

Dylan Johnson
Recovery Coach for Turning Point Center of Bennington
Recovery Day Testimony
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Good afternoon,

My name is Dylan Johnson and I am a Recovery Coach and Data Analyst for the Turning Point Center of Bennington and an Intake Coordinator for the Paradise Residential Treatment Facility. I am here today to connect my own personal story of recovery and redemption with the importance of Recovery Coaching and Residential Treatment Facilities.

My journey began in Baltimore, Maryland, where I was born and raised. I had a wonderful childhood, with a loving and supportive family, and yet, in spite of that, I still ended up using cocaine for the first time in my late teens and heroin at age 21. Within a year, I had lost everything: my job, family, friends, house, everything. I was living in California and moved back to my father's house in Baltimore to try and get sober. However, even with my father supporting me, I quickly relapsed again and wound up homeless in West Baltimore. This was most likely due to my father being in over his head. He was not a specialist, and while he tried his best, it was not at the level of a Treatment Facility. While on the street, I ended up getting into legal trouble. This led to me being put on probation in Baltimore in the summer of 2019, and I, once again, moved back in with my father. I was very fortunate to have him as a support. Unfortunately, not long after being put on probation, he passed away in his sleep. Thankfully, my mother helped get my probation transferred to Vermont to be closer to her.

Residential treatment facilities and Recovery Residences were never brought up by any of the agencies I worked with in Baltimore. Nor was I offered any recovery programming such as one-on-one Recovery Coaching. However, once I touched base with my PO in Vermont, I quickly realized that there were better ways of doing things. He implored me to get in touch with Turning Point. I went and introduced myself and was immediately connected with Bennington's recovery community. I started going to therapy, recovery groups, and utilized Turning Points connections and programming. Soon after, I went to community college to get a degree in Behavioral Science. While at CCV, I took a Work Experience Class. I had to find an internship with a Recovery Organization. My first thought was the Turning Point Center. I went in, explained my situation, and applied. I was hired on the spot.

Today I am a Recovery Coach in our Center, the ED, and Probation and Parole. I am in charge of our data collection and I am the intake coordinator for the Paradise Residential Treatment Facility.

As the Intake Coordinator for Paradise Treatment Facility, I oversee the members' introduction to our residential program. My lived experience is a great asset in connecting with new members. Often, these individuals experience the negative effects of stigmatization and

compassion fatigue as they move through the system. So, I relish the opportunity to show them that there are people who care about and understand them, that there is a safe place for them to live and recover, and that Recovery is possible. The initial intake's importance cannot be understated. It is where the standards and boundaries of the program are set and where the client's goals and needs are identified. In short, we help to create their foundation as they embark on their Recovery Journey.

I also manage the data collection and analysis for the Turning Point Center of Bennington and Paradise Treatment Facility. Data collection is a vital part of our work. It is crucial for designing and maintaining good programming. It helps us to see what works and what doesn't. Almost everything we do is tracked and analyzed. Recovery is difficult work. Anyone who has worked in the field knows success rates are relatively low and recidivism is high. That makes data analysis all the more important. It is how we learn, adapt, and grow as an organization.

Many people here today are asking to support the \$1.25m Recovery Coaching Program, which supports all the incredible work Recovery Centers are doing across the state of Vermont. I hope my speech demonstrated the importance of Recovery Programming and Data Collection within Recovery Centers and Recovery Residences. I am so incredibly grateful for the opportunities afforded to me by the Turning Point Center and the State of Vermont. Let's make sure they continue.

Thank you and have a wonderful day,
Dylan Johnson