

#ODNOMORE

Recovery Success Story – MATE # 4 Human Services Spotlight Series #20

In November 2019, a 26-year-old male was referred by Bayside Clinic as a Medication Assisted Treatment Program (MATE) grant recipient to Operation Parental Awareness and Responsibility (PAR) for medication assisted treatment, counseling, and case management services. At admission, client reported a 10-year history of opioid abuse with no periods of abstinence. Primary substance reported as heroin, intravenously. Other substances reported include methamphetamines, benzodiazepines, crack cocaine, and marijuana. Prior to entering treatment, he suffered from 4 overdoses in a 1-year period. In addition to abstinence



and a healthy lifestyle, a main goal reported at admission was repairing family relationships. Client stated, “I would like to regain the trust of my family.” The effects of addiction, including disengagement and lack of trust, had deeply damaged the client’s relationship with his family. Client entered treatment experiencing homelessness, sleeping in the woods. Case management needs identified at admission included vision and dental services, Hepatitis C screening, linkage to Directions for Living (DFL), job training, independent housing, furthering education, and other financial assistance. Case manager began working with client immediately to resolve needs and continued case management sessions on a weekly basis.

During his first individual counseling session, the client expressed what he would like from treatment stating, “I want to function without using... I want to thrive and be successful in a career... I want to go out in public without feeling like this.” Early on, characteristics of anxiety interfered with his day-to-day functioning. He self-reported anxiety symptomology as early as age 7. It was his anxiousness that prevented him from linking with a mental health provider for several months. Managing his anxiety and other emotions became a focus in treatment to

help client prepare for and become comfortable with linkage to mental health provider. Client was consistent with medication assisted treatment, counseling, and case management sessions. With his commitment to recovery, he

became more stable and confident. He was provided with a job resource and obtained full-time employment after 90 days in treatment. He was allowed to move back into his mother’s home 4 months into treatment and continued to work on mending their relationship. He began to work towards improving his quality of life so that it was enjoyable and re-engaged in his love for fishing and kayaking. After 5 months in treatment he stated, “I’m pretty happy.” During his time in treatment a focus continued to be a healthy balance between work and recovery to support successful lifestyle change. As time went on and client became more stable, his fear and anxiety that once prevented him from addressing his psychiatric needs were no longer a barrier. He confidently contacted mental health provider recognizing the need for mental health stabilization and influence on recovery. Although challenges surfaced to reach medication stabilization, client worked through managing his emotions appropriately, asking for help and leaning on his support system. This client shows time and time again that recovery is a process. It takes time to overcome anxiety, rebuild fragmented relationships, develop a professional path, and find pleasurable activities that support recovery.

Client responded well to treatment and the continued support. He chose to remain in counseling and continues to receive medication assisted treatment. Client has shown his resiliency and self-efficacy throughout the course of treatment by his commitment and practice of new skills to live a purposeful life. He has done a phenomenal job at financially becoming stable and budgeting. He was able to obtain his driver’s license after 5 years and purchase a vehicle. He has maintained stable employment for over 1 year. Professionally, his journey led him to a career change where he considers himself to be now thriving and even happier stating, “I love it.” He lives a full life including outdoor activities and surrounded by family. He has worked hard at rebuilding his life and creating a safe environment for himself. Not only has it been a pleasure to witness his growth, but also the hope and content he now carries when looking into his future. His smiling affects each session is a true testament to the life he has created.

Statement in his own words... “The old me would lie, cheat, manipulate, and had no work ethic. The new me is honest, hardworking, and responsible. Thanks to the program I am able to be there for my family, especially my nieces. With the hard work I put into my recovery and the tools I’ve acquired; I have now been able to live a happy and successful life.”

Funding for the MATE program comes from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) for the Pinellas County Health Care for the Homeless Program. Human Services has partnered with Operation PAR and the Florida Department of Health to provide medication assisted treatment services for those homeless clients with substance use concerns including opioid and alcohol dependence. According to the Pinellas County Opioid Task Force, more than one person dies every 48 hours from an opioid-related overdose.
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