

# PRESENTATION FOR A HIGH-FUNCTIONING ADULT DROP-IN CENTER IN NORTH PORT, FL

By  
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I'm here to make the case that a *high-functioning* adult drop-in center will prove a wise investment that will improve the quality of life for high-functioning, impaired adults, resulting in saving tax payer money for police and expensive hospital services

## CURRENT DROP-IN CENTER

Current drop-in centers in our area are not meeting the needs for the high-functioning consumer for the following reasons

- Education is dumbed down to tutoring consumers to brush teeth, maintain hygiene, and take meds
- Consumer ideas are not acknowledged. Ideas are often stifled at Mental Health Community Centers, at times because of necessity, because of the low-functioning demographic.
- Consumers must attend group meetings in order to have access to the facilities
- No creative input is accepted from consumers for the specific creation of a new group within facilities
- In the past, restrictive rules were enforced that forbid the consumer from leaving the premises until the end of the day

## ADVANTAGES OF A HIGH-FUNCTIONING DROP-IN CENTER

Conversely, a high-functioning adult drop in center is designed to inspire self-worth and self-reliance, because the consumer, under minimal oversight, will take part in ensuring that the facility functions smoothly.

(Only those who desire *freedom* AND *responsibility* for that freedom will seek out and thrive in a high-functioning drop-in center.)

## DESCRIPTION OF A HIGH-FUNCTIONING DROP-IN CENTER

A high-functioning center is a warm, nurturing environment, resembling a recovery club house, but with added depth. In other parts of the USA, centers such as the one I propose offer showers, hot meals, invite speakers for mental health, housing issues, and available programs suitable for the consumer.

A high-functioning center will have the capacity to address chemical dependency, which is experienced by a large percentage of consumers in order to “feel stable.” A program like this is needed, because Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous, and other twelve-step programs do not address the complications that mental illness piles on to addictions. Members of AA and NA would be welcome at our center to discuss recovery.

A high-functioning center might offer fun, games and programs similar to those offered at public libraries and community organizations such as the American Legion, the VFW, the Elks, and the Moose with the benefit of not having access and temptation to alcohol, and would be made possible by reaching out to the community.

I envision a center that would offer a television room where consumers bond in games and movies, a meeting room for dual recovery (ie) both drug and alcohol dependency, and meeting rooms for guest speakers, psychologists, and police.

I visualize consumers adopting projects such as a “clean-up” for a North Port City Street. Although the consumers hold the privilege to suggest creative ideas for the facility, they will be under the guidance and jurisdiction of a government appointed official. One of the most coveted desires of the high-functioning consumer is the ability to offer input into the betterment of the facility. Consumers see the exchange of ideas as valuable as the exchange of money.

Consumers are responsible for keeping the facility clean. When consumers have something meaningful to do, their mental outlook is enhanced, and gives consumers a sense of community so they will come to feel that a person’s dignity is not predicated on their current income. Eighty percent are unable to hold down a job

#### HOW IS COST A FACTOR?

A 2,000 square foot house, costing less than \$200,000 is suggested. When one considers the estimated cost of hospitalizing a consumer at \$1,878 per day on average through the USA, or \$2,086 per day here in Florida, one can argue that a facility that helps keep consumers out of hospitals is cost effective. For example, if three citizens spent three days in a Florida hospital, the cost would constitute approximately \$18,000 or roughly 20% of a down payment on a facility.

#### HOW IS THE CURRENT SITUATION AFFECTING CURRENT COSTS?

State and local governments are reluctant to allocate money for the mentally ill. This is understandable because some of the policies currently in force manage to increase the size and strength of bureaucracy.

For example: Paid positions are now in place at drop-in centers for Vocational Specialists whose job is to teach vocational training that amounts to nothing more than encourage consumers to arrive at their own answers by asking basic questions like: "What do you think is appropriate clothing for a job interview?" The consumer is not directed by the Vocational Specialist as to what the consumer should wear.

## HOW IS THE CURRENT SITUATION AFFECTING COSTS TO SOCIETY?

Basic economic formula: Supply and demand dictate price

Because 3% of the population is bi-polar and one in five citizens are in need of mental health counselling, the number of consumers for mental health services is glaring. The increasing cost to society yields a staggering price to society as is evidenced when the mentally ill butt heads with the police because they are not using mental health facilities. That's why it is vitally important that the mental health facilities **meet the needs of the consumer** and why there is a **need** for a facility for the higher functioning consumer. Not only does the community suffer, the stigma against the mentally ill increases.