A place to call home means the world in recovery

At Mercy Care, we believe housing is health care. Housing services are available to Mercy Care members with a Serious Mental Health (SMI) designation who want help with housing. Members can choose services based on their strengths, needs, interests and goals.

Benefits
Taking part in services is your decision. How long you receive those services depends on your needs.

Housing services can include life skills training such as:
- Tenant rules and rights
- Crisis training
- Transportation skills
- Personal self-care
- Housekeeping skills
- Money-managing

What experts say
The goal of Mercy Care and its housing partners is to keep members in their homes. More than 98% of members enrolled in Mercy Care housing services stay in their homes permanently. Many of those members also pay some of their rent and living costs, such as food. This stability allows members to be independent. It also helps with their self-care plan.

Your self-care plan may include:
- Regularly taking medication
- Working
- Attending family and support groups
- Eating healthy
- Exercising

Getting connected to housing
Mercy Care members can work with one of seven housing providers by speaking with their SMI clinic Case Manager or Clinic Housing Specialist. They can help with referrals to housing providers.

You can find a list of service providers on the Mercy Care website at https://www.mercycareaz.org/members/rbha-formembers/resources.

 Snapshots of success: Miles B.

When Miles B. worked as a grocery store manager, he saw several people experiencing homelessness outside the Phoenix-area store. He knew from personal experience they were likely living with mental health or addiction issues. He often tried to help them get the support they needed.

Miles, an Arizona native, started his own recovery journey years earlier. He’d been using drugs, living on the streets and, eventually, ended up in jail.

He says, “My entire life had imploded.”

Miles participated in mental health programs to avoid further jail time. He realized quickly that the RI International program he signed up for was what he needed to get his life on track. Staying committed to sobriety was his first hurdle.

“It (the program) felt like it was catered specifically to me,” Miles says. “It’s designed to get you out of it (addiction). It’s a welcoming environment, but there are rules. If I had a day that I was struggling, it’s a safe place to go to work through it.”

At RI International, Miles received practical supports such as training to find a job, help with

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Keeping members connected to services

The COVID-19 crisis has taken its toll on our minds and bodies. It’s brought the added stress of social isolation, grieving, health issues and financial concerns. In May 2021, 52% of people surveyed said they had feelings of anxiety, and 43% reported they felt depressed or hopeless according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Because of this, it’s important to practice self-care such as eating healthy foods and staying on your mental health treatment plans. Mercy Care has taken extra steps since the start of this crisis to help members stay connected to health care services. We’ve expanded access to telehealth on tablets and now offer new behavior health locations in our network.

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Snapshots of success: Kym P.

Kym P. describes her recovery as “an amazing journey of ups and downs.”

She has devoted her life to being a nurturing person — to herself, her children, grandchildren, friends and even her plants. This is because she grew up in a violent home where nurturing didn’t exist. She says it’s taken decades to reach the point in her life where she is today. The key for her, Kym says, is to “be consistent with self-care.”

Kym’s recovery struggles began when she was a teenager. She developed PTSD, which she says was triggered by years of abuse from a family member. She also misused drugs and alcohol for years. Kym says, “When I cleaned up, it wasn’t hard. I’d made up my mind.”

Soon after, Kym had her first daughter. Her professional success started when watched a show about missing children. She cried all the way through it. The show inspired her to act. She contacted the parents of the missing children, and they sent her flyers.

In 1994, Kym started Nations Missing Children Organization. She grew the agency to 14 employees with the aid of a government-funded contract. Later, Kym founded the National Center for Missing Adults. At its peak, the agencies were fielding about 100 calls a day and worked with law enforcement to locate missing adults and children.

She worked tirelessly to help others, but her unresolved family issues triggered her post-traumatic stress disorder. She closed her missing persons organizations in 2010. Kym says, “I suffered deep depression and grief. I isolated.”

Partners in Recovery helped Kym get the medication and counselling she needed to treat the PTSD. RI International connected her to their housing program. “Having housing stability gave me the opportunities to focus on myself,” Kym says. “I have a beautiful apartment. I grow a lot of plants. I write about true crime.”

She has also been through a peer support specialist training at RI International. She’s developed great relationships there that help others and contribute to her recovery. A huge step in her healing journey came after 45 years. With the support of RI International staff, Kym and her brother reported their abusive family member to the Phoenix Police Department. She stated the family member was later convicted for his crimes.

“It was the hardest thing I’d done in my life,” she says.

RI International staff was there to help Kym again when she had a stroke in 2014. She relearned to walk and use her primary hand.

Kym has overcome many obstacles. She hasn’t done it alone though. Her four children, 10 grandchildren, peers and friends have helped. Kym goes on hikes with her family and kayaking with friends. This year, she’s taken up patio gardening. She grows plants, rosemary, mini bell peppers and jalapeños. Kym says, “I want to give hope to others struggling with mental health. No one can do it for us. No one else is responsible for the choices we make. We need to make a solid commitment to ourselves to stay on our recovery journey.”
Join the Mercy Care Youth Leadership Council

It’s important to help foster care youth, especially those transitioning into adulthood, on their path to wellness and success. These youth will be serving and giving back to the communities they live in. One of the best ways to serve is by joining the Youth Leadership Council.

