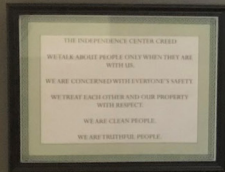


mental health
connecticut
independence center



men
Our
improvement
all Conn



United Way
of Greater Waterbury

INDEPENDENT TOGETHER

There are too many stories of men and women struggling to survive because they are challenged by mental health issues. **United Way of Greater Waterbury is writing new stories** as men and women flourish with access to the **coordinated, comprehensive health services** they need.

Until he found the support and work groups, meals, social work, and life skills training he needed at the Independence Center (IC)—run by Mental Health Connecticut and supported by United Way—**Joseph Cintia** faced homelessness and isolation as mental health challenges threatened to obscure this articulate and creative individual.

He also found the feeling that others care and describes the staff as very positive. “You can tell they really enjoy their careers and are very friendly. **The IC has given me a safe place to go**, keeping me from decompensating. Isolating and cocooning is not a good thing for me to do because I start to have bad thoughts, like maybe I don’t need my meds. But, it’s important to be med compliant for stability.”

Staff meet everyone where they are, asking **where they want to be and setting up the resources to reach that goal**. Drugs and alcohol are not prohibited on premises so IC members can make progress on their goals away from temptations. “There are places in the community to socialize but IC is drama free.”

Hundreds of our neighbors fall through the cracks, ineligible for services because they don’t meet the strict diagnostic designation or level of ability required by the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. Places like the IC create a community of care and inspire confidence in its members. **Joseph now has a home**, which he shares with a cat named Gomez Catams, and **regularly travels to Hartford to speak before legislators and advocate on behalf of those with mental health issues**. “The IC helps in the long run because we can prevent the bad things that happen to people in our community, a thing that wouldn’t happen if they had a safe place to go.”

Hear Joseph tell his story in our podcast
The Way Forward
unitedwaygw.org/podcast