

Testimony before the Mental Health Subcommittee
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Lee Russell

I do not know where I'd be today without the services of InterCommunity.

In November 2005 I lost my job of twenty five years largely due to poor job performance related to my problems with depression and anxiety. This was shattering to me as I am alone and my life was based around my job. Three years later, after my severance and COBRA benefits had run out, I was feeling worthless, suicidal and hopeless. Sometimes I was unable to get out of bed for two days.

I was calling psychiatric practices trying to be put back on medication. I called the psychiatric APRN I had used after my layoff, but had stopped going to when my insurance ran out. She had worked at InterCommunity and contacted a colleague there. I then set up an intake evaluation appointment for the first week in January 2009.

I was extremely positively impressed by the therapist who did my intake eval. I started group therapy at the next session of the Depression/Anxiety group. About two months later I started going to Common Ground, the social club of InterCommunity. Group and Common Ground were two of the few places I could go where I felt safe and not uncomfortable about my illness. I could go to the Common Ground and sit by myself and read or drink my tea, which was much better than the idle isolation at home which had taken over most of my life. Eventually I started socializing at Common Ground and became friendly with other Common Ground Members.

I have found all the staff with whom I have had contact at InterCommunity friendly, helpful and supportive. My therapist there is truly exceptional.

I now have had a part-time job for 2½ years, largely because of help from InterCommunity's employment services staff and a recommendation from a Common Ground staff member.

I still go to InterCommunity for therapy, med management and help with cleaning up the clutter which contributes to my anxiety. I still socialize at Common Ground and tutor other clients in computer usage.

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