

Empowerment & Advocacy Brief



Department of
Mental Health

Consumer Advocacy and Protection Office • August 2010

Meet more of the CAP Office Staff

In the last issue of Empowerment & Advocacy (April 2010) readers were introduced to Consumer Advocacy and Protection (CAP) Office Chief Amy Price and program staff: Kathryn Remer, Doug Bailey and Deb Givens. Introductions to support and Toll Free Bridge personnel continue below.

Julie Hubbard, Executive Secretary

I have worked intermittently for the Ohio Department of Mental Health as temporary support staff, providing coverage in various offices, since 2007. In July 2010, I was hired as Executive Secretary for the CAP and the Office of Risk and Disaster Services. Both offices are within the division of Program and Policy Development, but I am known for providing support wherever needed. I earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from Ohio University and have always been employed in some type of support or service capacity in a wide variety of work environments. I am continuing that now with public service for our consumers.



Toll-Free Bridge Peer Staff

The Toll-Free Bridge (TFB) specializes in helping to address the concerns of mental health consumers, their families and friends. This phone line provides a central contact point for consumers around the state to reach the department for help in navigating the often-complicated mental health system. Since peer support is an essential element of recovery-oriented mental health systems, all calls are answered by trained and supportive peers.

Currently, the TFB has five permanent staff and one on-call worker – all are able to assist callers from a consumer/peer perspective. Aleta, Christy, Kathy, Louis, Lori and Mary provide callers with an opportunity to speak with someone who has walked in similar shoes and is able to listen, provide support and link them to additional resources.

Christy

My job gives me an opportunity to share my experience and knowledge obtained through my journey of being the care giver to an autistic and medically ill child. It can be a daunting task to navigate the mental health system being a single mom while trying to cope with my own issues.

Kathy

I like the fact that we are helping other consumers. It is showing that

(Meet more of the CAP Office staff continued on page 3)

Peer Support is Staple of Recovery

This article by Miriam Keith, consumer support coordinator of the Washington County Mental Health and Addiction Recovery Board, appeared in the Marietta Times, July 3, 2010.

Most of us have felt the healing power of empathy when sharing difficult situations with someone else who has experienced similar distress. This principle, that individuals who have had the same life experiences can help each other, is the basis of peer support.

Peer support has been a staple of the mental health recovery movement for many years. In 1978, President Carter's Commission on Mental Health recommended the development of community based supports and that "a major effort be developed in the area of personal and community supports which will recognize and strengthen the natural networks to which people belong and depend."

The 1999 *Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General* found that self-help and mutual support, from which peer support services evolved, was the fastest growing service for individuals recovering their mental health.

President Bush's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health released its report in 1999 and stated, "Recovery-oriented services and supports are often successfully provided by consumers through consumer-run organizations and by consumers who work as providers in a variety of settings, such as peer support and psychosocial rehabilitation programs. Studies show that consumer-run services and consumer-providers can

broaden access to peer support, engage more individuals in traditional mental health services, and serve as a resource in the recovery of people with a psychiatric diagnosis. Because of their experiences, consumer-providers bring different attitudes, motivations, insights, and behavioral qualities to the treatment encounter.”

Peer support expert Shery Mead defines peer support as a system of giving and receiving help founded on key principles of respect, shared responsibility and mutual agreement of what is helpful. Peer support is not based on psychiatric models and diagnostic criteria. It is about understanding another’s situation empathically through the shared experience of emotional and psychological pain. The connection between peers is a deep understanding based on mutual experience where people are able to “be” with each other without the constraints of traditional (expert/patient) relationships.

Mead believes that while there are many contexts for peer support (groups, programs, two people talking, etc.) there are fundamental principles that make it beneficial and distinct from other kinds of help:

In spite of the fact that people might congregate around the shared experience of psychiatric issues, peer support does not necessarily assume a problem orientation. Successful peer support groups, programs or just one-on-one conversations focus on sharing remedies and tools that have proven useful in similar situations. Because there is likely more openness and trust among peers, issues may be discussed and understood in greater depth.

Analyzing, assessing and evaluating are not part of the relationships in peer support. There is a time and a place for the analyzing and evaluating that accompanies traditional mental health treatment; however, it is refreshing to talk with a kindred spirit without judgment.

Peer support assumes full reciprocity. There are no static roles of helper and helped. This reciprocity is the key to building natural connections in the community. This is an enormous shift for people who have learned to think about community as a series of received services where there is little incentive or opportunity to “give back.”

