

# self worth

courage™

WHERE ABILITIES  
AND DISABILITIES  
BECOME POSSIBILITIES

Courage Center's mission is to empower people with physical disabilities to reach for their full potential in every aspect of life.

## JOHN SHERRELL

Life changes in an instant. John Sherrell is living proof.

“On April Fools’ Day 2004, I was on my motorcycle heading to my friend’s performance at the Fitzgerald Theater,” he recalls, leaning an elbow on the counter of the Coffee Gallery, the coffee shop he owns and operates. Crisp winter light floods through the floor-to-ceiling windows of the converted warehouse on Washington Avenue in Minneapolis. “It was a clear blue day – like this,” he says, gesturing toward the windows. “I was only six blocks from home when a young driver pulled out in front of me. I t-boned her car, receiving broken bones, lacerations and a closed head injury. If it weren’t for my full-faced helmet, I wouldn’t be here. But I am, with a traumatic brain injury, which has totally changed my life.

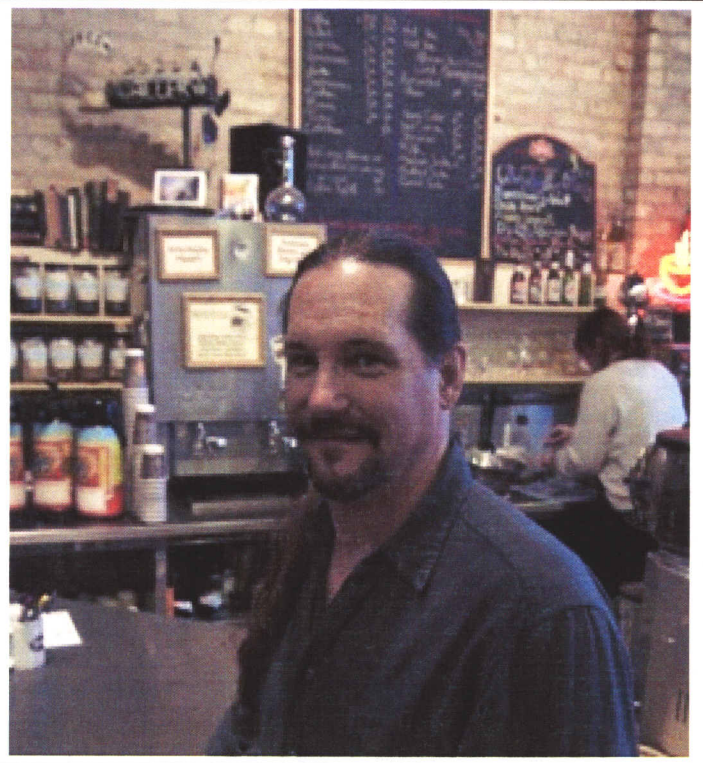
“My doctors at Hennepin County Medical Center weren’t sure I’d live. Two and a-half months at St. Paul’s Bethesda Rehabilitation Hospital helped me relearn to walk and talk. And finally, I ‘graduated’ from two years of coursework at Courage Center.”

John interrupts his conversation to wait on a customer, sending her out the door with a steaming latte in mittened hands and friendly thanks. Without skipping a beat, he returns and picks up his narration, tossing his long ponytail back over his shoulder.

“Courage Center guided me through my recovery,” he says. “My coursework included speech therapy, to relearn pronunciation and improve my diction, and occupational therapy, to relearn how to cook safely at home and practice my dexterity. Then there was physical therapy, to revive my partially separated left shoulder nerve, and the Community Reintegration Program – group therapy for brain injured people – where I brushed up on schedule planner use, attended classes weekly to work on memory exercises, and attended group outings. I even got involved with creating an infomercial video to expound the uses of a planner book!”

One of John’s most prized accomplishments was passing a state-recognized test of his driving skills. “Courage Center’s Driving program people are more familiar with brain injuries than the state’s personnel,” he says, “so their way of teaching was extremely effective.”

Currently, John still has twice monthly meetings in his home with Courage Center’s Independent Living Skills counselors. “They help me organize utility bills, to-do lists, and Social Security and state Medical Assistance paperwork I need to



manage. They’re a big part of the reason I can pursue normal mental and physical functioning.

“It’s all about independence and self-worth, you know. After my accident, I told myself that I would try to do all that was asked of me during rehab. I’ve worked hard to avoid living an institutional life, unable to take care of myself. That hard work – for me, at least – is the key to improving life. Courage Center has given me the opportunity to do just that.”

As for goals, John is practical. “I adjust my goals as I improve,” he says. “Five years from now, I’ll still be working on improving myself.” A pause, then, “Shouldn’t everybody?” he asks.

