



# 24/7 Newsletter

The number of hours we spend making Houston better

AUGUST 2024



# Most Admired CEO Awards 2024 Congratulations Leonard

Congratulations Leonard on being selected by the Houston Business Journal as one of 60 Top CEOs in Houston. Those selected have made an indelible mark on their organization's financial success, work culture and contributions to the community. This prestigious award honors great leadership, vision and values.

Leonard, who founded HRC 11 years ago, has built HRC into one of the few providers of compassionate care, offering intervention and community care coordination to underserved individuals affected by substance use. HRC was founded to help solve the challenges presented by the intersections of problematic substance use, law enforcement, the overburdened legal system, homelessness, and out-of-control healthcare costs impacting Houston, the surrounding communities and indeed every individual.

Leonard created a sensible solution with demonstrable outcomes. Through a Houston Health Department partnership, he developed a Recovery Management Program serving homeless and low-income/uninsured clients. People falling through healthcare cracks got a chance to access care with recovery support that spans years.

Leonard's community relationships jumpstarted the Sobering Center and Recovery Management Program, quickly expanding HRC's reach to proactively engage people in the jail, courts, probation, hospitals and streets. HRC has become a community hub for problematic substance use serving over 46,000 individuals with 4,900 enrolling in Recovery Management.

"Change Begins at the Heart" is HRC's guiding principle. Leonard leads with his heart, knowing culture can influence behavior change that improves lives. He epitomizes servant leadership by standing for the best of each person to emerge. His is a voice for people that otherwise would not be heard. Leonard's vision to do it differently and leadership to deliver difference is why he is an Admired CEO. **Congratulations again Leonard!**



**Houston Recovery Center**  
Sobering & Addiction Recovery Programs



*Looking Toward the Future*

**Impact Report 2024**

## 2024 Impact Report Looking Toward the Future

The Houston Recovery Center's 2024 Impact Report is now available. This year's report provides a closer look into why the Houston Recovery Center exists, our mission and our challenges going forward. It also provides a picture of all the programs and services our exceptional team of caregivers provide, and the impact they have on those they serve.

"Our programs have become a national model for meeting the challenges created by the problematic consumption of alcohol and other substances and our programs have helped thousands of people," said Leonard. "We are dedicated to educating people with persistence substance use issues and support their long-term recovery and quality of life... As we work to meet these ongoing challenges, our overarching goals remain the same. Join us in helping us reach our goal."

## Reaching Out to Those in Need



There's a saying, "A picture is worth a thousand words." In this instance, our Community Health Worker (CHW) Supervisor, Lisa, sat next to a young woman who, just moments before, was hysterical, seemingly in the midst of a manic episode. She had been walking barefoot, cursing, and behaving aggressively toward anyone who approached her. However, by meeting her where she was, Lisa made an incredible connection. She simply sat next to her in silence, patiently waiting before speaking. When Lisa noticed the woman preparing a substance, she casually asked, "What are you rolling up?" as though it were no big deal. This approach broke the tension, and the woman welcomed Lisa's presence. They began a conversation, and soon she accepted the socks, NARCAN, water, food, and hygiene kit Lisa offered.

A little later, I saw Maria, another one of our CHWs, and Lisa talking to another young woman resting on the ground by a store. This young lady had been homeless for about three weeks after being put out by her family. While she appeared sober and reported no substance use, the weight of her trauma was evident. Though she wasn't ready to accept our offer of transportation to a shelter, she was met with the compassion and dignity every human being deserves. Witnessing these heartfelt encounters is a powerful reminder of the importance of the work we do and the profound impact we are making in the lives of others. The people we serve are often the overlooked and forgotten members of society—the ones many prefer not to deal with. However, by transforming our own lived experiences into lived expertise, we are able to reach these individuals, restore hope, and walk alongside them on their journey to recovery.



