

Chairman Jordan, Ranking Member O'Brien and members of the Senate Finance Subcommittee on Government & Agency Review, I appreciate the opportunity to share my story with you.

I would like to introduce myself to all of you. It is my pleasure to stand in front of you today but to be asked to stand up here and tell you my story is an honor & privilege.

I am Tara Snyder a grateful recovering addict. I am currently employed at Community Assessment Treatment Services located in Cleveland, the place that gave me a chance to live a life that I couldn't even imagine. It was an extremely long & treacherous road before I could even think of holding a job, let alone be employed anywhere. It all began at the age when other girls were celebrating their sweet 16 except there was nothing sweet about the life I lived. I was in a car accident, when I suffered a dislocated shoulder at which time the doctor prescribed an opiate pain killer that killed far more than the pain. I rapidly learned that it came at a very high cost. I started abuse immediately but the doctor quickly caught on and stopped prescribing.

This led me to find other ways to obtain that which I believed was the answer to all my questions. I wanted it, I needed it & I couldn't live without it. I was forced to buy them on the street for far more money than they were worth but also a cost I couldn't afford. I found any means to get what I had to have.

At 17 I was a full blown intravenous heroin addict. I wasn't welcome into my mother's house without the thought that I would steal anything within reach. The cost just kept racking up and it came in the form of my home, my time and the time of my loved ones, my self-respect, my dignity, & my inability to maintain any type of relationships. I was in and out of detoxification, county jails, treatment centers, roach infested motels, homeless shelters, living on the streets & finally landing in prison. My addiction robbed me of 3 years of my life that I can never get back. It was spent at the Ohio Reformatory for Women. At the time of my stay, they didn't offer any recovery programs for women with less than 4 years on their sentence. The only education I gained was how to be a knowledgeable/manipulative criminal. I didn't finally get sober until I was sentenced to CATS in 2013.

At Community Assessment I learned a better way of life, coping skills, thinking for a change & criminal conduct. They taught me everything needed to live a successful & fulfilling life, things that I could not learn on the streets, behind bars or while using drugs. After finally getting my head in the game & taking my life seriously I began the greatest journey of my life. I was alive for the first time & actually loving every minute of it.

Upon my departure from CATS, I headed to sober living to start a life I had yet to lead. I obtained employment and paying bills came shortly after. Once I was able to obtain my driver's license which was a day I didn't think would ever come. I quickly began sponsoring other woman from CATS, taking them to meetings & helping them work the 12 steps. I wanted to give back what was so freely given to me. Members at Community Assessment seen the way I was leading by example and showing that I had become a productive member of society. I was given a chance to apply for a position in the billing department. What was once a vision of mine to help other woman in the way in which I had been helped & giving others the chance at a life, had become reality when I was presented with an offer to

work at the place that had saved my life. I now have 4 unbelievable years of uninterrupted sobriety. It is a true blessing to be employed at the place that has saved the lives of many as well as my own. There is no length of time or amount of action that I could do, to show my gratitude for the life that I once thought I couldn't find the strength to lead for a day.