

Western Pennsylvania Guide to Good Health

Health News You and Your Family Can Use

Gateway Rehabilitation Center

GRC's Extended Care Programs Offer Hope and Healing for Addiction Recovery

By Nancy Kennedy

At Gateway Rehabilitation Center (GRC), a team of highly skilled and deeply caring professionals are helping thousands of people to achieve and sustain recovery from addiction. The GRC staff accomplishes this with an innovative approach to addiction recovery that combines state-of-the-art medical management with compassionate psychosocial treatment. Individuals with addiction who seek help at GRC will find an environment of care that is both visionary and real-world pragmatic, offering individualized, whole person care that facilitates a personal path to recovery. At GRC, you CAN recover from addiction.

GRC provides a full continuum of care, through an expansive regional network of clinical settings and programs that can provide up to a year of treatment. This network encompasses multiple levels of care, explains Clare Morris, LCSW, GRC's Regional Executive Director of Extended Care. In-patient care, outpatient care, virtual care and extended care are among the options available, determined by an assessment of the patient's needs and ongoing progress. Extended care programs provide two levels of care and are designed to serve the needs of specific groups. Extended care can include both outpatient care and residential care in halfway houses.

"Usually, patients come in for withdrawal management and stabilization in our residential facilities. This may take several weeks, followed by extended care programs for ongoing support. The appropriate level of care and treatment plan depends on one's evolving needs and circumstances," Morris says. "Standards for this placement and subsequent transitions are set by the American Society for Addiction Medicine (ASAM); the highest level, level 4, is in-patient care, and the lowest level is out-patient care.

Our extended care teams work closely with the inpatient staff and have case consults on every patient. After the primary treatment in inpatient care, it is essential to provide ongoing support and preparation for returning to the community, to society. GRC has six extended care programs plus a new one in development; each program has a manager, therapists, and treatment support technicians."

Halfway House settings provide supervision and care, and offer a degree of autonomy to patients. They reside at the halfway house and have a treatment plan, therapy and training programs, but they

also have recreation and community service activities. "The goal is to engage in education or gain employment," Morris says. "Patients need the ability to think beyond their program here. They have to prepare to leave and transition to the community. Our training programs include life skills classes such as managing money, GED preparation and developing a resume. Community service means giving back to the community through volunteer activities."

One of GRC's most popular community partners is Communi-cycle, a bike repair shop in Beaver County that rehabilitates old or broken bicycles and then gives them to children. According to Morris, "Many people with addiction feel that they have taken from the community and they want to change that. This is a way for them to reconnect and repair relationships. They learn new skills and are part of a team. We believe that service is part of recovery and can even be life changing."

Clare Morris has extensive experience in addiction recovery and has spent most of her career in various roles at GRC, even serving as an "adventure therapist." She finds tremendous satisfaction in her current position, overseeing all extended care programs. "I have the reward of seeing people blossom and grow as they recover. I see them come alive. I call this 'the joy of recovery' and it's an experience the staff shares with patients.

Our team does an incredible job; we know that the longer a person stays in treatment, the greater their chance for success, so we want to offer that opportunity to them. Some of our treatment support technicians are recovery specialists who have experienced recovery themselves and now have amazing careers helping others with addiction."

Renowned throughout the region and the nation for groundbreaking care, leadership and successful outcomes, GRC continues to be dynamic, expanding and innovating to meet evolving community needs. With compassion, experience and a firm commitment to individualized care, hope has a home at GRC.



Clare Morris



For more information about GRC's network of facilities and programs, visit www.gatewayrehab.org.