

# **FY 2022**

# ANNUAL REPORT

(July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022)

Behavioral Health Network
of Greater St. Louis

#### REPORT OVERVIEW

This annual report will provide an overview of key activities and work completed between July 1, 2021, and June 30, 2022, of the Bridges to Care and Recovery (BCR) program, funded by Missouri Department of Mental Health (DMH) and the St. Louis Mental Health Board (MHB). It will describe the several new funding opportunities that allowed for the expansion of services to the Bridges target population, leveraging the platform to disseminate critical information, and strengthening the congregations' capacity to address behavioral health issues.

#### INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

Bridges to Care and Recovery began in 2014 when three area hospitals provided funding to Behavioral Health Network to outline strategies to address the behavioral and social components of emergency health usage, particularly among disadvantaged populations. In January 2015, the MO Department of Mental Health provided the Bridges to Care and Recovery program additional funding to expand the Bridges program.

This led to a focus on developing partnerships between African American churches and the community based behavioral health (BH) safety net. Faith-based leaders can play an extremely important role in strengthening and sustaining communities' abilities to prevent, protect against, mitigate the effects of, respond to, and recover from incidents with negative health consequences through the mobilization of individual and community resilience. The goal of BCR is to increase health literacy and build pathways to appropriate care while strengthening natural supports in vulnerable communities. Through the leadership of African American pastors, churches across denominations were recruited to form neighborhood clusters, share resources and mobilize the social support networks.

#### Our Mission

The mission of the Bridges to Care and Recovery program is to mobilize clusters of churches in North St. Louis City and North County to support the behavioral health treatment and recovery of congregants and other community members with behavioral health disorders. Bridges to Care and Recovery is part of an overall mission of extending the system of care for people challenged with behavioral health disorders.

# **Key Objectives**

- Reduce the stigma of mental illness in faith-based communities by equipping congregations to talk about behavioral health (BH) issues and increasing congregation participants' understanding and acceptance of behavioral health through Training and education.
- Establish partnerships between BHN providers and congregations that enable congregations to better access treatment.
- Equip congregations with the tools needed to develop wellness ministries and volunteer companion programs for long-term.

## Strategies

- Provision of training and ongoing support to pastors and designated "Wellness Champions:" (community resources, Mental Health First Aid, Youth Mental Health First Aid, Trauma-Informed Congregations, Recovery Presentations – 20+ hours of Training)
- Identification of potential referrals and filling the gaps: Wellness Champions and other community members refer individuals who need help to Community Connectors through the BCR hotline. The Community Connectors are closely linked with the ACI Crisis System (Behavioral Health Response BHR), Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs), Community Mental Health Liaisons (and CIT program), substance use treatment, developmental/intellectual disabilities services, and hospitals, allowing them to have a vibrant referral network, often tying specialized programs together and filling in the gaps.
- Connection to needed care and services: The Community Connectors link people to resources, including free or low-cost counseling and when appropriate, a transition to a support worker, CMHC Healthcare Home, primary care provider, or another active community coordinator.
- Mobilization of volunteers to better understand resources available to become a natural support
  for members of the community: Connectors train additional community volunteers to ensure the
  program reaches a greater population of people, including individualized congregations and their
  respective communities to support sustainability.

## PROGRAM ACTIVITIES AND CORE TRAINING

Bridges has now trained 104 churches since program inception in 2015. In FY2022, Cluster 8, comprised of 14 churches, joined the BCR family. Since the pandemic, training has been provided virtually which has resulted in an increased use of the program's social media platform, while also disseminating information, raising awareness, and working together to combat stigma. Additionally, to build partnerships with treatment providers in the region, guest speakers from local organizations presented information to the Wellness Champions. Cluster 8 graduated on May 19, 2022 and became officially designated as "behavioral health friendly churches."

