


Optum Idaho manages outpatient behavioral health benefits for Idaho Medicaid members. It is our commitment to help transform Idaho's behavioral health outpatient system by focusing on helping people reach recovery in their own health journey, one person, one family, one community at a time.

2022 Winter Issue



Luis Granados
Executive Director
Breaking Chains Academy of Development
Nampa, Idaho

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Story by Abigail Moore, photos by Bruce Tarbet.

The Power of Mentors

Luis Granados's Story of Overcoming Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

As a young child, Luis Granados did not feel safe nor protected. He saw his father assault his mother. And, Luis was beaten too. Emotionally abused, he also was left alone with his siblings for hours as their parents labored, six days a week at a meat-packing plant. School provided little respite. As a Mexican-American, he endured bullying

and racism. Growing hypervigilant and aggressive, he eventually joined a gang. At 17, he dropped out of high school.

For a time, he found acceptance and support through a community program, the Original Gangsters Basic Academy of Development (OGBAD) in Nampa, Idaho, whose mission is to provide

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Editor: Rebecca Kuta, Optum Idaho Member Engagement & Internal Communications Manager

Mentors (continued from page 1)

youth who are prone to gang involvement with alternatives to a gang lifestyle. Academy mentors helped him. They celebrated his GED, assisted with his resume and drove him to his job at the city's parks department where he never missed a day of work. Still, he connected with his gang again. Unwittingly, he sold a gun to a gang member, who then used it in a robbery. That sale landed Granados in prison, horrified and terrified at where life had taken him. Just 19, he was now facing 15 years behind bars.

In court, Granados listened to the prosecutor's grim assessment of him and his future. "I was just a gang member, pretty much a lost cause," he recalls. He was devastated: "Is that what the community really thinks about me? Is that who I really am?"

For six months, he waited for his sentencing in a small cell, sometimes contemplating suicide. As his sentencing date neared, a hardened cellmate warned Granados not to share his childhood experiences with a pre-sentencing investigator. But when the investigator was kind to him, expressing surprise at his youth, Granados did. "I remember starting to cry. It was the first time in a long time that somebody made me feel kind of human—made me feel like I was still a person."

The investigator noted his GED, work experience and support system of mentors and other academy resources. And at his sentencing, he took ownership for what he did. He addressed the judge: "I told her that I wasn't a lost cause. I had dreams and goals. My dreams were to work." He described his strong work ethic and his pride in maintaining Nampa's parks and contributing to the community.

The judge gave him a second chance: Six more months in prison, followed by seven years of probation. During that time, he worked hard to satisfy his probation requirements. Seven years later, appearing before the same judge for his final time, change was evident. Dressed nicely and with a positive attitude, Granados was now employed at OGBAD's successor—the nonprofit Breaking Chains Academy of Development (www.breakingchainsacademy.com) teaching and mentoring other youth in need. "I remember her smiling and looking over to the prosecutor and asking if there were any objections. There were none."

Now the academy's executive director, Granados credits the mentors for his turnaround. "They were the one trusted adult in my life. I am still in contact with them." At Breaking Chains, he has found a deeper redemption. "Working



Luis Granados helping a student at Breaking Chains Academy of Development in Nampa, Idaho

Resources For You

Optum Member Access & Crisis Line

(Available 24/7)

1-855-202-0973

For TDD/TTY, dial **711**

Learn What Behavioral Health Services are Available to You

Visit optumidaho.com

Click "Resources & Tools" on left side of the page

Click "QRG—Behavioral Health Services Available"

How to File a Provider Complaint

Call **1-855-202-0973**

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to start the process.

Live & Work Well

Live & Work Well is a great place to find all types of information for Medicaid members. You can download a copy of your member handbook, find healthy recipes, learn about stress reduction, exercise, meditation and so much more to support your health and wellbeing.

Visit optumidaho.com

Click "Live & Work Well" on left side of the page.



Optum Idaho recently donated **\$10,000** to support the work of Breaking Chains Academy of Development.

with the kids has taught me to love myself and forgive myself for things that have I done.”

Maintaining his mental health is an ongoing priority. “I see a therapist every week and have joined men’s circles about healthy masculinity. It’s done wonders for me,” he says, noting the loving relationship that he enjoys with his life partner and two daughters. Recognizing the fall-out from his adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) has brought Granados a measure of peace. “I’m not crazy. I’m not alone.”

He hopes the Optum Idaho co-sponsored documentary “Resilient Idaho: Hope Lives Here” www.idahoptv.org/shows/specials/resilience will spread awareness about ACEs—even in the school systems. Some days, when the turmoil in his life prevented him from sleeping, he fell asleep at his desk. “When I put my head down, instead of getting kicked out of class if they could have asked me what was wrong. That could have helped.” It is the question that he now asks each youth at Breaking Chains Academy.

