

### BestCare – One Family’s Healing Moment

“I don’t know what to do...he’s just been arrested!” she said tearfully as she walked into our waiting room one windy afternoon not too long ago. Her son – a scared, tearful, angry sixteen-year-old – followed hesitantly. We asked how we could help.

Forty-five minutes later, both the client and his mother had each already had an emergency, face-to-face session with a counselor. In that time, we’d also laid out a plan for the next twenty-four hours, sent home paperwork, and had the client’s insurance coverage checked by the administrative staff.

Thankfully, we were able to engage this family in treatment immediately – when they needed the help, not when we had time to try to help them. We were able to grasp this “healing moment” because we’d removed several barriers to treatment as a result of our participation in the NIATx 200 project.

Rather than sending this mother and son home scared and worried about the future, we helped them get started with treatment immediately, and made sure they walked away with the tools they needed to get through this crisis. We quickly placed the adolescent client in our intensive outpatient program and both mother and son now come in weekly to work on communication skills. The mother was also able to apply for low-income housing and move to a safer environment.

Before the outpatient treatment program at BestCare joined NIATx 200, clients were required to fill out twenty pages of forms, wait two weeks or more for an appointment with a counselor, and come up with a large amount of money to even begin treatment.

As a result of the changes that we’ve made as a part of our work with NIATx, we’ve eliminated all of these obstacles and are now able to provide treatment on demand. We’ve minimized the amount of required paperwork, now help clients work through the financial requirements for treatment, and are able to see clients on the same day they come for treatment.

We love opportunities for creative change that we get from working with NIATx. First and foremost, we’re learning to be flexible and meet our clients’ needs. We’re able to see clients when they most need to see us, without making them wait days or weeks, or turning them away altogether for financial considerations. Clients seem to stay in treatment rather than dropping out when we focus on them and make them feel their treatment is important. We know this family will keep coming to BestCare for treatment because we were able to help them right away.

We are now treating more families by working the NIATx way – rather than providing treatment in the same old way. And, this was truly one of the coolest moments of our respective careers.

*Shawna Vail, BA, CADCI, and Kelli Huntington, CADCI, have fifteen years of combined experience in the field of addiction treatment. BestCare Treatment Services offers detoxification services, outpatient, intensive outpatient, and residential substance abuse treatment, as well as mental health services and special services for Spanish language clients, women, and inmates.*