To successfully graduate from the program each Wellness Champion must attend 20 hours of mandatory trainings. The monthly meeting training topics in FY22 included: Becoming A Trauma Informed Congregation; Companionship; Building and Supporting A Behavioral Health Ministry; Mental Health First Aid; and Suicide Prevention. We also offer advanced classes. The goal is to address new issues that may be affecting churches and their congregation. These topics included Mental Health & Sex Trafficking; Opioid and Pain Management; Substance Use; Emotional Regulation and Crisis Intervention; Motivational Interviewing; and Dealing with Holiday Blues. The monthly topics are often based on the input and recommendations from the Wellness Champions. Prior graduates from all churches are encouraged to attend any of the training workshops.

# **Training And Education Metrics**

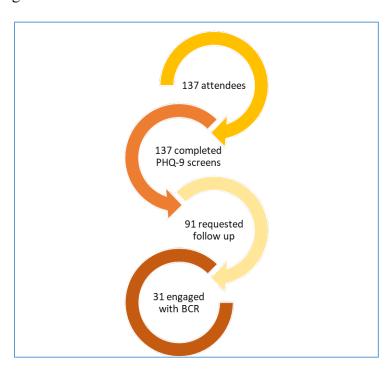
	Cluster 8	Clusters 1-8
Churches who graduated this year:	14	104
New Wellness Champions trained	79	379
Congregants who participated in training	NA	900+

I'm so glad I joined Bridges; it has been great for me and the people we've helped.
-Monica Childress Gornet, Super Wellness Champion

## **Depression Screening Events**

BCR received a four-year grant through the St. Louis Mental Health Board (MHB) for FY2020 - 2023 to continue and expand the program. As part of the grant, BCR worked with Wellness Champions to coordinate Screening Events at the network of existing churches throughout the City of St. Louis. Those individuals that displayed mild or moderate symptoms of depression were referred to the Community Connector who provided behavioral health navigation services.

In FY22, the Wellness Champions hosted ten successful depression screenings in their churches and surrounding communities. 137 individuals attended the screenings and completed the PHQ-9 screening form, and 91 requested follow-ups either at or after the events. 31% (43/137) of participants had scores of 10+, indicating the presence of at least moderate depression. It is worth noting that in FY21, only 18% of the participants scored 10 or higher; in FY20, the measure was 21%.



# **DMH Expansion Funding**

DMH provided 24 months of expansion funding for Bridges (July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2023). The funding allowed Bridges to increase the number of Super Wellness Champions from eight to ten. The Expansion funding also supports the Youth Wellness Champions (see below) and the Faith-Based Coordinator, who is recruiting additional churches through outreach and events. She is holding a monthly virtual meeting, "What's Brewing with Pastors?" to share new and upcoming information around training, current events, services and resources.

# **Super Wellness Champions**

Throughout FY22 BCR continued to leverage the power of the program's natural supports to expand its reach into the community, increase awareness about the stigma of mental illness, and educate people about seeking supportive services through stipends provided to ten "Super Wellness Champions." They plan wellness activities throughout the region, provide workshops and refer clients to the hotline. The Super Wellness Champions also support congregants and the community through other methods of communication, such as telephone calls, emails, postal mailings, texts and "drive-by's." They continue to do a great job disseminating Bridges messages across their social media platforms.

Super Wellness Champion Accomplishments July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022	
Participants reached through online presentations	18,597
Social media views (Instagram, Twitter, Facebook)	31,706
Social media engagements (clicked on link or shared post)	883
Individuals who received information about the BCR Hotline	1,598
Individuals connected to services	342
Zip codes reached	48

# Youth Wellness Champions (NEW)

Bridges to Care & Recovery recruited eight Youth Wellness Champions (YWCs) in March 2022. The youth have been paired with an active adult Wellness Champion to help them build youth BH ministries in their congregations, serving as BH role models and social media influencers. The youth meet twice a month for training on signs/symptoms of mental illness in youth, trauma, grief and coping, suicide prevention, substance/opioid use, communication skills, and local/national BH resources and hotlines. The youth also participate in teambuilding activities and outreach other youth through newsletters, social media, youth health fairs and more. YWCs will increase coordination of care and community capacity to address BH issues of Black youth, using the faith-based community to provide education, early intervention and referral.

