



**COMMUNITY  
SUPPORT  
SERVICES**

# LIFE CHAT

A publication spotlighting CSS clients

September 2021

## In this issue:

Self-care stories



Client poetry



Supported Employment  
success story



Client art



Tribute to RAC member

## Make time for self-care during difficult times

The term “self-care” is a trendy term, but what does it mean? At its most basic, self-care is about taking care of yourself—*all* parts of yourself. That includes not just physical care, but care for the mind, spirit, and social aspects, too. Self-care can include spending more time with friends and loved ones, meditating, getting enough sleep, eating well, praying, exercising, spending time in nature, doing activities that stimulate thought, and other meaningful activities. Self-care helps to build resilience and give you the strength to fight through stressful times.

In this issue, RAC members share what self-care means to them and how it can help during tough times.

For even more ideas, visit these links:

**5 self-care practices:** <https://bit.ly/2WKLjbc>

**15 self-care activities:** <https://bit.ly/2WPBWa4>



## We want to hear from you!

Contact Danya Bailey at 330-253-9388, ext. 238, or Narkeetah Brazil, at ext. 165, for the next Recovery Advisory Council (RAC) meeting or to contribute your art-istry or recovery story to Life Chat.

(See back page for RAC information.)

## Reese Cup – a sweet friend

At the top of my self-care list is Reese Cup. No, not satisfying a craving – unless you mean not getting enough of my 3-year-old cat, who I named Reese Cup because of the color of her fur. She is my family. I feel like her mother.

Having Reese Cup gives me responsibility, something to do. Without her, I'd be so lonely and my apartment would be too quiet.

Here's a little about Reese Cup: She's moody, feisty, and often nips at my fingers. She gets really excited when I purchase her toys that look like a squirrel, which is why it's good I have her only as a house cat. Whenever a squirrel comes up to the window, she pounces on the glass to try to get to it. Yikes! Reese Cup likes to curl up by me, sensing when I'm happy or sad. I often wake up to her licking my face, as she wonders what my loud snore is. She's my joy, my Reese Cup.

- Carol S.



## Self love

The greatest love on earth  
Is with us at our birth.  
We know just what we need,  
We care not where we do our deed,  
We insist on being heard  
Even without knowing a word.

At 2 we will explore  
The world outside our door.  
We will question everything we see  
Insist on all attention given to me, me, me  
We know that we are still bound  
To be the center of all around.

At 10 we first begin to fly  
And our hopes and dreams are ever high  
We leap and bound ahead once more  
Yet begin to run into an unexplainable door  
One which will our inner ego disturb  
As we are told our selfish ways must curb  
And yield the way for others to share our space  
With limited time and goods and needs to embrace.

At sweet 16 we are chastened again  
To be sure to remain in our own lane within  
Hunker down and focus on the greater good  
Behave as expected as we leave childhood  
Begin to put others first, the golden rule  
And fit in with peers so that we are cool.

By 20 some we are all turned around  
That greatest love seems to surely be drowned  
And now we are ever onward straight and tall  
Like trees in a forest, we answer the call  
To follow the crowd we set ourself aside and acclimate  
Our thoughts and aims we do habituate.

Bitterly lost and feverishly ungrounded at 35  
We look back and yearn once more to revive  
That long lost wonder, the joy of the soul within  
That has gone dark, dwindled, has been rescind  
We want to capture that lust for life, such zeal  
To love ourselves again we have to heal.

Now as I approach half a century  
I care less what others think of me  
I say and do just what I please  
As on this life I renew my lease  
I know now where the parameters are  
So my eccentricities don't venture too far  
I still don't wish to be ostracized  
Perhaps my full self-love isn't yet realized

Will I reach a time that is yet to come  
When others' opinions affect me none  
I wish upon my star at night  
To be a wild woman in bright moonlight  
But yet as still I'm learning more  
To yield to self, and my inner world explore.

- Angie Fawn

## "Being the best JR I can be"

Self-care for me means to grow my mind and grow into a better person. Being in the CET (Cognitive Enhancement Therapy) Alumni Group helps me to stay aware of how I want to act and present myself to others. Here are ways I've learned to keep a healthy mind:

- **Know my strengths.** Appreciate that I have the ability to get along with others, whether at work or anywhere.
- **Take responsibility for my actions.** I work on making changes to improve my relationships.
- **Practice having positive self-thoughts.** Believe in myself.
- **Don't easily give up on what's difficult.** Adapt to change.
- **Learn to be patient.**
- **Have realistic/reachable goals.**
- **Don't compare myself to others.**



- JR



"Self-care affects every part of my life. When my diet is in order, my mental health is stable. Also, all other self-care - exercising and bathing - plays a part." - *Joan Ahlstrom*, whose collage is pictured above.



