

Expanding Our Expertise: Three Bridgeway Clinicians Earn Certified Autism Specialist Credentials

Bridgeway is strengthening its ability to provide informed, person-centered behavioral health care for individuals with autism and intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).

Three Bridgeway outpatient clinicians recently completed specialized training through the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES) and earned the **Certified Autism Specialist (CAS)** credential:

- **Christopher Plaugic**, Licensed Wellness Clinician — Union County
- **Jessica Bleyhl**, Licensed Wellness Clinician — Sussex County
- **Samantha Shery**, Senior Licensed Wellness Clinician — Hudson County

The credential reflects advanced education and training related to autism, including approaches for understanding and responding to an individual's communication, sensory, emotional and behavioral needs.

This additional expertise is especially important for individuals with autism and I/DD who also experience mental health or co-occurring behavioral health needs.

“For too many families, finding a behavioral health professional who understands both mental health needs and autism or I/DD can be difficult,” said **Stephanie R. Simon, LCSW, NCPsyA, CCS, DRCC, Vice President of Strategic Growth**. “We are intentionally building that expertise within Bridgeway so individuals do not have to choose between care that addresses their behavioral health and care that understands how they experience the world.”

Bridgeway's outpatient programs serve individuals **age 6 and older** with autism and/or I/DD who need treatment for mental health or co-occurring conditions. Services include individual, group and family therapy; medication management; case management; and connections to additional resources.

With Certified Autism Specialists now serving outpatient programs in **Union, Sussex and Hudson counties**, Bridgeway continues to expand access to care that recognizes the whole person, their needs, strengths, goals and support system.

Congratulations to Christopher, Jessica and Samantha on earning this important credential and bringing this additional expertise to the individuals and families we serve!

Referrals Are Welcome

To make a referral or learn more about Bridgeway's outpatient services, call the **Central Access Line at 877-692-5664** or visit www.BridgewayBHS.org.