreach efforts, and the impact of guest speakers. Lamont highlighted the effectiveness of concise communication in spreading awareness, while Kathy emphasized the powerful emotional connections made during meetings with individuals who have lived experiences. The group also discussed the importance of face-to-face interactions and the positive impact these have had on building relationships and understanding within the community.



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Community Recovery Impact Initiatives

Yvonne discussed the importance of community impact reporting and shared various methods of raising recovery awareness in a Community Impact presentation (attached), including flyering, pop-up events, and collaborative partnerships with institutions like Walgreens and healthcare systems. They highlighted their efforts in reducing stigma through training and encouraging people to share their recovery stories, as well as participating in campaigns like Recovery Voices Count. Yvonne also mentioned their intention to host town hall meetings and mini conferences to engage the community further.

Personal Reflection: Standing Up for PLEs Mental Health Awareness and Loss

Neesha shared her personal story about losing her nephew to suicide in 2021, highlighting the importance of mental health awareness and preventive measures. She emphasized the need for conversations within faith-based communities and schools to address signs of mental health issues and substance use. Yvonne shared her recent loss of a godson, a graduate and father of two, who died under unclear circumstances involving medication. Both women discussed the challenges of dealing with such losses and the importance of open conversations about mental health and substance use. Capucine McGinnis, who recently took back her maiden name after 42 years, also shared her personal reflections during the conversation.

Mindful Storytelling and Community Engagement

Yvonne discussed the importance of mindful storytelling and community engagement, emphasizing the need for planned "pop-ups" in strategic locations. She highlighted the significance of effective communication techniques, including empathy, active listening, and controlled expressions, and encouraged council members to rehearse common questions and familiarize themselves with SRC's mission. Neesha shared her experience hosting a podcast, Neesha's Network, which uses social media to reach a broader audience and connect people with recovery resources.

Community Updates and Health Initiatives

The meeting covered several updates and announcements. Southland discussed dynamic delivery metrics and community impact reports due June 30th. Neesha announced an upcoming mental health conference at her church in Tinley Park, inviting attendees and offering to share resources. Eula mentioned seeking harm reduction navigators and promised to send out an announcement. The group also celebrated Kenneth Bell's new baby and discussed an upcoming faith-based recovery event on June 16th at Neesha's church.

Next Steps

1. Southland Recovery Coalition to submit community impact report by June 30th.
2. Southland Recovery Coalition members to practice and refine their pitch about SRC.
3. Neesha to host mental health conference in Tinley Park on Friday and Saturday.
4. Eula to send job announcement for harm reduction navigators to Yvonne.
5. Neesha to host "Show Up Recovery" event for faith-based community on June 16th.
6. Southland Recovery Coalition to hold in-person Mini Conference on 7/23 at Bremen Township in Oak Forest.
7. Southland Recovery Coalition to present recovery champion award to Myron Graham at the July conference.

Meeting Adjourned: 10:17 am

Next Meeting: June 25, 2025 at 9:30am via Zoom