What is the Mercy Care Youth Leadership Council (YLC)?
The YLC is made up of young people, ages 16-25, who are Mercy Care members. They’re smart, creative, resilient and have great ideas. They care about each other and their communities. They make a difference in how youth get their health care services.

If that sounds like you, we need you too! What if you could be a voice for change in your community? Meet new people and make new friends? As a member of the Mercy Care YLC, you can help shape how these services are offered:

• Physical Health
• Dental Services
• Behavioral Health
• Wellness

Why join the YLC?
• Meet new people and make new friends
• Work together for a common cause
• Create and plan events that inspire our communities
• Be part of something that makes lasting change
• Have fun

Benefits:
• Monthly stipend, $25 incentive per meeting
• Get practical experience you can put on your resumé
• Develop skills that hiring managers want, like leadership, teamwork and more

Who can join?
• Mercy Care members ages 16 to 25.
• We welcome diverse backgrounds and experiences.

When?
First Tuesday of each month from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM.

Where?
Currently, council meetings are virtual. When we resume in-person meetings, they’ll be at Mercy Care: 4500 E. Cotton Center Blvd, Phoenix, AZ 85040. Transportation to and from meetings is available.

Applying is easy
Apply online at www.mercycareaz.org/involved/committees.

Complete the Youth Leadership Council application, and email it to Kim Hemmersbach at hemmersbachk@mercycareaz.org.

Everyone can use a little extra support...

Sign up for the Pyx Health app to:
• Find resources to support your physical and mental health.
• Connect with compassionate humans for a friendly chat or help with resources.
• Feel better each day with companionship and humor.

Simply search ‘Pyx Health’ in the Apple or Google Play stores or use your smartphone and go to www.HiPyx.com to get the app.

Meet Kim Hemmersbach – A voice for transitional youth in foster care

Kim Hemmersbach, LPC is the transition age youth manager at Mercy Care since November 2020. She has worked for the health plan since 2014. She is a licensed counselor and uses this training for her current job.

Kim says, “I come from a place of advocacy and doing the right thing. I’ve always been young at heart which drew me to want to serve [for foster care] and help the youth population and their families.”

Kim really enjoys working with the Youth Leadership Council—a group made up of youth ages 16 to 25 who give input to help improve health plan services. It puts a smile on her face to see young adults come up with excellent ideas and want to help others with shared life experiences. She also works with providers to solve health service challenges.

She encourages youth to stay connected with a trusted adult for support—someone to celebrate their achievements. Also, set goals for themselves that they can reach and feel good about. Kim’s advice for youth is to apply for the Department of Child Safety’s extended foster care program before age 18. This program has great benefits that can set young adults up for success.
September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

Help keep loved ones safe from suicide by following T-A-S-C.

- **Tune-In** – Notice changes in behavior or warning signs.
- **Ask about suicide**
- **State the seriousness of suicide thoughts**
- **Connect to helping resources**

**Some warning signs**

**Body language:** being withdrawn, sleeping too much or not enough, increasing drug or alcohol use, anxious, agitated or reckless

**Speech:** talking about wanting to die, feeling hopeless, having no purpose or being a burden to others.

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**

800-273-8255

Hours: Available 24 hours.

Languages: English, Spanish.

Source: www.livingworks.net and www.save.org

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Mercy Care

As of August 2, 2021, our new location is:

4500 E. Cotton Center Blvd
Phoenix, AZ 85040

Contract services are funded under contract with AHCCCS. This is general health information and should not replace the advice or care you get from your provider. Always ask your provider about your own health care needs.

Mercy Care is administered by Aetna Medicaid Administrators, LLC, an Aetna company.

Follow Mercy Care on:

- /MercyCareAZ
- @MercyCareAZ
- @MercyCareAZ

Call Mercy Care RBHA Member Services at 602-586-1841 or 1-800-564-5465. (TTY/TDD: 711). We’re available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. 24-hour nurse line: 602-586-1841 or 1-800-564-5465.

www.MercyCareAZ.org

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Grant-funded programs to aid in recovery and mental health

Did you know that Mercy Care helps manage recovery and mental health grant funding to behavioral health providers? The funding is made possible by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

Even if your AHCCCS benefits don’t cover some of these services, you may still be able to get treatment through these grant-funded programs. These programs also help people who are uninsured.

**Mental Health Block Grant (MHBG)**

The MHBG provides mental health treatment services to:
- Adults with a Serious Mental Illness (SMI) designation.
- Children diagnosed with Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED).
- People experiencing a First Episode of Psychosis (FEP).

For information on MHBG funding, visit [https://www.mercycareaz.org/wellness/grants](https://www.mercycareaz.org/wellness/grants).

**Substance Abuse Block Grant (SABG)**

The SABG provides substance use treatment services to adults and youth. For information on SABG funding, visit [https://www.mercycareaz.org/wellness/sabg](https://www.mercycareaz.org/wellness/sabg).

**State Opioid Response (SOR) Grant**

The SOR grant helps give access to Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT), integrated care, and opioid and stimulant use addiction recovery services. For information about treating an opioid addiction, visit [https://www.mercycareaz.org/wellness/opioids](https://www.mercycareaz.org/wellness/opioids).

You can call Mercy Care Member Services at 602-586-1841, toll free at 1-800-564-5465 or TTY/TDD: 711 to get connected to care. Representatives are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.