Youth Super Wellness Champion Accomplishments March 2022-June 2022	
Zip codes reached	28
Social media posts (Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, TikTok, Other)	177
Social media engagements (clicked on link, liked, or shared post)	173
# of people who received information about BCR Hotline	262

#### BRIDGES TO CARE & RECOVERY IMPACT

## **Community Hotline**

BCR provides a dedicated hotline for 24-hour access, in partnership with Behavioral Health Response, to support people who were experiencing a mental health crisis. The on-call counselors answer the BCR referral line, assess, and resolve immediate crisis, gather information on the caller and transfer the information electronically to a portal. The BCR Program Manager retrieves the information each day and ensures follow up with a Community Connector within 48 hours. At that time, the Connector establishes a plan with the client to connect the individual to appropriate behavioral health, primary care, or other social services based on the person's needs.

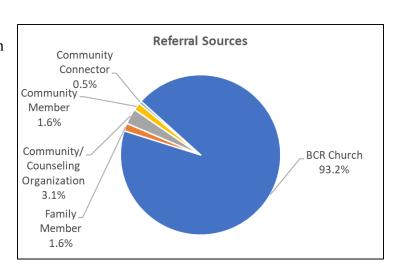
#### COMMUNITY CONNECTOR IMPACT

#### Volume of Referrals

During FY22 (July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022), **191 consumers were referred to the BCR program** (92 City, 99 County). This was comparable to FY21, during which 192 referrals were made. Utilization of the call line was especially strong in September through November 2021.

#### Referral Source

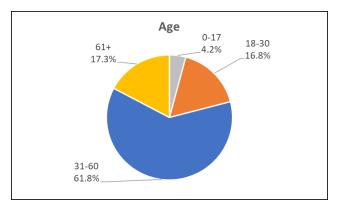
For these 191 clients, referral sources can be seen at right. More than nine in ten (93.2%) of all referrals came from BCR churches (including pastors, wellness champions and other church members.), with a small percentage of referrals coming from community/counseling organizations, community members, and family members. This is a significant increase from FY21 (63%) and demonstrates the impact of our work with the faith-based community.

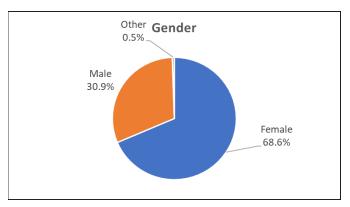


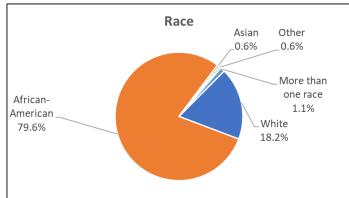
#### **Referral Characteristics**

• Access: Bridges strived to outreach those who might otherwise had limited access to or engagement in behavioral health services due to systemic or individual barriers. Of note, 100% of referrals who responded to the questions reported no prior history of behavioral health treatment (mental health or substance use services).

Race, age and gender breakouts are shown below. The majority of BCR clients are African American, female, and between the ages of 31-60.





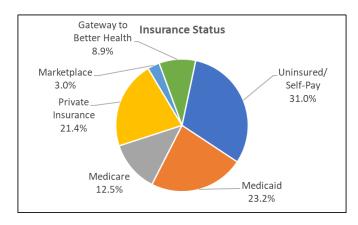


• Area of residence: BCR clients represented 34 different zip codes in St. Louis City and County. The top zip codes of residence included: 63107, 63120, 63113, 63031 and 63136. Almost three-quarters (74%) of referred clients lived in zip codes designated as part of the federally designated St. Louis Promise Zone, an area of North St. Louis City and County with high poverty, unemployment, crime and mortality rates.

I tell everyone I can about Bridges. I love the work they are doing and so many people I referred have received help. I have also sponsored several screenings at my church with good results. Bridges is an excellent program.

