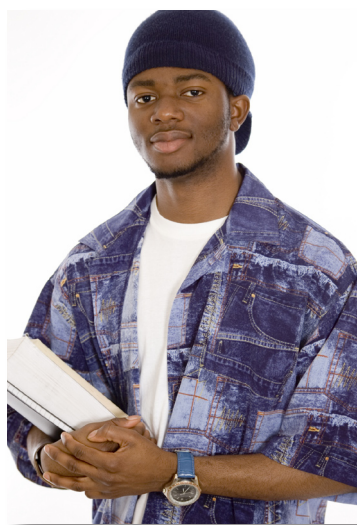


Supporting Wraparound Implementation: Chapter 5c.5

# My Career Journey with Wraparound Milwaukee

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My career with wraparound began on August 31, 1998. My first day of work was one of the most challenging days of my entire career because I didn't know what to expect. I had no training in adolescent mental health except for one course in Life Span Psychology. Despite my lack of training in the field, I found my niche and fell in love. I fell in love with the process; I fell in love with the families; and I fell in love with social service as a profession. During my two-year tenure as a Care Coordinator, I learned so much about people and what's needed to be successful. I also learned that every family involved in the system is just like mine. They are running the same race that my family has run over the years; running a race to make sure the next generation can succeed.

Fast forward two years to 2000, and I found myself at a crossroads. It was time for me to do something different but I still had passion for the work I did with wraparound. During this time period, Wraparound Milwaukee made changes to the contracts with the Care Coordination agencies, so that now there were opportunities for Care Coordinators to "grow" their careers. The Lead Care Coordinator position was just what I was looking for at the time. The Lead Care Coordinator position would provide me with leadership experience while at the same time allowing me to continue working with the children and families that had captured my heart. I held this position for just over a year and learned even more about the wraparound process. I also developed leadership skills that would give my career some direction. I decided during my time as a Lead Care Coordinator that I was ready to take my career to the next level and I needed

an advanced degree to accomplish that. I enrolled in graduate school to better prepare for my chosen career in Human Services Administration.

While in graduate school, I took another position within wraparound that would keep me connected to the work that I had so much passion for. I became a Facilitation Specialist, providing care coordination to families in which a parent was struggling with alcohol and drug issues. Another component to this position was to provide Wraparound training to providers of services to treat drug and alcohol abuse, so that they could implement the process within their respective agencies. I thoroughly enjoyed this position as well. I enjoyed being able to educate others about the wraparound process.

After being employed as a Facilitation Specialist for just over a year, I was given the opportunity to supervise a care coordination unit at Children's Service Society of Wisconsin. I have been in this job for just under four years and this position within wraparound has been my favorite to date. Not only do I have the opportunity to continue working with families, but I also have the opportunity to cultivate the skills of the Care Coordinators that I supervise. I've been very privileged over the last eight and a half years to have worked with a fine group of administrators who have consistently advocated for the mental health needs of the children and families in Milwaukee. I've been equally as privileged to work with the chil-

dren and families in Milwaukee who need a little help to run life's race.

I recently attended a conference where I learned that an African village determines its prosperity by the children of the village. A common question in this village is "How are the children?" The desired response is "The children are well." I believe that the work we do as Wraparound Milwaukee works to ensure that the children and families of Milwaukee are well.

### Author

**Kenyatta Matthews'** nine-year experience with Wraparound Milwaukee has been very educational. She has worked with wraparound in several different capacities, and this has provided her with the skills necessary to continue to effectively advocate for children and families.

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