

Mary Carol DeVilbiss

My name is Mary Carol DeVilbiss and I worked for the Health Dept. for 10 years. I am a Mental Health/Addictions Counselor and earned an AAS in Mental Health/Human Services.

I graduated from Essex Community College with Substance Abuse Counseling Certificates. I am currently licensed by the State as a CAC-AD and hold certifications with MAPCB as a CCDC and CCJP. I retired early about 4 years ago and held positions with the Health Dept. as a:

Project Specialist
Approved Supervisor
Addictions Counselor

I was hired to supervise the Adult Drug Court Program which I managed successfully for the majority of my work time with the Health Dept.. I later was transferred to the Health Department's main addictions office to work as an addictions counselor and did all of the rapid assessments for offenders in the District Court House for Harford County. Shortly after that I was appointed by the Administrative Judge in Harford County to start up the Subsequent Offenders Alcohol Court.

I realize after just now skimming through the Consultant's Draft Report that I am a few hours late on submitting my thoughts regarding this report and I apologize.

However, I just want to say that I worked extremely hard with the two counselors I had working with me in the Adult Drug Court Program to produce an 85% success rate for our Co-Occurring Disorder clientele that graduated out of my program. Fortunately I had the Mental Health and Addictions education behind me to understand what the clients needed. I also had a very dedicated staff of counselors (one of which graduated out of the same program as I at Essex Community College with the same education as I). I truthfully believe that if you have the correct training in Mental Health and Addictions, whether it be an AAS degree, Bachelors degree, or Master's Degree AND the counselor really cares about the clients they are counseling a similar result (85% success) can be achieved. I do hope that my comments will be taken into consideration about this. I have no doubt that hard work and dedication to the field of mental health and substance abuse counseling helped many of the adults (age 18 and up) we saw.

After studying and paying for numerous tests to earn my credentials, paying out of pocket for seminars to keep current on my State license as a CAC-AD (and other certifications with MAPCB) and working in the field with proven results I do hope that the State of Maryland will not let those of us with AAS degrees in Mental Health/Human Services including Addictions Certifications down when formulating the new plan. Having a husband who has been out of work for some time now will cause me to begin looking for work shortly after Christmas 2011. They will be needing all of the mental health and addiction counselors they can get and I will be one of them out there looking for a job.

If you are also able to convey that they, our State counselor credentialing board on Patterson Ave. consider grandfathering those of us with AAS degrees in Mental

Health/Human Services and Addictions Counseling certificates into the Co-Occurring Disorder Credential I think it would keep more of us working in the MH/Addictions field. We understand Co-Occurring Disorders and what to do with clients presenting with Co-Occurring Disorders. I have a daughter who has her Masters Degree from University of Maryland. She is a LCSW. While she got some training on the DSM IV R she still calls me to say....I don't know what to do with this client I am seeing who has Anxiety Disorder with panic attacks. I just have to laugh! That's where the Mental Health training/practicums I had comes into play. Or, she'll call and say I have a teen with a substance abuse problem and I'm not sure what to do with them. That's where the substance abuse counseling certificates that I have come into play. So please... convey this to your constituents.

I know that your task is difficult when considering statewide structure and policy. I hope that some of my simple comments above can help you and those you work with to help me as well. I loved my past work and after raising 3 successful young adults I know that I can make a difference in the lives of those with mental health and substance abuse problems including somatic problems. I can't begin to tell you how many professionals I dealt with to get my clients into 30 day or longer tx if needed, consults with the house psychiatrist and placement on medication, etc., etc.,etc..

God Bless, have a happy holiday, and best of wishes in your endeavors to help we professionals and those who need our services...

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