## "Press the reset button"

I always stay so busy. I go here and there, but what am I accomplishing!?!? I got to the point of saying, "enough's enough." I decided to press the reset button on my life. I don't want it so crowded. If I commit to an activity or appointment that's really, really important to me, then that's what I want to follow through on. I don't want to overlap it with something else and not finish what I start out to do. Being focused feels good. More structure feels good. Although it's in me to run off to the next meeting or doing whatever, I have to keep pressing the reset button.

- Ray Thomas



## Supported Employment Services Success Story

By Joel Voorman, SE Recovery Specialist



Winston Churchill once said, "Never, never, never give up." CSS Supported Employment client Jeff Jones is proof there is wisdom in that advice.

Jeff was one of CSS' first clients when the doors opened in 1988 and has been working with Supported Employment for more than 10 years to find and maintain a job. In addition to managing his mental health issues, Jeff had to juggle caring for his grandkids with his job search. He regularly attended the department's weekly Job Club meeting, where he was able to learn job-seeking and social skills, which he has used during his employment.



Jeff worked hard with his Supported Employment Specialist, Alisa Harris, to develop a professional resume, learn job interview skills, and become linked with other resources to help him achieve his goals. After years of navigating the program, the hard work of Jeff and the Supported Employment team paid off when Alisa was able to place Jeff at the Eye Opener restaurant as a dishwasher in 2019.

"The program gave me the skills to obtain the job and then maintain it," Jeff said.

While reaping the fruits of his hard work was rewarding for Jeff, it was equally rewarding to the Supported Employment crew, who dedicated much time and effort in helping Jeff overcome obstacles in his employment search. Jeff worked hard at the Eye Opener and was dedicated to his job until, through no fault of his own, his employment abruptly came to an end after he impressively maintained his position for two years.

Jeff at Denny's, where he works.

Instead of feeling sorry for himself, Jeff got on the phone with Alisa, and the two worked hard to find work with his new employer, Denny's. Jeff says working has done wonders for his mental health, noting it has "made me more stable, more available to help others, and more aware of my surroundings." He enjoys waking up in the morning knowing he has a job to go to, and his favorite part of the day is interacting with others at work.

Currently, Jeff is putting money aside to buy a car, and his goal is to maintain his employment. His advice to clients thinking about getting involved with the Supported Employment program is simple: "Do it! Stay with it! It will eventually come to you!" ♦

### Longtime RAC member passes away

*A note from Danya Bailey on the passing of longtime RAC member Lori Hackney:*

Lori, a dedicated member of RAC since at least August of 2015, when Narkeetah Brazil and I began facilitating it, passed away August 2. She was a gifted and inspired poet who contributed her work to almost every RAC newsletter since then. The best way we can remember her is by revisiting her poem that was printed in the January 2017 issue of *Life Chat*, where she searched for peace. She finally found it.



### *Searching for Peace*

If I could say the words  
That are going through my mind,  
All this madness  
I would truly find.

A nightmare to say the least;  
Night and day I try  
To get out of this hell,  
Always wondering why.

How to make it through  
Just one more day;  
Minute by minute,  
That is the only way.

I pray to be well  
And I get a little relief.  
God will rescue me now,  
Then my nightmare will turn to peace.

- Lori Hackney



# COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES

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## Resource for wellness

If you're interested in learning more about self-care strategies, mental health, and other wellness topics, a good resource online is [www.verywellmind.com](http://www.verywellmind.com). On the site you can find helpful articles, quizzes, news, and information related to mental health.

Verywell also hosts other sites for health and fitness, as well as family topics. Check them out for helpful information!

**verywell**mind



## Mission Statement

Community Support Services: Helping you achieve a healthy mind and body while supporting you to live and work in your community.

## Recovery Definition

Recovery is the continuous process of empowering an individual so he or she may live a satisfying and contributing life. It is a shared responsibility among the individual, the treatment staff, family, friends, and the community to:

- Discover or rediscover strengths and abilities
- Pursue personal goals
- Develop a sense of self-identity that allows the person to grow beyond his or her diagnosis

**The Recovery Advisory Council** is a collaborative effort with clients & family members to continuously improve the satisfaction of services for all Community Support Services clients.

