

Bipartisan Subcommittee on Gun Violence Prevention and Children's Safety
Mental Health Working Group
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Tinia Rodriguez

Hello, my name is Tinia Rodriguez. I am from Bridgeport, CT. Thank you for this opportunity to listen to my testimony.

“What people have the capacity to choose, they have the ability to change.”

— Madeleine Albright

Put yourselves in my shoes: a young child put into circumstances and traumas with no fault of her own.

Now picture this: A young adult brought up without any support or mentor to look up to. What to do? That is always the question of all young adults being transitioned to adulthood?

Thankfully, there are services, agencies, and non-profits that are available to direct our young adults to a positive, fulfilling, and productive life. However, much more funding and supported programs are needed to help maintain a safe and secure haven for those with mental illnesses.

In my case, thanks to the clubhouse called Bridge House, I was able to succeed and maintain recovery. In Bridge House I am not a client or treated differently because of my mental illness. I am a whole person. Caseworkers are called staff and clients are called members. Each work hand in hand to cater to the needs and goals to fit each individual. Such as: housing, education, employment, socialization and a place to belong.

Without these mental health services, I would not be able to function a normal and successful life. By cutting mental health services it would ruin the infrastructure of our mental health system. As a person we have the freedom to choose to realize our condition and wanting to seek help, not because we were forced to. As, young adults we are already rebellious and seeking to find our way in society. Taking away our right to choose a mental health service that best fits our own personal needs will only cause us to shut down and isolate ourselves from others and led to hurting ourselves.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak out and advocate for all persons needing assistance. Please we need more support and funding for our recovery and the right to choose what services best suit our personal needs. Please don't tear down our safety net!