Irene Smith-Hall, Super Wellness Champions

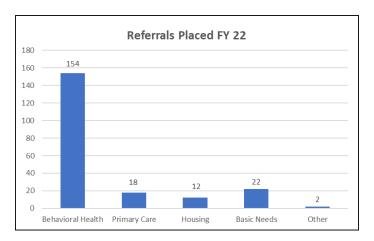
• **Insurance Status:** Most consumers referred to Bridges were uninsured, were enrolled in Medicaid, or had private insurance at the time of referral.



# **Referral Dispositions**

Of the 191 consumers referred, **162** individuals were willing to engage in BCR services at referral (an **85% engagement rate** with the Community Connector for follow-up).

All of the 162 clients were successfully connected to at least one service. A total of 208 separate referrals were placed (a client can be referred to more than one service). The most frequent referrals included behavioral health, primary care, food/other basic needs assistance, and housing.

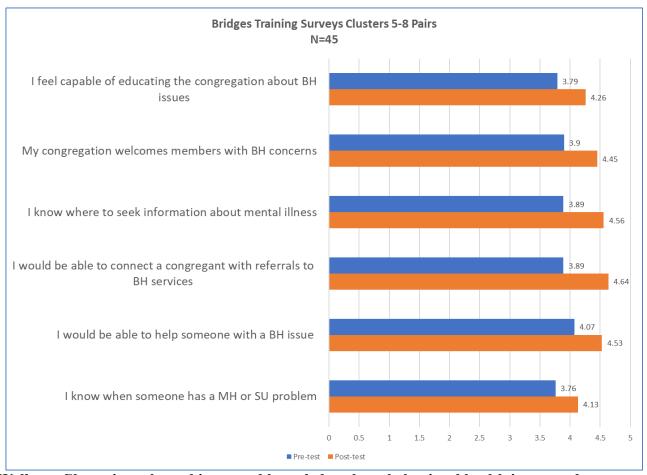


I really enjoy learning about mental health and hope to help friends and family members get help with the resources we are learning about.

Youth Wellness Champion

#### WELLNESS CHAMPION TRAINING SURVEY SUMMARY

All Wellness Champions complete a mental health literacy pre-test at their first training session and a post-test at graduation. It was challenging to get sufficient numbers of paired pre/post tests despite incentives provided for survey completion. The chart below represents 45 paired tests from Clusters 5-8.



Wellness Champions showed increased knowledge about behavioral health issues and resources, and confidence in their ability to provide support and education. As a result, their congregations became more welcoming to people with behavioral health concerns.

#### ST. LOUIS MHB OUTCOMES

The grant from St. Louis MHB is targeted to St. Louis City adult residents. The target outcome indicator is for 80% of consumers (at least 60 out of 75) to develop natural supports through successful navigation, which is defined as connection to at least one BH service.

Goal	FY22 Actual	FY22 Goal	% FY 22 Goal
			Met
Completed PHQ9 depression screens	137	100	137%
Clients who engaged with BCR	92	75	123%
Clients who achieved outcome	89	60	148%
(connection with at least one service)			

# CRISIS COUNSELING PROGRAM (CCP)

BHN recently concluded a grant from Missouri Foundation for Health that coordinated COVID-19 crisis counseling program (CCP) efforts in St. Louis City and County. BHN worked in collaboration with Show Me Hope Missouri, operated by the Missouri Department of Mental Health through a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency/SAMHSA.

24 Hr Helpline: 800-985-5990
SHOW-ME

HOPE

MISSOURI

Text "TalkWithUs" to 66746

CCP efforts taught coping skills and stress management techniques and offered referral to services. This project included the three Mental Health Centers funded by DMH (Hopewell, BIC Rehavioral Health

Health Centers funded by DMH (Hopewell, BJC Behavioral Health, and Places for People) and six "Extender Agencies" funded by Missouri Foundation for Health (Alive & Well Communities, Casa de Salud, Mental Health America, Safe Connections, VOYCE, and Bridges to Care & Recovery program). The Extender Agencies were designed to reach specific, vulnerable populations. Bridges CCP staff focused on Black communities and churches to address the high rate of illness and death and low rates of vaccination.