Participation in peer support is voluntary and inexpensive. While some peer support services may have the ability to bill Medicaid for services, most peer support services are free. There is no threat to be dismissed from services based on level of participation.....

Peer support is critical in Washington County’s current fiscal environment, particularly in regard to recent and ongoing reductions in mental health funding. It is a powerfully effective recovery tool that offers friendships, hope and empowerment to an often lonely and disenfranchised segment of our population.

Trained peers pivotal in supporting recovery

Magellan Health Services, Inc. has joined with the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) to offer a new series of online learning opportunities to consumers, families and providers that address the pivotal and growing role of peer specialists in helping individuals work through and recover from mental illnesses.

Peer specialists are recovering from mental illnesses themselves, and this training will assist them to help others with mental health challenges gain hope and move forward in their own recovery.

Designed by DBSA, the four new e-courses listed below are offered free of charge at www.MagellanHealth.com/training.

- 1) Research, Core Competencies and Ethics
- 2) The Five Stages of Recovery and the Role of Peer Specialists

3) Using your Recovery Story

4) Effective Supervision of Peer Specialists

The goal of these e-courses is to help participants better understand the peer specialist’s role in helping others recover from mental illnesses. Each e-course is tailored toward the beginner or intermediate skill level and takes approximately 30-45 minutes to complete. Health care professionals who complete the new trainings will be issued a certificate of participation.

These e-courses join 10 other interactive, self-guided trainings in the Magellan Resiliency and Recovery e-Learning Center.

Governor endorses PSH Framework

This month, the Interagency Council on Homelessness and Affordable Housing received Gov. Ted Strickland’s endorsement of the council’s Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Policy Framework. The PSH Framework, approved by the council earlier this year, is the first statewide policy to define permanent supportive housing criteria and target populations. It builds a solid foundation for work toward the goal of increasing the availability of permanent supportive housing across the state by 6,000 units in the next five years.

In a letter to state agency directors, Gov. Strickland stated, “After reviewing the PSH Framework and the actions of the Interagency Council over the course of my administration, I believe you have done an excellent job developing an ambitious yet attainable goal, along with a clear path forward to meet that goal.”

The PSH Framework and the letter of endorsement from the governor can be found in the Consumer & Advocacy Protection section of the ODMH Web site.

(Meet the CAP Office staff continued from front page)

we really care.

Lori

Working part-time helps with my mental illness, by getting me out and about. I help people get help, and hopefully into the right direction.

Louis

I am a consumer as well as a worker for the Toll Free Bridge. I am able to give helpful information to people and that is fulfilling and helpful for my own condition.

Mary

I like that I can help people with resource information; and help ease their mind of some of the hardships they are struggling with at the time.

The Ohio Department of Mental Health (ODMH) is committed to helping consumers of mental health services locate, obtain and maintain employment. Through its Office of Consumer Advocacy and Protection, ODMH supports technical assistance, consultation and training on employment to mental health provider organizations and consumer operated peer centers. For more information about ODMH employment projects please visit the ODMH website or contact Doug Bailey at doug.bailey@mh.ohio.gov. "Nothing says recovery like a job."

Have you used the Toll Free Bridge Line?

If so, The Department of Mental Health would very much appreciate your input about the services you receive from the Office of Consumer Advocacy and Protection (CAP). Located on the Client Rights and Resources page this survey is designed to find out if individuals who utilize CAP services such as the Toll Free Bridge Line receive assistance in a timely and courteous manner. In our efforts to help consumers, family members and other concerned parties from the community with information, referrals, complaints, and grievances, it is necessary to identify our customers and find out if their needs are being met when working with staff from ODMH's CAP Office. Your input is important to us, as it will help us to improve services we provide. Please go to ODMH Web site's [Client Rights and Resources](#)



Consumers and family members can call the Toll-Free Bridge at 1-877-275-6364 or 1-888-636-4889 TTY for confidential information and referral.

All other callers should continue to use ODMH's Central Office numbers to reach individual ODMH staff members.

PATH projects focus on homeless veterans

According to an Associated Press report from May 2009, "Up to one-fifth of the more than 1.7 million military members who have served in Iraq or Afghanistan are believed to have symptoms of anxiety, depression and other emotional problems. Some studies show that about half of those who need help do not seek it." (www.msnbc.msn.com/id/30782778/)

Considering that untreated mental illness is often connected to homelessness, the Ohio Department of Mental Health has funded three veteran pilot projects during State Fiscal Years 2010 and 2011 with a portion of its Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) dollars.

