

## 2022 Awards of Excellence

*Peer Specialist of the Year Award*



*Kathy Raney, CRSS  
Care Access Coordinator  
Centerstone of Illinois*

### **ABOUT THE AWARD**

Each year at NatCon, the Peer Specialist of the Year Award is given to an individual with lived experience who works in a health care organization and uses his or her strengths to help peers on their road to recovery from mental illness. Learn more by visiting our [awards website](#).

### **MAKING A MARK**

As a Certified Recovery Support Specialist (CRSS) for more than a decade – and with 27 years of experience in the social work field – Kathy Raney has dedicated her life to serving others. In her role as a Care Access Coordinator for Centerstone of Illinois, Kathy works with an intensive and difficult population and is able to use her own recovery journey to assist others in need.

Kathy has increased Centerstone’s presence in the community by reaching out to gain partners within counties served. She is currently building and guiding a team of case managers and peer supports that are providing needed services to individuals and families – from helping them obtain substance treatment, access resources and enhance their life skills, to job placement and housing.

Kathy is involved in several action groups, including the Veterans Administration, local Veterans of Foreign Wars and American Legion and Illinois Department of Mental Health. She is passionate about reaching out to community members to gain insight into the barriers impacting individuals experiencing homelessness, mental health challenges and substance use issues.

Kathy’s compassion lies in her hope for others and her understanding that a life with mental illness(es) is not a life that people choose. Her desire to help people be the best they can be – and knowing that the best they can be is defined by *them* and not by a service provider – has helped her make a significant impact in her community and on the lives of the individuals she serves.

*The [National Council for Mental Wellbeing](#) is proud to recognize Kathy as its 2022 Peer Specialist of the Year Award winner and thanks her for going above and beyond to change lives in her community. Kathy will be accepting her award at [NatCon22](#) from April 11-13 in the Washington, D.C., metro area.*

