



# Southland Recovery Coalition ROSC Council Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: 11/19/2025 9:30 AM to 10:30 AM

LOCATION: Zoom

PRESENTER(S): Felicia Houston, MA, LCPC

TOPIC: At Capacity Pt. I: The Power of Gratitude in Recovery

ATTENDEES		AFFILIATION	ATTENDEES		AFFILIATION
1	Yvonne M. Orr	ROSC Coordinator; BEE CDC	11	Marianne Bithos	NAMI South Suburban
2	Capucine McGinnis	Cornerstone CDC, Workforce Coor	12	Celeste Fonseca	Heartlife Ministries
3	Kamil Walton	Cornerstone CDC, Deputy Director	13	Neesha Stringfellow	Heartlife Ministries/Recovery 180
4	April Thompson	Cornerstone CDC; HHI	14	Sherri Keyes	Family Guidance Centers
5	Kathryn Straniero	Together We Cope	15	Isaac Marrufo	Cook County Dept of Public Health
6	Lamont Wallace	PLE, Comm Nav, Cornerstone; BEE	16	Kaylon Vaughn	Cornerstone CDC
7	Kenneth Bell	Region I TA	17	Elena Rivera	Family Guidance Centers
8	Martinez Sutton	Proactive Community Services	18	Denise Jones	Tender Touch Inc.
9	Souheir Rahman	Together We Cope	19	Katie Huffman	Together We Cope
10	Michael Ferguson	Family Guidance Centers	20	Yasmeen Hishmeh	Together We Cope

## MEETING SUMMARY

The meeting opened with greetings from Yvonne M. Orr, who acknowledged scheduling conflicts for Angelia Smith (our fearless leader of Cornerstone CDC and Lead Fiscal Agent for our ROSC). Yvonne provided updates on the Southland Recovery Coalition hydroponic farm project. The concrete slab is being poured, land is being prepared, and the project will soon support:

- A year-round farmers market
- Elder engagement in planting and esthetic activities
- A mural design contest with Chicago Heights and Ford Heights School Districts 169 and 170

Yvonne reminded attendees to complete the Southland Recovery Coalition Recovery Survey, noting that several members still need to submit their responses.

A warm welcome was extended to Celeste Fonseca, Executive Outreach Administrative Assistant with Heartlife Ministries, who joined the SRC ROSC Council meeting for the first time.

To accommodate scheduling needs, the agenda was adjusted and the guest speaker, Felicia Marie Houston, was introduced early.

## PRESENTATION & DISCUSSION

Presenter: *Felicia Marie Houston, LCPC*

Felicia, a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor with 20 years of experience, led an interactive session on gratitude as a tool for mental health, resilience, and recovery. She holds a BA in Psychology and an MA in Human Development Counseling from Bradley University and is an active member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Top Ladies of Distinction, and multiple community organizations.



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## *Gratitude Quotes Exercise*

Participants selected one of four quotes about gratitude and shared why it resonated with them:

- Celeste Fonseca chose Quote #1, emphasizing new beginnings
- Neesha Stringfellow chose Quote #3, highlighting rest and thankfulness
- Suhair Rahman and Isaac Marrufo chose Quote #4, connecting gratitude to faith

## *Key Themes*

Felicia emphasized that gratitude:

- Does not ignore pain
- Helps anchor people during difficult seasons
- Reduces symptoms of anxiety/depression
- Strengthens emotional regulation and connection
- Supports recovery by restoring hope

## *The Four A's of Gratitude*

1. Awareness – noticing the good
2. Acknowledgment – recognizing and valuing it
3. Appreciation – expressing gratitude (e.g., thank-you cards)
4. Action – demonstrating gratitude through kindness

Participants shared simple things they were grateful for, including:

- Waking up to a new day
- Comfortable beds
- Family support
- Warm socks
- A working heater

## *We Are Not Alone Circle*

Participants shared what they were grieving, including:

- Loss of mothers, sisters, sons
- Miscarriage
- Loss of community
- Loss of former church
- Diagnosis of inoperable cancer

Felicia emphasized the importance of allowing space for grief as part of healing.

## *Gratitude as Protest*

Participants named individuals they wished to thank for justice or community care work, namely these individuals doing work in the community:

- Yvonne Orr
- Marianne Bithos
- Dr. Kisha Roberts Tabb for girls
- Neesha Stringfellow

Felicia encouraged writing thank-you notes to uplift those doing difficult work.

## *Navigating the Current Climate*

Felicia encouraged attendees to:

- Set boundaries
- Rest and reflect often
- Reclaim joy
- Dance, laugh, and create



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- Practice daily grounding by naming “one true and good thing” each morning

## COMMUNITY SURVEY

Members were reminded to complete the Southland Recovery Coalition Recovery Survey, which informs coalition strategy and identifies barriers to recovery.

Attendees were reminded to PASS ALONG THE SURVEY! Yvonne expressed its important of helping and informing SRC with identifying barriers to recovery and informs coalition strategy. As of the meeting, only 14 ROSC Council members had completed it.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Region 1 ROSC Council events and pop-up initiatives are forthcoming
- Community members were encouraged to reflect on how seasonal changes and the holiday season can trigger depression or relapse.
- The next SRC ROSC Council meeting is scheduled for December 17, 2025 **via Zoom\***

**Meeting Adjourned:** 10:21 AM

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday, December 17, 2025 | 9:30 AM **via Zoom\***

**Zoom Info:** Meeting ID: 836 3638 1377 | Passcode: 746782

**\*NOTE:** At the time of the November meeting, the announcement was made about the next SRC ROSC Council meeting being held in person. Due to inclement weather and extreme cold, the decision was made to adjust the in-person meeting to January 28, 2026 and change December’s to virtual.