

LIBERATION PROGRAMS, INC.

Recovery for Life



In 2015, there were 723 deaths in Connecticut from accidental overdose; 415 involved heroin. The oldest victim was 72, youngest 18.

Liberation Programs believes that was 723 too many.

LIBERATION PROGRAMS – Who We Are

Liberation Programs is one of the area's primary behavioral health service providers specializing in treatment for substance abuse of all kinds including alcohol, opiates, depressants and stimulants. Our mission is to help individuals and families overcome addiction in order to restore their lives and ultimately strengthen our communities. Liberation provides services for youth, adults and families that include two inpatient treatment programs, outpatient services, health education for older adults and people living with HIV/AIDS and other chronic illnesses, treatment and resources for adolescents and their families, education, prevention and wellness efforts in the community, and permanent supportive housing for families. In operation since 1971, the agency has sites in Greenwich, Stamford, Norwalk and Bridgeport that served 2,286 individuals in our last fiscal year.

THE PROBLEM – A Growing Epidemic

Headlines across the state are alive with news of opiate and heroin use and the escalating problem of overdose. An article in the *Hartford Courant* stated, "*Heroin deaths have increased dramatically across Connecticut over the past three years. The state medical examiner records reveal that in combination with other drugs or alone, heroin was a key factor in 222 deaths in 2013 and 100 in 2012. The troubling trend mirrors national numbers recently released by the federal government. While most heroin-related deaths involved residents of the larger cities, the number of towns with at least one fatality jumped from 45 in 2012 to 79 in 2014.*"

This is just heroin. The problem extends beyond that with 723 people dying in CT last year from some type of accidental combination of drugs and/or alcohol. This growing problem reaches into the schools. According to the Connecticut School Health Survey (CSHS) conducted by the CT Dept. of Health, from 2011 to 2015, the percent of Connecticut high school students who had ever taken a prescription drug, without a doctor's prescription, to get high increased from 9.6% to 12%. During the same time frame, Liberation saw a 38% increase in need for our services.

THE SOLUTION – Help Without Stigma

Treatment for substance abuse can be very effective if a person isn't so traumatized by the stigma to seek treatment. Despite the fact that science has taught us that addiction is a disease, few will seek treatment due to lingering negativity surrounding those who struggle with the problem. It's estimated that 25,000 Fairfield County residents have a serious mental illness, more than 43,000 have a substance use disorder and 18,293 suffer from both. And yet, less than 15,000 individuals will actually seek and receive some type of help.

Liberation Programs' philosophy of treatment utilizes an asset-based approach that has proven extremely effective. According to the agency Credo, *"We help each Recoveree, through our daily efforts, to re-discover their gifts, skills, strengths, abilities and purpose for living. We will search to unearth those positive qualities; we will seek opportunities to grow them through positive reinforcement."* Liberation focuses on the strengths within each person to help them achieve and maintain lifelong recovery. The result is a successful completion rate for people in treatment that is 18% above the state average.

Families in Recovery Program (FIRP)—Inpatient Program for Women—Norwalk



"Once I started smoking crack...I never slept, never showered—it was disgusting. We ended up losing our house. When I first came to FIRP, I might not have been so nice, but the staff stuck with me. If someone told me three years ago that I would be sober almost two years today and have a little boy and have my life back—I would have called them a liar. The staff at FIRP really made a difference. They helped save my life. They will always be in my heart." Ashley, FIRP Graduate

The Families in Recovery Program (FIRP) has been saving lives since it was first created in 1994. Designed specifically for pregnant and parenting women, it is the only program of its kind in the State of Connecticut where women can bring two children up to the age of 10 into the program with them. For many women, short to long-term inpatient treatment is elusive because they have no one to care for their children and other programs do not allow children or allow only one child under the age of five. This handful of programs, 77 beds in all for women and far fewer that allow children, is sprinkled throughout CT with Families in Recovery the only one in Fairfield County.

In addition to working on their addiction problems, Liberation connects women to community resources, assists them in reunification with children placed in foster care, and helps them acquire daily living skills including positive parenting. The goal is to help mothers overcome their substance abuse problems and acquire the skills and connections to resources they need to provide safe, nurturing homes for their children, and in so doing, break what is often a multi-generational cycle of poverty and addiction. Their children will grow up with a mom who is there for them every step of the way as they in turn become adults with families.

The challenge is that FIRP is one of the most *highly subsidized programs* offered by Liberation. Almost two-thirds of the women served do not have benefits that will cover inpatient treatment for substance abuse and often come into the program with little more than they can carry. Approximately \$140,000 needs to be raised in private support each year to provide scholarship services for these women as well as help pay for program supplies including basics such as food, sheets, towels, toiletries, and even diapers.

Program Goals and Objectives and Evaluation Methods: Each woman and her counselor work together to develop a comprehensive treatment plan that includes major goals that go beyond addressing their addiction. Specifically for FIRP, there are three major areas for client improvement in the program.

- **Successful Completion** – Women served will attain and maintain their personal goals regarding freedom from alcohol or any other substance abuse while enrolled in the program, as evidenced by toxicology screens, and successfully completing treatment.

- **Reunification/Healthy Pregnancy and Births**— Women served who are separated from their children by the Dept. of Children and Families (DCF) will regain custody. Women who are pregnant will improve their health to ensure optimal chances for a healthy newborn.
- **Increased Self-sufficiency** – Women served will improve their ability to live independently in the community through connections to housing, education and vocational opportunities and other community resources.

Last year, FIRP served 37 women; 20 of the women served successfully completed treatment; six are still in the program; 11 women left for reasons that included relocation and transferring to an outpatient program at Liberation; 11 women delivered healthy babies; and eight children in foster care were reunited with their mothers; another 16 women who were determined to have mental health issues were connected to services and received treatment.

THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT



When people are in crisis, when they need treatment and can't afford it, when they want to take that next step in building a better life—sometimes that next step can just be too big. When individuals and families are caught in the throes of addiction with little hope in sight, Liberation can be the lifeline they are looking for—if we have the resources.

At Liberation, we want to help each person we serve enjoy lifelong recovery but recent budget cuts have sliced deep. Government agencies that once contracted for our services are no longer able to continue due to cuts in their own budgets. Funds allocated by the President to address substance abuse will not trickle down to community-based addiction treatment providers. Liberation is currently facing cuts totaling almost \$800,000. As a result, our ability to provide lifesaving services is in serious jeopardy.

The support we receive from our community partners has never been more important. Liberation has achieved some remarkable accomplishments in the past few years—the construction of 18 units of permanent supportive housing for families in Norwalk and the relocation of our Families in Recovery Program to newly renovated space. These things could not take place without the support of people like you. Every private dollar we receive helps us achieve greatness and makes it possible to extend critical day-to-day services to those who so desperately need our help. Support makes it possible for us to extend treatment to those who are uninsured or under insured, it helps provide mental health services and even the basic everyday things many of us take for granted—a toothbrush, soap, even diapers. Without your help, we face limitations on how much we can provide and how many we can help. Through our partnership, the investment you make today will help save lives in the coming year.