



THE LOOP

A COLLECTION OF STORIES FROM AROUND CALIFORNIA

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WestCare Family,

As we remember and celebrate the significance of the motherly figures in our lives, I want to take this time to honor the living angel in my life who is the person on this earth that I have the utmost respect for and that has taught me to be the person I am today - my mama. Not only did she take care of us with patience and devotion, but she did so with complete unselfishness and with the purest love of all, ready to sacrifice anything and everything to ensure our happiness and wellbeing. I extend this respect and honor to all of our WCCA mothers - all of them. Motherhood does not only come from birthing a child. It is definitely a choice we make to care, nurture, and love a child. That love for another human and our willingness to put their needs above ours is what makes us mothers and on this special day, we honor the contribution of all mothers, acknowledging the efforts of strong maternal bonds, and the role of mothers everywhere! For all of our mommas that have passed on, we honor their memory by being the best versions of ourselves that we can be and carrying out their teachings in all that we do. Happy **Mother's Day!**

I would now like to welcome my colleague, Dr. Herbert Cruz, to share some poignant thoughts on May's observance of Mental Health Matters Month.



Mary Ann Kroy
Mary Ann Kroy, Vice President
WestCare California

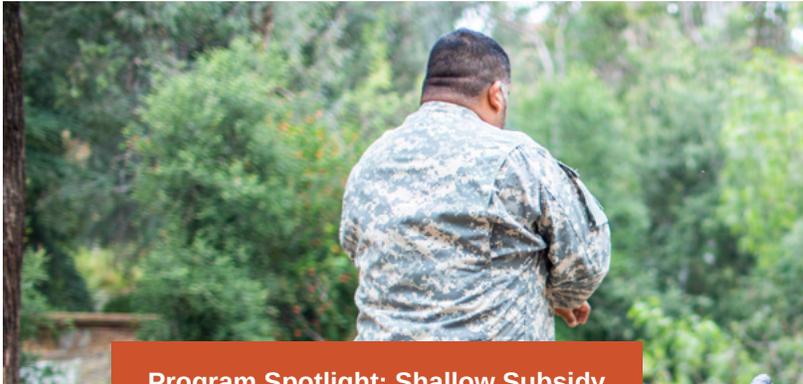
The goal of **Mental Health Matters Month** every May is to enhance awareness and assist in recognizing access to mental health services. At any given moment, approximately 52 million people in the U.S. are dealing with the direct impact of mental illness. COVID-19 has certainly increased recognition of anxiety disorders and depressive episodes, and now as the pandemic wanes, individuals that may have shied away from participating in in-person treatment are urged to get in to see their providers.

More importantly, early recognition of psychiatric disorders is critical. As early as 1946, articles were being written about early manifestations and recognition of mental disorders. At that time, psychiatry and even nomenclature (what we called the disorders) was in its infancy. In 2022 however, groups such as Mental Health America (MHA) support universal screening for potential mental health problems. One very important risk factor for mental health issues is, of course, family history. There are psychiatric disorders (such as depression, anxiety, and bipolar disorder) that tend to run in family members. There are other disorders whose impact leads to familial pathology. For example, parents of children with ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) tend to develop depressive disorders at a higher rate than the general population. Finally, familial patterns through exposure can emerge such as intimate partner violence, suicide, and many substance use disorders. It is important to perform periodic screenings via primary care or even self-screening of children and family members.

One of the earliest intervention points is that of primary care physicians. If someone is tired or fatigued from anemia, it is possible that they may not be taking in sufficient nutrition due to depression or paranoia. If someone is seeking a sleep medication, it may be that their insomnia stems from use of substances or depression of the unipolar or even bipolar type. Although many primary care physicians are not necessarily comfortable with diagnosing and treating mental health, at the very least, they can refer to a mental health professional for further assessment. Any time there is a change in mood, function, or threat of suicidality or harm to others, that is an indicator of need for intervention. The key is that **mental health matters.**"



Herbert Cruz
Herbert Cruz, M.D., Medical Director
WestCare California



Program Spotlight: Shallow Subsidy

By **Cherri Conant, Lead Veteran Advocate, SJVV - Shallow Subsidy**

WestCare California's **Shallow Subsidy Extended Service** provided by **San Joaquin Valley Veterans (SJVV)** offers an extension of the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) grant to qualifying Veterans. Shallow Subsidy provides a two-year subsidy for monthly rent and helps bridge participants through supportive services and community connections to permanently sustainable living by increasing income, obtaining a lower rent unit, and/or a permanent subsidy. We have added two advocates and one resource specialist in each of our offices in Stockton, Fresno, and Tulare to provide the two-year commitment of support for participants.