To read the full ‘Overcoming Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)’ case study, visit optumidaho.com > About Us > Case Studies. ■



Coping with Grief and Loss

By Optum Idaho Senior Clinical Program Consultant, Dennis Woody, Ph.D.

Often after a death or loss of some kind, many people feel empty and numb, or just angry, even without a reason. People experiencing grief may also withdraw socially or have no desire to participate in their usual activities, work or school. There are also physical reactions to grief, which may include trembling or shakiness, muscle weakness, nausea, trouble eating, trouble sleeping or even trouble breathing.

People often ask, “How long will I feel this way?” Your grief may subside, but it will last as long as it takes you to accept and learn to live with the changes in your life. For some people, grief lasts a few months; for others, it may take more than a year. It’s different for each person.

While grief is a normal reaction to loss, there are ways people can ease their minds by coping with their grief in healthy ways:

- Simply talking to your friends, family or faith leaders can help you cope.
- Exercise and eat healthy meals to take care of your physical well-being.
- Do the things that you used to enjoy doing, even if you don’t always feel like it. This will help you get back into your routines.
- Allow yourself to feel joy at times and to cry when you need to.

It’s also important to talk to children about grief and loss. Close relationships are important to children’s development, and the loss of a family member or friend can negatively affect that. They may experience depression, anxiety or aggression.

Here are some ways you can help children cope with grief:

- Allow children to talk about their feelings and to express their grief (e.g., crying, being sad).
- Try to follow the same routines as usual.
- Encourage them to play and laugh.
- Encourage them to get adequate rest and to eat healthy meals.

Again, grief is a very normal reaction to loss. While some people might have these feelings over a long period, they will likely be less intense over time. If these feelings persist, if they don’t become less intense, and if your grief continues to affect your daily life in significant ways, you should seek the help of a mental health professional.

There are a lot of resources available. There’s the Optum Member Access and Crisis Line at **1-855-202-0973**, TDD/TTY **711**, operating 24/7, or you can call the Idaho Careline at **2-1-1**. ■



LGBTQ+ Awareness

By Optum Idaho Behavioral Medical Director, Julie Wood M.D.

Did you know that roughly 48,000 Idahoans age 13 and up identify as LGBTQ+? According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "They [LGBTQ+ population] are diverse, come from all walks of life, and include people of all races and ethnicities, all ages, all socioeconomic statuses and from all parts of the country."

Unfortunately, the individuals in this population continue to face significant challenges in their lives. They are at higher risk of both sexual and non-sexual violent acts against them compared to their heterosexual counterparts, higher risk for mental illness including substance use and suicidal ideation and higher risk for being outright denied general health care. Current statistics project more than 50% of those that identify as LGBTQ+ have experienced sexual harassment or violence due to their gender identity and approximately 8% of the LGBTQ+ population and nearly

27% of the transgender community report not receiving needed health care services. Due to the stigma and discrimination, many fear asking for help when needed.

Optum Idaho wants you to know that we are working diligently to increase awareness and access to care for the LGBTQ+ population. Our hope is to improve provider understanding and capabilities through tools and resources, so our providers feel knowledgeable enough to provide equitable, affirming and supportive care for all our members. We also want to engage you as the member by providing you with available resources.

We've included several national and local resources for you to explore. These include but are not limited to:

- Pride365plus.com
- Sanvello.com | On-demand help for stress, anxiety, and depression
- www.idahocounseling.org



- www.youtube.com/watch?v=7i3QlpiTgnM
- www.flourishpoint.org
- www.allunderoneroof.org
- www.thetrevorproject.org
- www.sageusa.org/what-we-do/sage-national-lgbt-elder-hotline/

By providing you with more support and resources, you can begin to feel empowered and take positive steps toward a safe and healthy future. We also plan a future focus on allies to help them learn how to support our LGBTQ+ population through additional resources and ally specific tools. ■

Youth Support Eligibility

Age Clarification in Member Handbook

Optum Idaho recently made a clarification about eligibility ages for Youth Support services in the Member Handbook, effective March 1, 2022.

Youth Support services are available to members **ages 12 to 17 (until the day they turn 18)**. What is Youth Support? Youth Support providers help you understand your role in accessing services and becoming an informed self-advocate. It is provided by someone who has lived experience of serious emotional disturbance (SED) as a young adult and special training. Youth Support may include,

but is not limited to, mentoring, advocating and educating through Youth Support activities. Youth Support providers will show you what living in recovery looks like. They will share their stories of their experience to help you be involved in the recovery process.

Is your child under age 12? Family Support, Respite and/or Skills Building/Community-Based Rehabilitation Services (CBRS) are services to consider for members under the age of 12.



Review all the details in the Member Handbook online: optumidaho.com > For Members > Resources & Tools > Member Handbook.

