

Dylan Johnson
Recovery Coach for Turning Point Center of Bennington
Recovery Day Testimony
2/11/26

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. Despite his limitations, I was very lucky to have a family member with a house who was willing to help. If I did not have him, I am unsure what I would have done. Residential treatment facilities and Recovery Residences were never brought up by any of the agencies I worked with. Nor was I offered any recovery programming such as one-on-one Recovery Coaching while on probation in Baltimore.

Not long after being put on probation my father died in his sleep from a heart attack. My mother came down to Maryland and begged the PO to transfer me to Vermont, where she lived, and they finally acquiesced. Once I touched base in Vermont with my PO, 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.

I often think about the lack of opportunities afforded to me in Baltimore. I am sure there were Recovery Residences, Residential Treatment Facilities, and Recovery Centers, but at no point did anyone with any authority on the subject recommend them. If I did not have my father, I am not sure what I would have done. It felt impossible to get sober on the street. Having a safe and structured environment to get sober in is paramount. As the intake coordinator, I meet with every individual who moves into the Paradise Residential Treatment Facility. I see them at their lowest, the most decisive moment in their Recovery, and I see them after months of treatment as they prepare to depart. The opportunities afforded to them through Residential Treatment are immense. They are able to shower and sleep in a warm bed at night. They are required to connect with a Recovery Coach, Recovery Groups, and any other necessary treatment options, as well as to clean up after themselves and manage their responsibilities. They learn how to live with other individuals, to communicate more effectively, and to advocate for themselves. Take it all together and they learn how to live a healthy, substance-free life. There is nothing more important for an individual suffering from the disease of addiction, especially one with no home or support network.

I hope my speech today demonstrated the importance of Recovery Programming, including long-term Residential Treatment Facilities, in helping individuals get sober. I do want to clarify that Residential Treatment Facilities and Recovery Residences are separate, but they complement each other in the system of care in an important way. Often, an individual “steps down” from one to the other as their recovery progresses and they need less immediate clinical intervention. Many people are here today asking for support for S.157, which is a bill that is needed and important for recovery residences. This bill does not affect treatment facilities since those are clinical and already regulated.

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