



ROSC Meeting – Lee/Whiteside Counties

Date: October 15, 2025 3pm

Facilitator: Shannon Tully

Format: Virtual (Zoom)



Attendees

- **Shannon Tully** – Facilitator
 - **Gerald Lott** – Executive Director, SVVOR – gerald.lott@svvor.org
 - **Brandi O’Rorke** – Lead Coach, SVVOR – brandi.ororke@svvor.org
 - **Ben Rudolph** – Region 2 ROSC Technical Assistant – berudolph@chestnut.org
 - **Jacob Albers-Ogle** – DeKalb ROSC Coordinator (SVVOR) – jacob.albers@svvor.org – 815-631-9153
 - **Lupita Serrano** – Lee County Health Department – lserrano@lchd.com
 - **Melanie Marrandino** – MSW, Aurora University – marrandinomelanie@gmail.com – 815-981-6956
 - **Penny Stark** – Recovery Centers of America – p.stark@recoverycoa.com
 - **Karl Arellano, LCSW** – Sterling VA Clinic – karlan.arellano@va.gov
 - **Whitney Miller, LCSW** – Roberts Counseling – lcsw.wmiller@gmail.com
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Key Discussion Highlights

Introductions & Networking

- Shannon reminded everyone to include their name, organization, and email in the chat.
 - Participants introduced themselves and shared contact information to support cross-county collaboration between Lee and Whiteside regions.
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Past Events

- **RecoverCon** was a major success with **around 175 attendees** and **26 vendors**.
 - Attendees shared positive feedback, and the event fostered strong community and provider engagement.
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Program & Data Updates

- **Gerald Lott** reported **35 intakes** over the last month.
 - The **bell curve** of participants is between **ages 35–50**.
 - Data trends show a **shift toward methamphetamine use**, which is proving increasingly difficult to address.
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Recovery Friendly Workplace Initiative

- **Gerald** shared insights from visiting Recovery Community Organizations (RCOs) across the U.S.
 - In **Nevada**, the **Foundation for Recovery** trains companies on recovery-supportive policies, like allowing employees to attend meetings.
 - Businesses there receive **Recovery Friendly Workplace recognition** and **tax incentives**, though Illinois currently doesn't offer such benefits.
- Gerald emphasized the need to **move from talk to action**, asking, *"What do we want to do about it?"*

- Discussion points included developing a **curriculum for employers** to educate them about hiring and supporting people in recovery.
 - Ideas: hire **training specialists**, define **support roles**, and ensure **advocates** are available to mediate workplace issues.
 - Target completion: **March 2026**.
 - **Deanna Cada** suggested connecting with **local Chambers of Commerce** for business engagement.
 - A **Recovery Friendly Workplace Committee** was formed, including **Penny, Marta, Erika, and Amanda**, to begin planning next steps.
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Community & Program Initiatives

- **Hydroponics Project:**
 - A meeting is scheduled with **Bruce Black** at **Cledy's House** to measure for hydroponic installations at **Legacy** and **Cledy's House**.
 - Residents will receive training, and the program may be integrated into **therapeutic activities**.
- **Nutrition Education:**
 - **Sara Wright** from ISU will be featured on an upcoming flyer promoting **nutrition education programs** for the community.
- **Recovery Centers of America (RCA):**
 - **Penny Stark** asked how RCA can better support local ROSC efforts, emphasizing her desire to contribute.
- **Illinois Youth Survey:**
 - **Marta Jarka** encouraged promoting the **Illinois Youth Survey** to schools, principals, and teachers.

- Illinois has **never published statewide results**, and she's checking participation from **Ogle and Lee Counties**.
 - **Healthcare Education:**
 - **Marta and Penny** discussed the importance of educating **urgent cares and ERs** about emerging substances like **Kratom** and **Xylazine**.
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Community Support & Resources

- **Whitney Miller** shared details about her **Grief Group** at Roberts Counseling.
 - **Zoom Link:** [Join Meeting](#)
 - **Meeting ID:** 879 0720 9492
 - **Passcode:** 766553
 - Additional info and flyers are available on **Facebook**.
 - **Melanie Marrandino** offered to share **government and congressional documentation** with **Penny Stark** for ongoing advocacy efforts.
 - **Karl Arellano (VA)** shared interest in collaborating on community support projects, pending availability.
 - **Lupita Serrano** raised questions about local resources and outreach efforts in Lee County.
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Upcoming Events

- **October 24, 2025:** Haunted House event
- **November 6, 2025:** *The Anonymous People* showing at the Dixon Theater
- **ROSC Surveys:** Ongoing — participants are entered in a **\$100 monthly prize drawing**

Action Items

Action Item	Responsible Party	Timeline
Develop Recovery Friendly Workplace curriculum	Committee (Penny, Marta, Erika, Amanda)	By March 2026
Explore VA collaboration opportunities	Karl Arellano	Ongoing
Share government/congressional documentation	Melanie Marrandino → Penny Stark	ASAP
Promote Grief Group on partner channels	Whitney Miller	Ongoing
Continue outreach to employers open to recovery hiring	Gerald, Marta, Jake	Ongoing
Partner with local Chambers of Commerce	Deanna Cada	Ongoing
Promote Illinois Youth Survey	Marta Jarka	Next quarter
Support hydroponics project at Cledy's & Legacy	Joyce Lewis, Bruce Black	In progress
Expand healthcare education (Kratom, Xylazine)	Marta & Penny	Before next meeting

Closing Notes

- Strong interest across both counties in expanding **Recovery Friendly Workplace efforts**.
- Continued focus on **community education, data trends, and interagency collaboration**.
- The group remains committed to **action-based follow-through** and supporting one another's initiatives.
- Next meeting will review progress from the Recovery Friendly Workplace Committee and ongoing event outcomes.