

## *Brittani Shells*

My name is Brittani Shells, and I am a Mental Health Court Peer Support Mentor for the Delaware Health and Social Services Mental Health Division of Delaware Psychiatric Center. I am a native of Camden, Delaware. My first passion was basketball where I led the Caesar Rodney Raiders to their first state Semi-Finals appearance. However, after my sophomore year, I transferred to Caravel Academy, in hopes to gain more basketball exposure. Upon graduating, I earned a full athletic Division I scholarship to the University of Richmond, where I studied Rhetoric and Communications. My main aspiration was to play professional basketball in the United States; however, my dream slowly came to an end, when I did not get drafted by the Women's National Basketball Association. Fortunately, I was given an opportunity to play professional basketball in another country.

In 2011, I signed my first Professional contract with Elizur Holon, a team in Holon, Israel. That following year, I found myself in another court—The Superior Court, for making a wrong decision in life. Despite my obstacles, I was awarded another opportunity to play professional basketball in Slovakia. Due to my life experiences, I wanted to spend the rest of my life counseling/mentoring other individuals who faced similar experiences and give people hope toward their future.

After returning to the States, I decided to undergo an early basketball retirement and further my education in Social Work. A few months later, a friend told me about a new position with the State as a Peer Specialist—someone who counsels supports and mentors a peer to further their ability to move forward and transition into the community. A couple of weeks later, I was offered the position as a Peer Support Mentor. Although, I still plan to further my education in social work, train other athletes, and compose positive music for the youth, my main focus is to inspire and uplift individuals who encountered difficult situations and feel hopeless. As a Peer Specialist, I look forward working and helping other individuals while gaining the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to be an asset to my community.

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