Bridges, in partnership with Show Me Hope Missouri, BHN and our regional CCP team created an effective disaster response infrastructure to address the needs the Black community and ensure efficiency in directing individuals to appropriate professional services.

The Bridges to Care and Recovery platform and network of partners was engaged to develop a resilient network of community members and entry points for efficient interventions. Utilizing this trusted network, allowed a larger number of people to receive information about the supports provided by Show Me Hope. The Super Wellness Champions were instrumental in supporting these efforts.

Bridges CCP Encounters September 1, 2020 – June 30, 2022		
Type of Encounter	Number	
Social networking, webinars, email, telephone, distribution of printed material	67,592	
Group – public education or group counseling	6,459	
Individual - community resources, problem solving, financial assistance, reaction to	137	
disaster, coping strategies		
TOTAL	74,188	

I have learned a lot working as a Crisis Counselor. I can share information and resources with individuals, along with directing them to Bridges. I was introduced to so many organizations I had no knowledge of. Thanks to BHN, I was offered a position in the medical field.

Brenda Matthew, BCR Crisis Counselor

#### EPICC/SOR COLLABORATION WITH BCR

Beginning October 2020, BHN's EPICC (Engaging Patients in Care Coordination) program expanded to work closely with BCR to address the high rate of opioid overdose among African American males. The Department of Mental Health funded the expansion through the State Opioid Response funds. EPICC staff provided outreach within North City/County, partnering with churches and other community organizations. Additional training on prevention of and recovery from opioid use was presented to churches and the community through BCR training platforms. FY22 accomplishments included:

- EPICC staff attended an event at Monumental Church of Faith and identified nine individuals
  who were interested in treatment linkage. All nine were offered community outreach with a Peer
  Recovery Coach.
- Between October 1, 2020 and June 30, 2022 there were 348 referrals to EPICC attributed to the community outreach in North City/County.
- Specific training on substance use issues was provided in the Wellness Champion Training:
  - o Addiction as a Treatable Disease
  - o Pain Management and Addiction
  - o Overview of Good Samaritan Laws
  - o Addressing the Stigma of Addiction through Recovery Services (peer presentations)
  - o Community Referrals/Resources

Slightly more than half (50.5%) of all FY22 EPICC referrals came from zip codes of the churches that had graduated from Bridge's training program. BCR and EPICC will continue to work together with the Wellness Champions and spread information via their social media platforms, food pantries and other church activities to assist their community in accessing substance use treatment and recovery services.

#### **COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS:**

#### St. Louis City Clergy Advisory Board

Bridges Care and Recovery participated in a Clergy Advisory Board created to improve health outcomes and promote health equity for all in St. Louis City. The Board consist of pastors, doctors, and community organization staff, and is led by Dr. Mati Hlatshwayo Davis, Director of the St. Louis City Health Department. The initial goals of the campaign revolved around COVID-19 but have broadened to include other critical issues such as STIs and opioid overdose. The Advisory Board partners with the Health Department to share information and resources with the faith-based community to address the service gaps that churches and families may be experiencing. The Board members partnered with St. Louis Public Schools for Back-to-School events, hosted vaccine events at Bridges churches, and delivered thousands of bags to residents that included information on COVID safety, masks, hand sanitizers, and thermometers.

#### **RE-ENGAGEMENT OF CHURCHES**

While Bridges continues to grow and gain more recognition each year, it is important to keep churches from previous clusters engaged, and re-engage those who haven't attended trainings within the past year. This year Bridges provided multiple opportunities to re-engage churches, including:

- Continued a Spotlight Segment to introduce organizations to the churches. Before the training workshop starts, the organization representative has 3-5 minutes to discuss their program, how to access services, and explain their eligibility requirements. We also have made this a monthly Face Book live sessions for those who want new information but are no longer in training.
- Created a virtual platform partnership with CCP to acknowledge Women's History Month.
   Videos can be found on Bridges Facebook page that feature members of the community who were highlighted.
- Implemented a Summer Institute with monthly classes in June, July, and August on domestic violence; youth and bullying; and substance use/opioids and COVID-19 update. These serve as updates so that people will have an opportunity to revisit classes they may have missed.
- Developed a new orientation about Bridges for new Steering Committee members.

