



Southland Recovery Coalition ROSC Council Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: 3/25/2026 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM

LOCATION: Cornerstone CDC, 943 East Lincoln Hwy, Ford Heights, IL 60411

PRESENTER(S): Renee Dickerson, Counselor, PhD, LCPC, CADC

TOPIC: Invisible Wounds of the Mind and Spirit: Recognizing and Managing the Effects of Trauma

ATTENDEES		AFFILIATION	ATTENDEES		AFFILIATION
1	Angelia F. Smith	Lead Fiscal Agent; Cornerstone ED	15	Johnnie Cole	PLE
2	Yvonne M. Orr	ROSC Coordinator; BEE CDC	16	Lakeasha Gatling	PLE
3	Capucine McGinnis	Cornerstone CDC, Workforce Coor	17	Marianne Bithos	NAMI Metro Suburban
4	April Thompson	Cornerstone CDC; HHI	18	Kaylon Vaughn	Cornerstone CDC
5	Kenneth Bell	Region I TA	19	Denise Jones	Tender Touch Inc.
6	Johanna Gonzalez	Statewide ROSC	20	Tiffany Johnson	PLE
7	Souheir Rahman	Together We Cope	21	Zion Moss	PLE
8	Katie Huffman	Together We Cope	22	Laila Fultz	PLE
9	Yasmeen Hishmeh	Together We Cope	23	Maurice Mance	PLE
10	Jasmine Atkins	PLE, Comm Nav, Cornerstone, BEE	24	Essence Moore	PLE
11	Joseph Alford	Lifeshouse Behavioral Health Service	25	Darrel Walker	PLE
12	Talisha Burge	Proactive Community Services	26	Thomas Blake	PLE
13	Nyerere Gatling	PLE	27	Christina Cornacchia	Together We Cope
14	Marvin Jones, Jr.	PLE	28	Kathryn Straneiro	Together We Cope

MEETING SUMMARY

The meeting was called to order by Angelia F. Smith, who welcomed attendees. Attendees were asked to introduce themselves and share their organizations in the chat. Members and guests introduced themselves, including representatives and participants with lived experience joining from Cornerstone. The meeting included introductions from new and returning members.

PRESENTATION & DISCUSSION

Yvonne introduced a video in honor of Women’s History Month about the “Mother of Recovery”—Betty Ford. This Women’s History Month, we’d like to highlight Betty Ford, former First Lady and fierce supporter of social policy reform. Ford fought for women’s rights, the arts, health and breast cancer awareness, and many other philanthropic efforts. After her time as First Lady, Ford found a new purpose – fighting addiction and the negative stigma around substance use disorder. https://youtu.be/QQLj_UijnX8?si=TyL1xVspT6dzqTaA Dr. Renee Dickerson led the training session, “*Invisible Wounds of the Mind and Spirit: Recognizing and Managing the Effects of Trauma*,” which focused on the often-unseen impact of psychological and emotional trauma. The session emphasized that not all injuries are physical or visible; many individuals carry internal wounds resulting from experiences such as abuse, loss, violence, chronic stress, or adverse childhood events. These invisible wounds can significantly influence a person’s thoughts, behaviors, relationships, and overall well-being.



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A central theme of the training was recognition. Dr. Dickerson highlighted how trauma can manifest in subtle and varied ways, including anxiety, depression, irritability, emotional numbness, difficulty trusting others, and even physical symptoms like fatigue or headaches. Participants learned that individuals often develop coping mechanisms—some healthy and others less so—without realizing they are responses to unresolved trauma. The session encouraged greater awareness and empathy in identifying these signs in both oneself and others.

The training also explored the connection between the mind and spirit, noting that trauma can affect more than mental health. It can disrupt a person's sense of identity, purpose, and meaning. Dr. Dickerson discussed how individuals may experience feelings of guilt, shame, or spiritual disconnection, and emphasized the importance of addressing both psychological and deeper reflective aspects of healing.

In discussing management and recovery, Dr. Dickerson provided practical tools and strategies to support healing. These included developing emotional regulation skills such as mindfulness and grounding techniques, building resilience, and fostering healthy coping mechanisms. She also emphasized the importance of creating safe and supportive environments that encourage openness and recovery, as well as the value of trauma-informed care—approaching individuals with sensitivity, understanding, and without judgment. The session underscored the importance of seeking professional support, such as counseling or therapy, when needed.

