

JULY 2008 RECOVERY TIMES EMPHASIS ON PEER-DRIVEN/PEER RECOVERY SUPPORTS



HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- **PATHWAYS TO RECOVERY**—Infusing the workplace/workforce with the face and voice of recovery.
- **PEER-LED NUTRITION AND WELLNESS INTERVENTIONS**—Focusing on dietary changes, exercise, smoking cessation and breast health to improve residents' quality of life.
- **PEER RECOVERY AND WELLNESS PROGRAMS**—Supporting continued personal growth and employment for people in recovery.
- **PEER SUPPORT STAFF TRAINING**—Preparing people in recovery from mental illness to be Peer Support staff.
- **VALUING PEER SUPPORTS**—Utilizing the value-based practices of peer support in furthering a recovery-oriented system of care.

Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
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PATHWAYS TO RECOVERY ~ DMHAS' Southeastern Mental Health Authority (SMHA) Pathways' peer specialists have infused the workplace/force with the face and voice of recovery. Recently Pathways' peer specialists received accolades for their efforts in increasing attendance and participation of individuals within SMHA's Brief Care Program's morning groups. Peer specialists continue to engage individuals after these structured meetings, often returning later in the day to provide continued support and encouragement and to receive updates from the individuals.

Pathways' peer specialists are increasing their presence to case managers by participating in daily team meetings. At these meetings the peer specialists learn about individuals and their needs, identify alternative approaches and offer individualized peer supports. Case managers identify individuals needing specific supports and match them with the distinct skills of the peer specialists. One case manager asked for assistance in helping an individual prepare for a job interview – hair, make-up, what (not) to wear, coaching to reduce pre-interview jitters...peer support specialists have been there, done that and now share their experience! Peer specialists are a daily reminder that recovery is possible and successfully returning to employment is attainable.

For more information, contact Karen.Spaulding@po.state.ct.us or 860-859-4679.

PEER-LED NUTRITION AND WELLNESS INTERVENTIONS ~ Perception Program, through its residential services for individuals with co-occurring disorders, uses a holistic approach to target mind, body, and spirit. Its wellness approach includes focus on dietary changes, exercise, smoking cessation and breast health to improve residents' quality of life. In response to residents' requests for additional recovery-oriented nutrition and exercise, Perception has recently implemented peer-led nutrition and exercise interventions. Exercise equipment was purchased and staff and residents are receiving training from an experienced fitness trainer in its use. Each month residents

will elect a male and female peer exercise leader who will facilitate exercise groups and teach new residents how to properly use the equipment. Likewise, a nutritional consultant provides education and recovery nutrition recommendations to staff and residents, and the program has begun to make alternative food purchases. Residents who hold house positions that assist with meal preparation will implement these recommendations under staff supervision, and will train their replacements as they pass on the opportunity to other residents.

For more information, contact Denise Keane, Perception Program, at 860-450-7130.

Peer support specialists learn about individuals, their needs and identify alternative approaches.

PEER RECOVERY/WELLNESS PROGRAMS ~ DMHAS' Western CT Mental Health Network (WCMHN)–Torrington, continues its emphasis on peer programming through Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP). Many individuals in recovery have set up recovery plans and utilize them as part of their

treatment. Recently, Pathways to Recovery has been presented and well received by individuals in recovery with great discussions within the groups providing a supportive and empowering base to grow in. WRAP facilitators have found that the group embraces and provides supportive growth. Sixteen (16) individuals to date have completed the course.

WCMHN also runs two stipend programs, the Warmline, which provides peer support via the phone evenings and holidays from 6-10pm, and the "Home Works Program" which has peers assisting other peers in house cleaning and organizing. Participants of these programs are paid through an hourly stipend of \$7.65 per hour. These programs provide choices for continued personal growth and employment for people in recovery.

For more information on the above, contact Vicki.Jene@po.state.ct.us or 860-496-3704. For more information on WCMHN, contact Colette.Anderson@po.state.ct.us or 203-805-6400.

PEER SUPPORT STAFF TRAINING ~ DMHAS' Western CT Mental Health Network (WCMHN) representing the Danbury,

Torrington and Waterbury areas, was recently awarded a Mental Health Transformation Grant to implement the Mary Talcott-Fitzpatrick Peer Employment Project (Mary's Project).

"Mary's Project" will teach people in recovery from mental illness to be Peer Support staff and prepare them to work with mental health service providers. The project will feature a 10-day training which will be conducted by Recovery Innovations, Inc. of Arizona. Recovery Innovations, formally known as Meta Inc., is a nationally recognized organization which promotes individual's recovery from mental illness and substance abuse conditions. In addition to the training, Mary's Project will work with employers in Western CT to help program graduates obtain employment. Other parts of the grant include educating employers, consumers/individuals in recovery, family members and practitioners about the importance of recovery in the mental health delivery system.

For more information, contact Colette.Anderson@po.state.ct.us or 203-805-6400.

VALUING PEER SUPPORTS ~ DMHAS' Southwest CT Mental Health System (SWCMHS) has been utilizing the value-based practices of peer support as part of its system of care for over six years. The approach of respect, shared responsibility and mutual agreement of what is helpful, based on shared experiences, is applied in various capacities and in many different venues at SWCMHS. An update of SWCMHS peer services follows:

-Peers Reaching Out (PROs) is active on 2 psychiatric units at Bridgeport Hospital and 2 acute units at Greater Bridgeport Community Mental Health Center. PROs facilitate groups, work one-on-one, assist staff, and present weekly on the designated "Family Night".

-People Utilizing Strengths for Healing (PUSH) continues to connect peers to their communities. A second venue is now starting a at SWCMHS' Middle Street site.

-Soundview Warm-line has been in existence for three years with a staff of approximately nine peers that offer telephonic support to individuals in Region I from 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., 7 days a week. The Warm-line receives approximately 125 calls weekly.

Connection between peer coaches and individuals in recovery contributes to both people learning and growing.

-Peers are integral to the success of, and are always welcomed on the *Consumer Council meetings* held monthly. The Council offers the peer perspective while assisting the system with further thoughts on peer initiatives, satisfaction surveys, job openings, and providing regular consumer input and feedback.

-Recovery Educators provide a safe and encouraging environment for individuals to learn and grow. Educators offer several different courses, including Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP), Pathways to Recovery For You, Peer Employment Training, and recently Illness Management and Recovery (IMR). To date, over 400 people have taken WRAP in the region.

-Pathways to Recovery is a curriculum for personal growth taught 2-hours weekly for 12 weeks. There have been over 40 graduates of this course. The training teaches the peer support discipline in a 3-hour weekly class for 15 weeks. There are over 80 graduates to date, 25 of whom are employed using their certification.

-Recovery Coaches, introduced in March 2007, are co-located on various community-based teams to connect with individuals in recovery through shared life experiences. The coaches use an approach based on mutuality, meaning that the connection between the coach and the individual in recovery contributes to both people learning and growing. Their role is to assist individuals in recovery in moving toward goals and action. These conversations may take place at the local coffee shop, in the library, while going to the YMCA, or while looking for employment. The coaches often are seen as role models "if she can do it, so can I".

For more on the above, contact Celeste.Cremin-Endes@po.state.ct.us or 203-551-7405. For more information on SWCMHS, contact James.Pisciotta@po.state.ct.us or 203-579-7368.