## HRC Partner Surveys

In July we completed two partner surveys. One among Recovery Services Organizations, those organizations that HRC "feeds" and that provide substance use treatment and recovery services, and the other among Community Stakeholder which includes the local police department, Houston court system, Houston hospitals and other healthcare organizations. Responses from both surveys were overwhelmingly positive. Some of the questions and responses included:

*What is your most important priority when dealing with individuals with substance use issues?*

- **Safety**
- **Quick and easy access**
- **Safety and solution**
- **Providing hands-on assistance to individuals and following through on their progress.**
- **Safety, engagement, respect**
- **Providing connection and counseling to persons struggling with substance use.**
- **Using data to drive community-level, substance use interventions**
- **Initiating timely, evidence-based SUD treatment**

*What is the one service, program or function HRC provides that is the most useful/significant for you and your organization?*

- **Safe housing and transport**
- **Transport and transitional services**
- **The Sobering Center, all the work HRC is doing to help deal with the opioid crisis, and re-integrating individuals into the community**
- **Recovery Coaching**
- **Education**
- **Expertise associated with peer support services**
- **Housing support for underserve populations**
- **Personal Addiction Recovery Team**

*How does the Houston Recovery Center help support your agency's mission and service to the people you serve?*

- **Access to real time services and assistance from your staff.**
- **Being an available resource to our clients for substance abuse treatment is invaluable. Many of our clients just need a starting point or someone to talk to in order to build trust. It is great to have that subject matter expertise on site on a regular and consistent basis.**
- **We have a Peer Specialist attend our center once a week**

*How can we improve your experiences and your organization's relationship with HRC?*

- **Everything is fantastic**
- **Nothing comes to mind. Just keep on doing the great work!**
- **Overall, the HRC team is successfully able to coordinate with multiple SMH departments including residential treatment, admissions, and detox.**
- **It would be helpful if counselors answered or returned phone calls in a timely manner.**

*On a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 means you are very satisfied and 1 means you are not satisfied at all, how easy is it to communicate with HRC staff on the referral process or our program offerings?*

- **On a scale of 1-5, the average rating was: 4.3**

*What could we have done, or be doing, to improve your experience working with Houston Recovery Center?*

- **We are very satisfied with our collaboration. More days would be great.**
- **Nothing, HRC has been great to work with**
- **More information about the services HRC provides**

*What is your overall satisfaction, on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 means you are very satisfied and 1 means you are not satisfied at all, with your experiences working with our staff and programs? Please rate your overall satisfaction with your experiences with HRC.*

- On a scale of 1-5, the average rating was: 4

## A Celebration of Recovery! Greater Houston Big Texas Rally 2024 September 28th, Houston Botanic Garden 10am-2pm

For more than 30 years, during the month of September, communities, and local organizations from across the country host celebrations in honor of the **National Recovery Month** observation. These activities take many forms that bring public attention to recovery and challenge negative attitudes, stigma, and discrimination.

There will be great music, comedy, storytelling, dance and food planned. Dignitaries from the national recovery movement, public officials, and persons in recovery, families, community supporters, speakers, and friends of recovery will all join the celebration to inspire and replenish our passion for recovery.

We can work to reduce the stigma surrounding those with substance use or co-occurring disorders that challenge their efforts towards recovery. Texas Behavioral Health Communities and other health authorities recognize the remarkable impact that addressing stigma, silence, and shame will have through the effects of the Big Texas Rally for Recovery.

This Rally will increase understanding of substance use and mental health challenges and encourage others to achieve recovery. Meeting people where they are and showing non-judgmental support can be the critical factor for a person to accept evidence-based treatment and supports.



Positive messaging, tools, and supportive platforms can encourage healthy choices, and help those in need find support or help. Get more details at :

<https://bigtexasrallyforrecovery.org/houston-tx-2024/>

Join us on the 28th.

OCTOBER 10-11, 2024

## **NSC SOBERING SUMMIT: PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER**

HOUSTON, TX

FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
[nationalsobering.org/summit](https://nationalsobering.org/summit)



[admin@nationalsobering.org](mailto:admin@nationalsobering.org)  
[nationalsobering.org](https://nationalsobering.org)

## **Join The Houston Recovery Center at this Year's Summit**

HRC welcomes the NSC Sobering Center Summit to Houston.

In a world where the challenges of harmful substance use impact individuals, families, and communities alike, it's crucial that we work collaboratively to address these issues. Join HRC for this year's Sobering Summit and explore the theme "Putting the Pieces Together."

This year's summit, will explore how collaboration, both at the systemic level and within ourselves, is essential for creating lasting change. Uncover strategies and initiatives that promote a holistic approach to addressing harmful substance use and related issues.

