



**Address given by Jonathan Scott, President & Executive Director of
MHSA Member Agency Victory Programs, Inc.**

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A few days ago as I was walking down the street in Boston, a homeless woman sitting on the sidewalk caught my eye. She looked at me directly, shook her head, muttered, "*It doesn't make sense. It doesn't make sense. It doesn't make sense.*" I answered in agreement, "*I know. It doesn't make sense.*" Then she smiled.

War doesn't make sense. Financial catastrophe doesn't make sense. AIDS doesn't make sense. The death of someone you love doesn't ever make sense.

But at some point, to keep going, you put one foot in front of the other and sidestep fear, doubt, and insecurity. Maybe it's a survival gene or just plain stubborn hope that you know:

"The sun shining makes sense; your health makes sense; hearing your child laughs always makes sense."

Here's what else makes sense: the staff of Victory Programs. I go to work everyday at Victory Programs when outside news feels out of control; but what never feels out of control are the individuals who work here and try to make sense everyday in how we treat & communicate with one another.

They told me evidence proves the worst thing to do to someone in treatment who relapses is to kick them out. So they don't. It made sense even when few supported that principle.

They told me evidence proves someone on medication management does as well in a residential setting as someone not on medication. And so they open their doors to those on all medications. It made sense even when few supported that policy.

They told me evidence proves the man who discloses a struggle with sexual identity and asks to be admitted to a long-term program for women, and they do, and she thrives for the first time in treatment. It makes sense even when few supported its logic.

And they told me when the distraught homeless woman speaks of her pain in the only way she knows how, having a compulsive urge to impose my own view on her isn't the goal of motivational interviewing; evidence proves people change when we honor the space to share feelings freely, without judgment, bias or a requirement to conform. It makes sense.

Everyday, it's an honor to see firsthand such excellence in best practices applied by our risk taking, daring, innovative employees of our 20 urban facilities.

When our clients come to our staff with complex histories of pain and loss, our employees come back to them with uncompromising compassion. When our clients come to our staff with nowhere left to turn, our employees turn over the impulse to control and honor the clients' own decision making process.

When the future feels fragile, our employees are solid. When others cling to the status quo, they create a revolution in cultural change. When so much happens that doesn't make sense, it's a privilege to know the many individuals at Victory Programs who everyday thoughtfully make things happen to save lives. The evidence proves that makes sense.