Helping others seems a guidepost of John’s self-improvement journey. Just one example? He’s started a traumatic brain injury support group that meets at his coffee shop.

“I’m way fortunate,” he adds. “I have the support of strong relationships with Courage Center staff members, my friends and my family. They all keep me positive. Courage Center has given me the ability to put all aspects of my life back together again. Because it’s a *comprehensive* rehabilitation facility, it’s able to meet my *numerous* challenges. That gives me hope, and I feel able to continue with life as I find it now.”

# COURAGE CENTER'S COMMUNITY REINTEGRATION PROGRAM

*A Better Life for Minnesotans with Disabilities*

*A Better Deal for Minnesota Taxpayers*

Courage Center's Community Reintegration Program (CRP) is an outpatient program that helps adults with mild to moderate brain injury reintegrate life tasks and roles into their community.

CRP's coordinated approach works with individuals to develop skills and strategies to address deficits in:

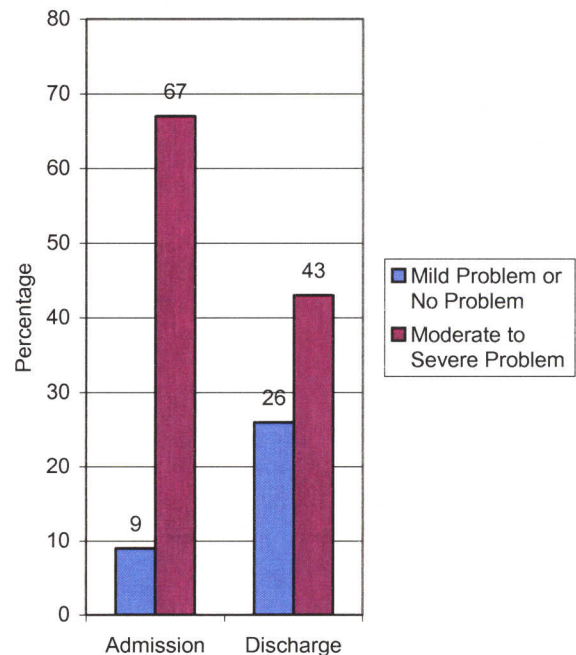
- attention
- memory
- problem solving
- awareness
- adjustment to disability, and
- other impairments caused by acquired brain injury

The program is provided three days per week. Typically individuals receiving services spend six hours at Courage Center.

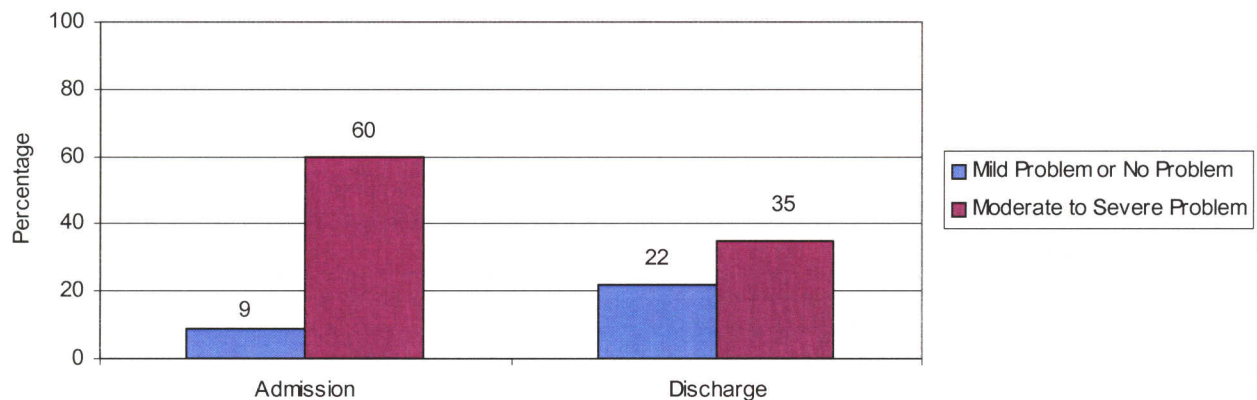
CRP participants develop goals to:

- increase independence
- decrease vulnerability
- increase safety, and/or
- improve prevocational skills

**Impaired Self Awareness**



**Memory**



**Clients in CRP make clinically and statistically significant gains in abilities, adjustment, and participation while in the program, and maintain them for at least six months after discharge.**

COURAGE CENTER is a nonprofit rehabilitation and resource center for people with disabilities, brain injuries, speech or vision impairments, and hearing loss. Since 1928, Courage Center has offered comprehensive rehabilitation services to people of all ages.

Our services are designed to empower people with disabilities to reach their full potential in every aspect of life.

For more information about Courage Center, visit [courage.org](http://courage.org).

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