Overall, the training reinforced that healing from trauma is a gradual and non-linear process that requires patience, self-compassion, and support. By increasing awareness of invisible wounds, Dr. Dickerson aimed to reduce stigma and equip participants with the knowledge and tools to respond in ways that promote understanding and healing.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Yvonne shared Maya Hardy's previous announcement that April Food Day will take place on Wednesday, April 22, 2026, at the Convention Center. Food collection will occur from 8:30 AM to 1:30 PM, pantry pickup will begin at 1:30 PM, and the awards luncheon will be held from 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM. She invited members to donate food, host drives, or sponsor tables, and noted this year's awardees include Advocate, Renard Ellsbury, and the Kiwanis Club of Crestwood and Oak Forest.

Joseph shared information about the AmeriCorps Recovery program.



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Saturday, April 18, 2026

\$20.00 Admission
Includes ALL 15 games played!

Community Center
14020 S. Torrence Avenue
Burnham, Illinois
708-862-9150

**Awesome
Raffle Prizes!**

Meeting Adjourned: 11:07 AM

Next Meeting: Wednesday, April 29, 2026 | 9:30 AM on Zoom

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

HOW IT
STARTED...



ADVOCACY & LEGISLATION

Women's History Month: Betty Ford and Removing Addiction Stigma

This Women's History Month, we'd like to highlight Betty Ford, former First Lady and fierce supporter of social policy reform. Ford fought for women's rights, the arts, health and breast cancer awareness, and many other philanthropic efforts. After her time as First Lady, Ford found a new purpose – fighting addiction and the negative stigma around substance use disorder.

Forging a Path From Problem to Solution

Ford suffered from a pinched nerve and was prescribed opioid medications to deal with the pain. She also dealt with alcoholism, dating back to her time before the White House. Despite her struggles with addiction, Ford left a positive mark as First Lady with her platform and philanthropic efforts. It wasn't until after her tenure as First Lady that her addictions became apparent to her family, to the point of being life-threatening. Her family staged an intervention in 1978, leading her down the path to sobriety.

Rather than hide behind the stigma around addiction, Ford was transparent with her struggles as she was with her breast cancer diagnosis and treatment. Drug misuse treatment clinicians and experts lauded her public-facing recovery, as they felt it would open a proactive dialogue around the subject. With the help of the hospital's addiction treatment program, Ford managed to overcome her addiction to opioids and alcohol. She penned her journey to recovery in her first memoir, *The Times of My Life*.

The Formation of the Betty Ford Center

After beating her addiction in 1982, she opened the [Betty Ford Center](#) in Rancho Mirage, California. The center was launched to help others battle and overcome their chemical dependency issues. The non-profit residential treatment center is still open today and offers inpatient, outpatient, and residential day treatment options. There are also preventative and educational programs offered for families and children, reinforcing the community aspect of successful addiction recovery. Their website lays out their primary goal of providing patients with "individualized, compassionate, holistic, and expert substance abuse treatment." Today, the facility's inpatient programs are gender-informed and personalized to address individual needs.

All treatment plans take the following into consideration:

- Physical health
- Mental health
- Gender identity
- Family history
- Substances used (types of drugs)
- Potential for relapse
- Medical necessity
- Willingness to change

Dealing With The Stigma of Addiction

Betty Ford's work in the public sector helped shine a light on addiction and how it impacts both individuals and their families and loved ones. Unfortunately, negative stigma overshadows addiction and limits the help and resources people need to recover. Ford, a prominent figure, brought opioid addiction and alcoholism out into the light. She reinforced this through her memoir and continued support through her treatment programs at the Betty Ford Center.

Overdose Lifeline's Work on Removing the Stigma

Overdose Lifeline is also a strong champion of [removing the stigma around substance use disorders](#). Our goal is for addiction to be provided the same care and attention that is provided to other chronic diseases. Unfortunately, the stigma around addiction perpetuates false stereotypes, spreads misinformation, and makes it harder for people to get the care they need. It also leads to denial with family members of people dealing with substance use disorders, causing further harm and limiting resources.

"Changing the language and removing the stigma provides people hope that someone cares enough to help them walk this journey, because it's a difficult, scary journey and the resource available for medical care and understanding addiction are just not the same as there are for other chronic diseases," says Justin Phillips, Founder and Executive Director, Overdose Lifeline, Inc.

Recognizing Betty Ford and Her Emphasis on Community With Recovery

Betty Ford's legacy lives on through the Betty Ford Center, and she recognized the importance of a strong network of resources in dealing with addiction. In her 1978 statement to the public, she said, "I expect this treatment and fellowship to be a solution for my problems. I embrace it, not only for me, but all the many others who are here to participate."

Southland Recovery Coalition celebrates Betty Ford and her longstanding efforts in helping others on their journey. Removing the stigma around addiction is an ongoing battle and one that takes active work.