See more at: <https://nationalsobering.org/summit/>

## **The Madison Jobe Senior Healthcare event**

HRC's Lisa Rizo and Lovinah Igbani-Perkins worked the HRC booth at the Madison Jobe Senior Healthcare event in Pasadena on August 14, along with more than 50 other vendors. Everything from healthcare insurance providers and hospitals to cruise planners and legal aid representatives. The hundreds of attendees had a great opportunity to meet the many representatives, ask questions, gather information, or sign up on the spot.



## **Client Recovery Journey: Jonathon Clifton**

**Today I have a network of positive influencers I can call/rely on.**

### **Before**

This is Jonathon Clifton and he has been in recovery for 113 days. This is not the first time he has "been in recovery." Unfortunately, it only lasted two weeks. He was living at home and believed he could do it himself cold-turkey. Jonathon was born in Texas, but lived off and on in both Texas and Louisiana. He had been drinking since I was 18. He was in culinary school from 2017 until 2020. In 2021 he moved back to Houston and began heavy drinking and using drugs, mostly weed. He finally ended up in jail where he met Melissa. In jail there are not many treatment people working with the LGBT community. He didn't know what it was, but found himself in RIC count. Melissa told me him he was hers and took him to the Houston Recovery Center's Sobering Center.

### **After**

Recovery is not easy. Jonathon goes to meetings, call his sponsor or any of the "12 steps" support people he knows, when he's down. He doesn't have to run anymore. Today he has a network of positive influencers he can call/rely on. HRC helped him form that network and learn how to make connections. One of the best things he has learned is to "sit still," don't try to fix yourself alone. "Let others help you. Let miracles happen – they will. Trust in people like the staff at HRC. They know what they're doing. Let them help you."

**Let miracles happen – they will.**



# NEWS

## Stimulant users caught up in fatal 'fourth wave' of opioid epidemic

Hundreds of Americans continue to die every day from overdoses. More of those deaths now involve stimulants like cocaine and meth mixed with fentanyl. Men of color have been hit particularly hard.

"Somebody can believe that they can smell it [fentanyl] or taste it, or see it...but that's not a scientific test," said Dr. Josiah "Jody" Rich, an addiction specialist and researcher who teaches at Brown University. "People are going to die today because they buy some cocaine that they don't know has fentanyl in it."

The mix of stimulants like cocaine and methamphetamines with fentanyl is driving what experts call the opioid epidemic's "fourth wave." The mixture presents powerful challenges to efforts to reduce overdoses, because many users of stimulants don't know they are at risk of ingesting opioids and so don't take overdose precautions. In the U.S., the first wave of the long-running and devastating opioid epidemic began with the abuse of prescription painkillers (early 2000s); the second wave involved an increase in heroin use, starting around 2010. The third wave began when powerful synthetic opioids like fentanyl started appearing in the supply around 2015. Now experts are observing a fourth phase of the deadly epidemic. Nationwide, illicit stimulants mixed with fentanyl were the most common drugs found in fentanyl-related overdoses, according to a study published in 2023 in the scientific journal *Addiction*.

It's not clear how much of the latest trend in polydrug use is accidental or intentional. A recent study from Millennium Health found that most people who use fentanyl do so at times intentionally and other times unintentionally. "People often use stimulants to power through the rapid withdrawal from fentanyl," Friedman said. "And the high-risk practice of using cocaine or meth with heroin, known as speedballing, has been around for decades."

Studies of street drugs, he said, show that in illicit drugs the potency can vary from 1% to 70% fentanyl. "Imagine ordering a mixed drink in a bar and it contains one to 70 shots," Friedman said, "and the only way you know is to start drinking it...There would be a huge number of alcohol overdose deaths." Drug checking technology can provide a rough estimate of fentanyl concentration, he said, but to get a precise measure requires sending drugs out to a laboratory. Fentanyl test strips offer a low-cost way to prevent overdoses by detecting the presence of fentanyl, regardless of potency, in cocaine and other illicit drugs.

Read the entire story at: [Stimulant Users Caught In Fourth-wave Opioid Epidemic](#)

## FORWARD TO A FRIEND

The mission of Houston Recovery Center is to provide compassionate care to underserved individuals affected by substance use through early intervention and community care coordination to help them achieve lifelong recovery.

Copyright © 2022 Houston Recovery Center LGC, All rights reserved.

**Writer/Editor: Bob Lytle**

**Our mailing address is:**  
150 N. Chenevert St., Houston, TX 77002

Want to change how you receive these emails?  
You can update your preferences or [Unsubscribe](#) from this list.  
[View it in your browser](#)