# MEDIA =

Bridges to Care & Recovery was featured in an article on **News Nation** in June 2022. The article, "Churches take the lead on mental health, addiction services," quoted Rose Jackson-Beavers, Rev. Rodrick Burton of the New Northside Missionary Baptist Church, and Wellness Champion Dameena Cox.

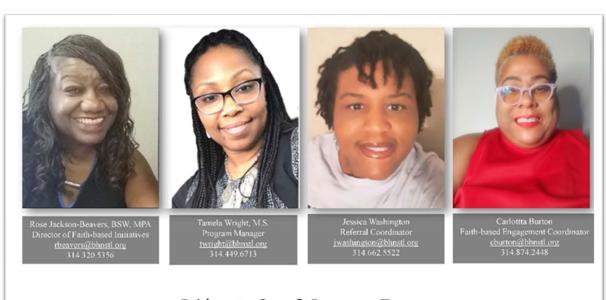
https://www.newsnationnow.com/solutions/churches-take-the-lead-on-mental-health-addiction-services/



Bethesda Temple Church of the Apostolic Faith held a service in May 2022 to raise awareness of mental illness.

# **NEXT STEPS FOR FY23**

- Increase BCR presence on social media and develop strategies to manage additional program referrals that are anticipated as a result
- Plan and implement Youth Wellness Champions Activities
- Host "100 Churches" celebration
- Host our Quarterly Network Meeting
- Host Cluster 9 Pastor's Brunch and recruit Cluster 9 churches
- Reinstate and disseminate our updated Newsletter, which was previously produced three years ago



Bridges to Care & Recovery Team

#### **KEY PARTNERS**

#### We are grateful to our ongoing partners who are key to the success of BCR.

**Pastor B.T. Rice** provides invaluable program leadership and facilitates the generous use of his facility for many BCR meetings.

Alive and Well STL provides training as a community-wide effort focused on reducing the impact of toxic stress and trauma on health and wellbeing.

**Behavioral Health Response (BHR)** provides confidential telephone counseling and support to people in mental health crisis as well as mobile outreach services, community referral services and critical incident stress management. In this project, they take the initial calls on the Bridges to Care and Recovery hotline.

Mercy Neighborhood Ministry provides resources and training to help volunteers identify multiple types of assistance when referring clients to seek help.

**NAMI** provides training as part of their mission to improve the quality of life of persons with severe and persistent mental illness and their families, and promote and provide community support, education, advocacy, and understanding.

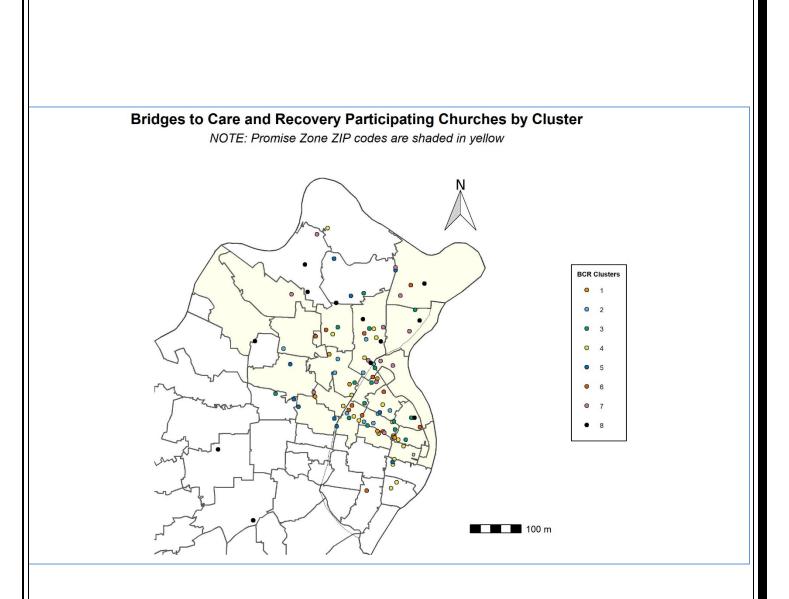
**Pathways to Promise** provides training, consultation, educational materials and other resources to BCR. It is an organization that supports people and communities by reaching out to people with mental illnesses and their families. Along with Sabbaths of Hope, Pathways also provides Companionship Training and Building a Mental Health Ministry, which help create a safe atmosphere in the faith-based network.

