



## Fletcher Group Partner Success Story

# SMART IN NEW YORK

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## AN AMERICAN STORY

Once a booming industrial center with more millionaires per capita than any other American city, Watertown, New York began losing residents and businesses in the mid-60s. Like other 'left behind' communities in rural America, ensuing workforce and infrastructure challenges have been exacerbated by high rates of substance use. One casualty was 19-year-old Antwane Wallace, who, unlike his mother, was not actively addicted but lost his life by merely trying something offered by a friend. That something was fentanyl.



## A MOTHER'S STORY

"Antwane's death changed everything," says Trudy Wallace. "When that happened I made the decision to help educate people about addiction because my son wasn't actively addicted. He just tried something his friend gave him and lost his life. That's when this whole new journey of mine began."

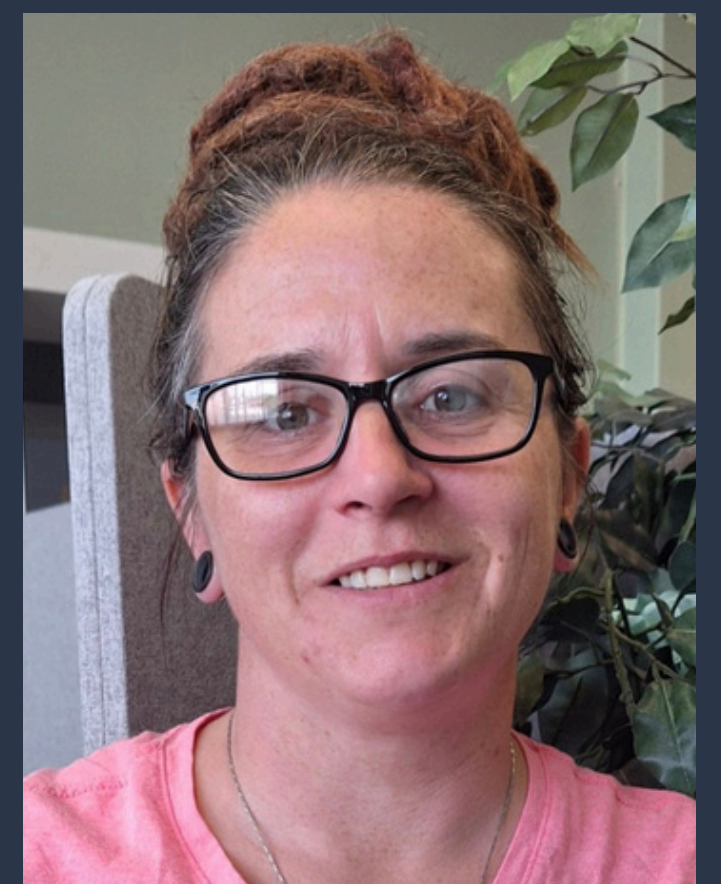
After struggling with addiction all her adult life, Trudy is now a full-time certified peer recovery advocate at the Anchor Recovery Center in Watertown where she serves clients on a walk-in basis, some of whom she knows from the streets.

## A NEW BEGINNING

Trudy's new career was unexpected. She was still struggling when SMART Recovery training at a halfway house in Watertown pointed her in a new direction. "The Successful Life Skills curriculum is so empowering," says Trudy. "I learned how to think my way through challenging situations and respond in positive ways instead of freaking out." When Trudy heard that Anchor also offered SMART training, she began volunteering there and, to her surprise, was soon hired by Anchor Director Kelly Wright. "After 32 years of struggling with addiction, I'm finally on the right track," says Trudy.

## A SMART MOVE

"I wish I'd heard about SMART earlier," says Trudy (pictured below), "It's given me key insights I wasn't getting anywhere else. Before SMART I was always listening to the same old tapes in my head that rationalized every bad decision. SMART gave me the self-awareness I needed to see my life and my choices more objectively. That's been huge for me, as it has been for many of the people we work with at Anchor. SMART is an amazing tool that I'd recommend to anyone involved in recovery."





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## MAKING BETTER CHOICES

*"Before SMART, I was making bad choices without knowing it," says Trudy. "It didn't even occur to me that I had a choice—that I could react positively in a way that would make things better or negatively in a way that would make things worse. For example, the other day I spilled a full cup of coffee. A couple years ago I would have freaked out. Instead, I was able to talk myself down, saying, 'Well, I'm just glad the cup wasn't bigger and there wasn't a ton of sugar in it so it wasn't so sticky to clean up.' An incident like that would have tipped me over the edge before. But now, thanks to SMART, I can manage it and go on with my day without it triggering me to do something stupid."*



## NO CONFLICT

*Trudy was introduced to SMART as a complement to the 12-step program she was in. "There's no conflict or incompatibility," she says, "so why not offer both? After all, one requirement of a 12-step program is to keep an open mind. To me, that means helping people find what works best for them. Twelve-step works great for a lot of people, but some people aren't comfortable with the emphasis on a 'higher power' because it sounds too religious. With SMART you can serve those people while maintaining your established 12-step program."*

## RURAL BENEFITS

*"The SMART Successful Life Skills workbook is truly amazing," says Trudy. "There's so much information that can help people manage everyday situations. The SMART website is equally amazing. If I need help setting healthy boundaries, I can find loads of different activities and tips there that are immediately helpful. The fact that participants can be certified to become facilitators also makes SMART perfect for rural communities like ours by bringing valuable knowledge and services to us that would otherwise be unavailable."*

## NEXT STEPS

*"I've made the decision to go further," says Trudy. "I'm going back to school to get my case worker credentials and a bachelor's degree in human development. It's my way of giving back, helping people, and honoring my son's legacy."*

*"Trudy's an example of how people can recover and find new meaning in life," says Anchor Director Kelly Wright (pictured below). "We thank the Fletcher Group and funding from the Elevance Health Foundation for making it all possible."*