Eligible Veterans will qualify for SSVF services at the time of entry and have documented low income, a lease in place, and will be able to consistently pay 50 percent of their rent and utilities. The case managers and the resource specialist provide light case management and work with the Veteran to provide supportive services. Services that we can provide include goal setting, budgeting assistance, applications to subsidized housing, identifying more appropriate housing, SOAR representation, (if necessary) and connections to other assistance programs to help maintain and sustain their housing. SJVV has always had the mission of getting and keeping our Veterans housed and this is another tool that we can use in our SSVF toolbox.



A Testiment to Success featuring Mark

Mark accepted a transfer to Shallow Subsidy Extended Service through SJVV's Stockton office after successfully completing the rapid rehousing program with the help of the amazing team who were able to help him increase his income while identifying and qualifying for housing. However, over time, it became apparent that with his declining health and limited mobility that he would benefit from the new Shallow Subsidy Extended Service to assist him in obtaining resources as he entered the next phase of his life. Mark was stably housed in an upstairs apartment, but often struggled to make his appointments due to the stairs and long walk to the parking lot to get to his car. The Shallow Subsidy team were able to quickly identify his barrier and began to reach out to the landlord regularly and advocate for Mark to move into a downstairs apartment. Mark will be moving into his downstairs unit this month and was able to transfer the security deposit, paid for by SJVV with SSVF funds, to that new unit. Mark, utilizing the Shallow Subsidy team's resources in the area, was also able to apply for the Sierra PACE Program to gain that extra assistance with his day-to-day living by providing transportation, medical needs, and housekeeping services. Mark wants to stay in his own home for as long as possible and the Shallow Subsidy team has been able to help him navigate the community resources needed to succeed in independent living.



Shout Out to Ivory Carter, Veteran Advocate, SJVV - Shallow Subsidy (Fresno)

"Ivory Carter hit the ground running from the moment that he joined the team. Ivory has readily accepted every challenge presented to him, including accepting participants in other counties as the new advocates in that county gained training. He is always forward thinking about his participants and trying to plan for their next steps in their journey. Thank you, Ivory, for all that you have done and continue to do to uplift our Veterans!" - Cherri Conant, Lead Veteran Advocate, SJVV - Shallow Subsidy



Kudos to: Raymond Gonzales, Outreach Specialist, and Patrick Martinez, Educator, SJVV (Fresno)

"I wanted to highlight Raymond Gonzales, Outreach Specialist, and Patrick Martinez, Educator, for stepping up and providing last-minute coverage for WestCare at Fresno City College's Spring 2022 Job Fair! The team made connections with Fresno City College staff and vendors in attendance and will be sharing information with our team of the resources available to our Veterans served!" - Yadi Renteria, SSVF Program Coordinator, SJVV (Fresno)



4.27 - Administrative Professionals Day

In April, we celebrated Administrative Professionals Day by sharing our appreciation for all of our wonderful support staff! All of your hard work and dedication to your fellow staff and those that we serve does not go unnoticed. We appreciate you and all that you do on behalf of our organization! Thank you!

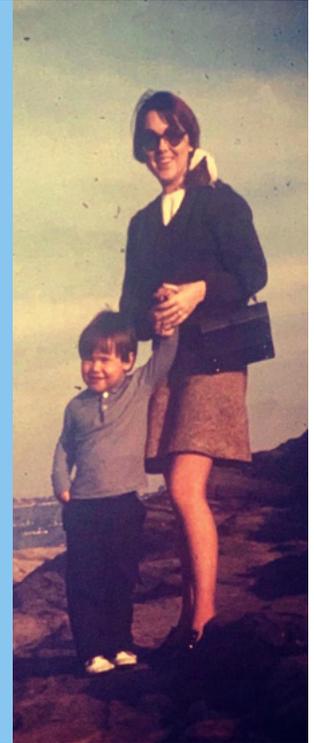


Gabriela Espinosa-McNiel, *VP of Marketing & Communications, WestCare Foundation*

"My mom is patience, strength, faith and love! She is the glue that binds our family together. Honestly, she is quite possibly the nicest person you'd ever meet. Our family describes super nice and kind people they meet as 'Tia Vicky-ish!' I hope to be just like her when I grow up!"

Robert Church, *Deputy Administrator, Admin*

"Mom showed me the meaning of strength and love. She set boundaries with love that allowed me to be the man I am today. RIP."



Teresa McCracken, *Case Manager, STOP Area 3 Fresno*

"My mother is my world, my rock, and my best friend. She shows the love of Jesus Christ to others through her selflessness and makes me want to be a better person every day. She is my hero. Her unconditional love for her family amazes me and her heart is so full of love that it takes my breath away. I love her more than words could ever say."



Carolina Avila, *Housing Locator, HUD CES*

"My mom means everything to me. This woman is like no other. She gave me life and taught me to be strong. There are no words to describe how important this woman is to me. I love my mama."



