

Unique Facility Helps Mentally Ill People

Channel 2 - KUTV

Last Update: 8/03/2007 10:58 am

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When serious mental illness strikes, it can rip people away from things like their jobs, school or relationships. In our Healthy Living report, a unique facility in Salt Lake that helps these people reconnect.

“I wasn't doing anything; I wasn't getting out of the house.”

Eleisha says mental illness literally made her a prisoner in her own home. Traditional mental health services didn't seem to work for her, then she found Alliance House.

“When I first walked in, I could tell there was something different about it,” Eleisha said.

Alliance House is different from treatment centers or residential facilities. It's called a clubhouse and it's a meeting place for people suffering from severe mental illness such as depression, bi-polar disorder and schizophrenia.

“Mental illness is a very debilitating and serious condition that takes people out of life,” said Jeremy Christensen, Executive Director of Alliance House.

At Alliance House, people are able to re-connect, by building relationships and job skills. There is no group therapy and no separation between staff and members. The house is set up to replicate a workplace everyone participates in the running of the house and everyone is treated equally.

“We work together side by side, building relationships and learning skills so they can get comfortable and move back into the community,” said Christensen.

Members perform daily tasks everything from cooking and serving up lunch to computer work and bill paying. In the process, they gradually pick up skills and habits they can take out into the workforce. They can also work on high school diplomas and other educational pursuits. Eleisha believes this non-traditional model is what finally worked for her. She's now working on a college degree.

“I felt the strong support that I would be ok and that I was actually going to make it somewhere,” she said. “I have achieved more after coming to Alliance House than I ever believed I could before.” Alliance House is part of a partnership with Valley Mental Health. Members must be referred by their mental health provider.

For more information go to www.alliancehouse.org

Four Points Media Group of Salt Lake