**Preferred Family Healthcare** provides substance use resources and services to the Wellness Champions to help identify substance abuse in their churches and communities.

Provident Behavioral Health, LifeQuest Christian Counseling, Tyree Miller LLC, Rejuvenating Comprehensive Services LLC, and St. Louis Counseling (formerly Catholic Family Services) help improve the quality of life of Bridges' clients through outpatient counseling, support and guidance. Free counseling (funded by the project) is provided to BCR clients who do not have insurance coverage.

**Dr. Kanika Turner**, consulting physician to the Missouri Opioid State Targeted Response (STR) Team, facilitates Opioid Crisis Management Training to churches that are interested in providing Narcan kits onsite. Dr. Turner works with BCR staff to tailor the presentations so they are most helpful to the churches.

**Dr. Brandy S. Peoples is** a licensed psychologist who received her Ph.D. in counseling psychology from the University of Missouri – Kansas City. She is currently on staff at the St. Louis County Family Court where she specializes in forensic psychology. Dr. Peoples is also an ordained minister who serves at Mt. Pisgah Christian Church. Dr. Peoples works closely with BCR staff and offers her unique perspective at numerous presentations.



BRIDGES TO CARE AND RECOVERY PARTICIPATING CHURCHES	
CLUSTER 1 CHURCHES (2015)	CLUSTER 2 CHURCHES (2015-16)
St. Luke's Memorial Baptist	Bethesda Temple Church
St. Alphonsus Liguori Rock Catholic	West Side MB Church
Scruggs Memorial C.M.E.	Holy Metropolitan Missionary Baptist
St. Matthew Lutheran	Kossuth Church of God in Christ
Lane Tabernacle C.M.E.	Murchison Tabernacle
Pentecostal Church of Jesus Christ	Metropolitan Baptist Church
Galilee Missionary Baptist	Mount Airy Missionary Baptist
New Horizon Christian	New Beginning Missionary Baptist
Mount Beulah Missionary Baptist	New Northside Missionary Baptist Northside 7 <sup>th</sup> Day Adventist
	St. Paul A.M.E. Church
CLUSTER 3 CHURCHES (2016-17)	CLUSTER 4 CHURCHES (2017-18)
Faith Miracle Temple	Last Days Church
Greater Pentecostal Church of God	Higher Ground Community Outreach Center
Greater Rising Star MB Church	Compton Hill M.B. Church
North Galilee Baptist Church	Holy Way Church
The World Overcomers Christian Center	Solomon's Temple Church
St. Luke AME Church	St. Peter AME
Lily of the Valley MB Church	True Vine Church
Centennial Christian Church	First Baptist Church of Creve Coeur
Pavilion of Praise Christian Church	Coleman Wright CME Church
The Equation Church	Unfailing Love Christian Church
Temple Church of Christ	Berean Seventh-day Church
Oak Grove	Greater House of Prayer – COGIC
Lively Stone	Leonard MB Baptist
Ward Chapel	Mt. Hermon Christian Church
Pine Lawn Glen Echo	Word of Life Church Breath of Life Christian Fellowship Church
	Breath of Life Christian Fellowship Church
CLUSTER 5 CHURCHES (2018-19)	Jamison Memorial CME Church
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# BRIDGES STEERING COMMITTEE FY 2021-22

A special thanks to our entire Bridges to Care and Recovery Steering Committee for your presentations, support, attendance and participation throughout the year. You are the best!

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Carlotta Burton Faith Based Engagement Coordinator, BCR	Wendy Orson Chief Executive Officer, BHN

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