

# ACIDD News



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## **Recovery for 'the other dually diagnosed'- Brittany's Story**

Recovery from a mental health issue is often an ongoing process. It is, however, unique when a person with co-occurring Intellectual Disability and Mental Disorder takes charge of one's treatment plan and actively work towards the type of life the person hopes to lead.

That's the motivation that drove Brittany to explore her options and find a new ally for her mental health recovery journey. Brittany who lives in a group home, joined ACIDD Maryland's Psychiatric Rehabilitation Program in 2014. She has been actively involved in the program since then. As an individual struggling with 'the other dual diagnosis' (a developmental disability with a mental health issue), Brittany is no stranger to the ups and downs of the recovery process. When

asked how she feels since joining ACIDD Maryland's PRP, Brittany states, "I like it: I like it a lot! My coordinator helps me when I get frustrated so I can calm down; it's good to know what to do to handle things when I'm stressed".

As a young adult in her early 20s, Brittany knew that she did not want to be ignored due to her age or have others decide the best course of treatment for her. In the past, this frustration of not feeling in charge of her treatment, led her to anger issues and arguments with her residential staff. With the help of staff at ACIDD, Brittany now regularly practices advocating for herself and making her wishes known. Whether speaking up at an Individual Plan meeting with her team or trying to schedule her doctors' appointments, Brittany is taking charge of

her overall health. She is thrilled with the changes and progress she has been making!

ACIDD staff has also worked with Brittany to develop coping techniques that she can use in any situation. She says, "I've learned to calm down and think before I act, or take a walk or go to my room when I'm frustrated. I also listen to music more now." Brittany is able to stand up and speak her mind and knows more healthy ways to react when things seem stressful or overwhelming. Thanks to ACIDD staff, Brittany is continuing her journey towards recovery on her own terms. She is involved in a number of social events and groups, and is "looking forward to joining Best Buddies and doing more activities". Brittany is proud to share her story with her friends, and staff!

## **Prince George's County...and beyond!**

As 2015 continues to move along, ACIDD Maryland is excited to continue expanding our services. With the opening of our corporate office at 300 Thomas Drive in Laurel, Maryland, we are now able to provide wraparound & supportive services to people in PG, Baltimore coun-

ties, and Baltimore City besides Howard county. Our services include individual, group, and family therapy (By March 2015); off-site PRP & MHVP (Ongoing); Residential & SE services to people with co-occurring IDD and Mental Disorders (By April, 2015). PRP & MHVP continue to be of-

fered, onsite and offsite, at our Columbia location. We have no waitlist for services. If you are interested in our services, please contact our Laurel office (301-755-9476) or Columbia office (443-319-5010). You can also email us: [info@aciddmaryland.com](mailto:info@aciddmaryland.com). We look forward to embrace minds, empower people!

## Steps to Self-Advocacy

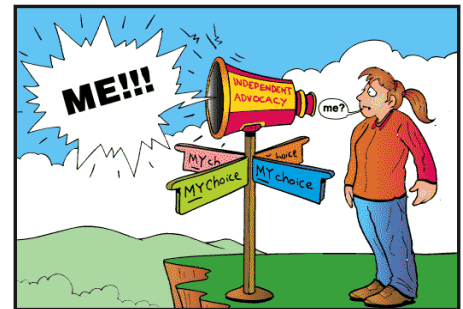
Whether it is medical or mental health, there are many organizations that help advocate for those that face barriers to treatment or assistance. Of equal importance is to be an advocate for one's self. This is not an easy feat for those that have historically been ignored or brushed aside. However, there are steps you can take to be an effective advocate for yourself.

The first step is to believe in yourself. Believing in yourself means you are aware of your strengths, know that you are worthwhile, and are willing to take good care of yourself. To ask for what you need and want and to protect yourself when others

treat you badly, you will need to support your self-worth. You will want to assess, appreciate, support, and improve the way you feel about yourself. You can work with your mental health team to raise your self-esteem through activities, such as reciting positive statements about yourself, having others write down positive statements about you, which you read often, or by participating in activities you enjoy.

The second step is to know your rights. Everyone including individuals with co-occurring Intellectual Disability and Mental Disorders, is entitled to the same civil rights and equal treatment. If you know that

your rights are being violated, the first thing to do, if possible, is to ask the person, people, organization, agency, or institution that is violating your rights to stop. Remember, advocating for your care and rights is worth it and it's never too late to take the first steps towards developing your voice.



## Welcome to Rhonda and Jasper, our PRP staffs!

ACIDD Maryland is pleased to welcome Rhonda Waller and Jasper Nance to our team of staff to facilitate PRP and MHVP services to more participants! Rhonda has over 17 years of experience in providing psychiatric rehabilitation and supportive services to PRP participants. Jasper who is a Masters in Social Work with 3 years of supportive and administrative experience in PRP is

very persuasive of helping individuals with PRP. We are excited about the wealth of knowledge and passion that these staff bring to our team. When asked why she originally chose to join this field, Rhonda stated, "I like to talk with people and I love helping people; what better job can you

do than working directly for people on their needs!"

***"I like hearing people's stories and seeing where they've come from, what they've overcome."***

Jasper has both theoretical and practical know how as to how to handle mental health issues of his case load of participants. We are seeing progress in our participants mental health status.

They speak high of their new staff. Keep it up Rhonda and Jasper!

## From the Director of Programs....

As ACIDD Maryland continues to grow and expand, so do our roles we play. I have recently taken over the role of Director of Programs, which has been a goal of mine for some time As I hope to grow with this mental health agency that invests in helping our consumers and being a key partner in the communities we serve, I become aware of my serious roles too.

Our programs continue to thrive and expand, which has also allowed us to bring on new members to our team that share the same goal and desire to help others. With the opening of our corporate office in Laurel, PG County, we are able to spread our message of hope and empowerment to individuals living with a mental illness or intellectual disability. I am excited to be

part of this growing agency and for the opportunity to be a change agent in the field that I love. I also appreciate all those that have been a huge support to us thus far in our journey!

