

**Testimony before Task Force to Study the Provision of Behavioral Health Services for Young Adults  
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Age: 27

Current and Past Affiliations: Intercommunity, YASBIZ, and Join Rise Be

Good afternoon members of the Task Force to Study the Provision of Behavioral Health Services for Young Adults. My name is Jesse Cote and I am currently in long-term recovery from a primary diagnosis of Bipolar Disorder.

Currently, I receive outpatient service at Intercommunity Mental Health, and also assist as a mentor, group leader, and co-coordinator with the young adult program. Today, I'd like to expand on how a strong outpatient program can help, and has helped many like me to become independent in today's ever-evolving society.

Before I had my feet planted solidly on the ground, I needed help dealing with a mental health diagnosis. Part of this was because I was never given information about my diagnosis, and was never included in discussions about my treatment plan.

For me, it all came together when I was finally given the wrap around support that I needed to feel that there was a safety net for if I fell. This encouraged me to keep taking small, but productive steps in my recovery. My team is comprised of a therapist, an APRN, and an organization that offers a variety of recovery resources. With this team I am equipped for life in the real world so that I can soon complete not only my program, but also the transition into adulthood.

What I have found is that when people who are being paid to help me don't care about their jobs they don't help me nearly as much as those who make this their life ambition; indeed, devoted workers in this field not only have a professional way of assisting young people with the problem(s) at hand, but also show that they too are on a mission to guide someone towards recovery.

It is interesting that once I understood the challenges I had to rise above and began living my life as I defined it, I began to give back to the community. It started with volunteering my time with the young adult program at Intercommunity, and it wasn't too long before my improvement really started to shine.

For all that I endured, I now became a person in a very privileged position. I had been given the opportunity to lead the young adult newspaper group, become a young adult that would be a mentor to others, and I was even given the chance to do Recovery Assistant work within the greater recovery community through another non-profit.

Today, I run a creative group every Wednesday at the organization, as well as keeping a leadership status among the young adults in the program. I am so grateful for the services that were provided for me, and the opportunities to explore my strengths and apply myself in positions of responsibility.

I've learned so much about independent living. Everything from making sure I keep a schedule for daily tasks, to exploring my gifts in acting, music, and writing. This has all reminded me of how blessed I am that I was able to receive wrap around services that empowered me through consistent and secure guidance offered by dedicated and compassionate staff!

If I were to be asked how to go about helping someone who is experiencing mental health challenges, I'd suggest enhancing out-patient services. This means that they not only have to be accessible, so the barrier of transportation needs to be addressed, but also that outpatient services need to integrate both clinical treatment options and recovery supports that extend beyond medication and clinical groups.

In addition, these services need to be offered to everyone - no matter their socioeconomic status, or how they are planning on paying for them. If this were to be accomplished, then I fully believe, based on my experience and the experiences of my peers, that young people will be given the opportunity to become their own person again. This means that they will be able to go out into the real world and live life to their fullest potential - hopefully remembering to give back to those that gave so much.