If you don't have access to a computer, you can call the Optum Member Access & Crisis Line at **1-855-202-0973**, TDD/TTY **711** to request a copy to be mailed to you. You may also request special needs materials including large print, audio or specific languages depending upon your needs. Requesting and receiving the Member Handbook in print or in any special format comes at no cost to Members. ■

New Resource: Transition-Aged Youth (TAY) Guide

By Optum Idaho Senior Clinical Trainer, Carla Hart

Are you turning 18 this year? If so, you are like more than 38,000 Idaho Medicaid youth members who meet the criteria of transition-aged youth and you will soon be considered an adult. This is an exciting step in your life!

While exciting, this transition may also cause feelings of stress. The Transition-Aged Youth Guide was created to help support you and those around you with information and resources to make your journey through this transition as smooth and stress-free as possible.

What does transition mean?

Transition means to make a change, going from one circumstance to another. This change usually takes a series of steps to complete and is done over time.

Many of your current behavioral health services and other aspects of your care will likely need to transition to new providers that will support your adult needs. Your current providers may only specialize in services for youth under age 18, so it's important to make the move to adult-care services so there will be no interruptions to your future care.

There are other decisions you'll be making as a new adult in other aspects of your life such as: work, continuing education, transportation, housing, money, etc.

Each person has individual experiences (both good and bad); different levels of support from families, friends and/or others; and individual strengths and resiliency factors that all influence

outcomes throughout the phases of their life, including the transition to adulthood.

If you're worried, that's normal. The good news is this: you'll have adults around you that can help you with this process—whether a parent, guardian, mentor or counselor.

Optum Idaho has a new resource to help as well; it is the Transition-Aged Youth (TAY) Guide. Inside the guide you will find information specific to:

- Resources and support when you are ready to apply to Medicaid.
- Regional Medicaid contact information.
- Adult behavioral health services available.
- How to find an adult behavioral health provider and questions to ask providers.
- Activities to help you identify and advocate for what you need and want.

The TAY Guide and worksheets can be downloaded from our website at www.optumidaho.com/content/ops-optidaho/idaho/en/members/resource-center.html Or if you'd like a hard copy of the guide, you can email us at optum.idaho.education@optum.com ■



Substance Use Disorder Housing Assistance Program

Through a new Division of Behavioral Health program (not part of Optum Idaho), Idaho residents who are in substance use treatment OR have

successfully completed treatment in the last 90 days may be eligible to receive help with housing costs and utilities.

For more information about the program and eligibility requirements, contact BPA Health at **1-800-486-4372** or visit www.bpahealth.com/housing-assistance-program/ ■





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Optum does not discriminate on the basis of sex, age, race, color, national origin or disability.

Free services are available to help you communicate with us. Such as, letters in other languages, or in other formats like large print. Or, you can ask for an interpreter. To ask for help, please call the toll-free number **(855) 202-0973. TTY 711.**

If you think you weren't treated fairly because of your sex, age, race, color, national origin or disability, you can send a complaint to:

Optum Civil Rights Coordinator
11000 Optum Circle
Eden Prairie, MN 55344

Phone: 888-445-8745, TTY 711
Fax: 855-351-5495
Email: optum_civil_rights@optum.com

If you need help with your complaint, please call the toll-free number **(855) 202-0973. TTY 711.** You must send the complaint within 60 days of when you found out about the issue.

You can file a complaint with the US Department of Health and Human Services.

Online: <https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/portal/lobby.jsf>

Complaint forms are available at <https://www.hhs.gov/ocr/complaints/index.html>

Phone: Toll-free 1-800-368-1019. TTD 800-537-7697.

Mail: U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue,
SW Room 509F, HHH Building
Washington, D.C. 20201

Language Assistance Services and Alternate Formats

This information is available in other formats like large print. To ask for another format, please call the toll-free number (855) 202-0973. TTY 711.

You have the right to get help and information in your language at no cost. To request an interpreter, call **1-855-202-0973.**

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Language Assistance Services and Alternate Formats (continued)

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German/ Deutsche: Sie haben das Recht, kostenlose Hilfe und Informationen in Ihrer Sprache zu erhalten. Um einen Dolmetscher anzufordern, rufen Sie die Nummer 1-855-202-0973.

Tagalog/ Tagalog: May karapatan kang makatanggap ng tulong at impormasyon sa iyong wika nang walang bayad. Upang humiling ng tagasalin, tumawag sa 1-855-202-0973.

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French/ Français: Vous avez le droit d'obtenir gratuitement de l'aide et des renseignements dans votre langue. Pour demander à parler à un interprète, appelez le 1-855-202-0973.

Japanese/ 日本語: ご希望の言語でサポートを受けたり、情報を入手したりすることができます。料金はかかりません。通訳をご希望の場合は、1-855-202-0973までお電話ください。

Romanian/ Română: Aveți dreptul de a obține gratuit ajutor și informații în limba dumneavoastră. Pentru a cere un interpret, sunați la 1-855-202-0973.

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Optum Idaho

322 E. Front Street
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What's working well for you?
What could we do differently?

Email us at membermatters@optum.com.