Charmain Turner, *Counselor Tech, Richmond*

"My mother is a strong beautiful person and my grandmother is the most, loving, kind, honest, and giving person I have ever met. I am so grateful to have had her in my life. I can't find the right words to sum up the abundance of life and love treasures she shared, but I can say that I do not know who or what I would have done without her. She introduced me to God and showed me the power of prayer and for that I am forever grateful and blessed. I love you, grandmother!"



Mary Ann Knoy, *Vice President, Administration*

"My mama is my strength, my mentor, and my rock. Her love, dedication, and humility have taught me to always do my absolute best and to be a genuinely good person."



Michelle Stone, *Counselor, Belmont*

"My mother is my inspiration for who I have become. Through watching her trauma and struggles, I have become a better woman today."



Ada Bren, *Veteran Advocate, SJVV Tulare*

"My mother is the epitome of strength, sacrifice, and the purest of Love. She is a woman to admire and I am proud to follow in her footsteps."



Michael Mygind, *Director of Marketing - CA/NV, Administration*

"To this day, I continue to learn so much from my mom! She is kind, patient and opens each new day with open arms!"

Celebrating MOTHER'S DAY

Enjoy these sentiments sent in from our WestCare California team that celebrate the special moms in their lives!

Mental Health Matters Month

Throughout the month of May, members of our WestCare California family proudly recognized **Mental Health Matters Month** with pledges on how they plan to improve their own mental well-being and help end the stigma surrounding mental illness! Mental health plays a tremendous role in our services and affects us all. Our pledges are the first step to having honest conversations with ourselves and our loved ones as we work together to end the stigma and live happier and healthier lives! Head to our social media pages to read everyone's pledge!



Our 1st Quarter CORE Recipients



February: Dedication
India Brletic,
Admissions Specialist,
Fresno Admissions



February: Dedication
Rosa Garcia,
Navigator,
Housing Services



March: Customer Service
Amy Hooper,
Administrative Assistant,
Administration



March: Customer Service
Ilene Cervantes,
Administrative Assistant,
Housing Services



March: Customer Service
Jeremiah Hinojosa,
Vocational Counselor,
MLK Residential



March: Customer Service
LeeAnn Girardeau,
Admissions Specialist,
Fresno Admissions

Employee of the Month: 1st Quarter



Community-Based Employee of the Month - January:
Mayra Maldonado, GPD Case Manager, SJVV
Veterans Plaza

"Mayra has gone above and beyond to assist our incoming case managers while simultaneously managing her GPD case load and the Vons Veterans to Work Grant. Despite an increased workload, she hasn't complained or shied away from being of assistance. She takes initiative, and I can't ask for more from a team player than one that takes positively-charged steps based on initiative! As a female Veteran herself, she continues to stay mission-focused within her duties as a WestCare employee and within our Veteran community."

- Angie Edwards, Program Director, SJVV



Criminal Justice Employee of the Month - February:
Kori Gillis, Vocational Counselor, CCTRP - San Diego

"Kori is an outstanding employee who I would like to recognize for the passion and creativity he brings to his job as a Vocational Counselor. When he realized that a lot of our clients had trouble learning the WestCare Philosophy, he turned it into a hip hop song, now fondly titled, 'Funky Fresh.' Both clients and staff sing and dance (With the moves he added to it!) along at the close of our daily morning meetings. It creates a positive and upbeat environment for both clients and staff and is a good reminder that you can have fun and still be sober! When our facility was under quarantine, he created the 'WestCare Coronacles,' a weekly newspaper for clients while in quarantine. In addition, he has taken it upon himself to ensure that our clients are able to continue their schooling while we actively recruit a new teacher. He researched an online high school diploma program for phase 3 clients and wrote a proposal which would ensure that clients were able to continue their education with Feather River College when they arrived from an institution. Kori never does the bare minimum. He is always looking for ways to help our clients grow and Uplifts the Human Spirit by inspiring hope in the individuals that he works with!"

- Stephanie Bertrand, Program Director, CCTRP - San Diego



Criminal Justice Employee of the Month - March:
Wanda Turner, Cook, Bakersfield Residential

"Wanda does what is requested from her and regularly goes above and beyond. She comes in on her days off, stays late when needed, and does it all without complaint. She is currently the only cook that we have and has been extremely patient and understanding throughout the entire process. Wanda asks clients when their birthdays are and prepares a little something for all of them to celebrate. She has adjusted the menu to have more flavorful and desired meals and always completes tasks with a hearty 'Yes' and a big smile."

- Dwayne Gotay, Program Director, Bakersfield Residential

Connect with us in California

Get in touch with our Marketing Department to learn more about what is happening in WestCare California at marketing@westcare.com