

Grant program: Second Chance Act

Grantee Type: Adult Offenders with Co-Occurring Substance Abuse and Mental Health Disorders

State: Ohio

Grantee: Ohio Department of Youth Services (DYS)

Program Name: Franklin County's Integrated Co-Occurring Treatment (ICT) Program

Janelle, who will soon turn 20, has a long history of drug use and criminal behavior. She started dealing crack-cocaine at age 12. By 14 she was regularly smoking pot, drinking, and popping pills. Her first arrest was at age 15. By 16, she had spent over a year in court-mandated residential substance abuse treatment.

Janelle had a very troubled childhood. Between the ages of 8 and 12, Janelle was the repeated victim of sexual abuse by her stepfather. (He was convicted of the crime and died in prison in 2009.) Her school record was poor. She was expelled in the seventh grade for setting a fire in a classroom and threatening a teacher. She dropped out entirely in the ninth grade. When she was 18 years old, she was reading at a fifth grade level.

In 2010, Janelle was arrested for complicity in an armed robbery. She and a young male accomplice held up a pizza deliveryman at gunpoint; her older sister, worried about the path Janelle appeared to be on, turned her into the police. The young woman spent a year and three months in state prison. While incarcerated, she received a diagnosis of co-occurring bipolar disorder (with psychotic tendencies) and substance use disorder.

She was released in August 2011 and linked to Franklin County's Integrated Co-Occurring Treatment (ICT) Program, operated by the Ohio Department of Youth Services and a recipient of a 2010 Second Chance Act grant. Initially she met with her clinician three or four times a week; this was later reduced to once a week. Her ICT clinician helped her manage her medication, live a drug-free life, face her traumatic past, prepare to return to school and make better decisions. She passed every random urine screen and never missed an appointment with her psychiatrist.

Janelle found support at the exact moment she most needed it. After her release, she was required to live with her mother, but their relationship was severely strained. Janelle blamed her mother for not preventing her stepfather's raping her and for not believing her daughter. Janelle's clinician helped her process these feelings and identify alternative support systems—which included her older sister who had turned her into the police.

The program also helped Janelle find work and return to school. She participated in a job skills training with her ICT clinician, who assisted with job applications, interviewing tips, and referrals to potential employers. She was employed by Wal-Mart during the 2011 holiday season and continues to apply for work through temporary service employment agencies. She also enrolled in an online school with the goal of graduating, and her participation has been problem-free since her reenrollment several months ago.

She plans to leave the Columbus area in order to put her traumatic past and negative peers behind her. With the help of her ICT clinician, Janelle applied for a Job Corps placement out of Columbus. She has now completed her court-mandated enrollment in ICT and was referred to ongoing outpatient medication management and counseling. The young woman found in ICT the tools she needed to live a healthier life. For the first time in her life, she is hopeful.

All names and other identifying details have been concealed to preserve individuals' privacy.