PATH is a formula grant administered by the Center for Mental Health Services, a component of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). PATH services are for people with serious mental illness, including those with co-occurring substance use disorders, which are experiencing homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless not linked or engaged with traditional community mental health services. PATH services include community-based outreach, mental health, substance abuse, case management and other supports, plus a limited set of housing services.

The three veterans projects (which are among 11 Ohio PATH projects) were required to hire a veteran peer as part of their PATH outreach teams. By incorporating a veteran peer, all projects report improvement in the team's ability to engage homeless veterans in settings where they are known to congregate and staff have increased their understanding of military culture. The following counties house the three veteran projects: Butler/Hamilton County (Transitional Living, Inc. in partnership with Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services); Cuyahoga County (Mental Health

Services for Homeless Persons, Inc.) and Franklin County (Southeast, Inc.).

Many homeless veterans are challenged by post traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse disorders or co-occurring disorders. The pilot projects are to expand culturally appropriate outreach, engagement, treatment and other services to veterans with mental illness who are homeless. You can find a more extensive summary of the pilots by visiting, ODMH online at <http://mentalhealth.ohio.gov/what-we-do/promote/consumer-advocacy-and-protection/housing/path.shtml>. To locate a provider near you, visit <http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Super/Path/Grantees.aspx> or contact Deb Givens at Deborah.Givens@mh.ohio.gov.

Web resources for cultural competence

Cultural competence recognizes the dimensions that influence an individual's personal identity. These Internet resources may help service providers become familiar with how these dimensions can often affect a person's ability to receive or engage in services.

Asian Community Mental Health Services (California)

www.acmhs.org

Asian American Community Services (Columbus Ohio)

www.asiancomsv.org

The Cross Cultural Healthcare Program (Seattle)

www.xculture.org

Diversity RX

www.diversityrx.org

Latino Behavioral Health Institute (California)

www.lbhi.org

NY Coalition for Asian Mental Health (NYC)

www.asianmentalhealth.org

National Association for Rural Mental Health

www.narmh.org

National Center for Cultural Competence (Georgetown Univ.)

<http://gucchd.georgetown.edu/nccc/>

List of medication resources updated

The ODMH Office of Consumer Advocacy and Protection has updated its comprehensive listing of the available Patient Assistance Programs from U.S. drug companies. This guide is designed to assist people who may be unable to pay for their needed medications. It can be downloaded from the ODMH Web site's [Client Rights and Resources](#) page.

Questions or comments about this document should be directed to Kathryn Remer at (614) 644-5297 or kathryn.remer@mh.ohio.gov.

Empowerment Center brings hope, healing

The National Empowerment Center believes that recovery and empowerment are not the privilege of a few exceptional leaders, but are possible for each person. They strive to let those those who have been diagnosed with mental illness know that there is a place to turn to receive the needed information to have control over their lives.

NEC has a toll-free information and referral line. A Spanish-speaking information specialist is also available. To learn more, call: 800-POWER2U (800-769-3728).

OEC hosts conference, launches Web site

The Ohio Empowerment Coalition, the new statewide consumer advocacy and recovery education organization, held its first annual conference, "Honoring Our Past, Building Our Future," Aug. 13-14 in Dublin, Ohio.

The OEC is consumer-run and consists of members statewide united to support and give voice to persons and groups working to transform systems, promote wellness, facilitate mental health recovery and build resiliency. The Coalition is seeking to reflect and encourage the valuable ethnic and geographical diversity of all persons in Ohio committed to mental health recovery.

To learn more, contact the OEC Office at 614-310-8054 or 1-877-643-6701 toll free, or visit the new Web site: www.ohioempowermentcoalition.org.

The CAP Office has updated its pages within the ODMH Web site:

<http://mentalhealth.ohio.gov/what-we-do/promote/consumer-advocacy-and-protection/index.shtml>



Ted Stickland, Governor
Sandra Stephenson, Director

Department of
Mental Health

30 East Broad Street, 8th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215
mentalhealth.ohio.gov

Empowerment & Advocacy Brief

is published electronically on a quarterly basis by the Consumer Advocacy and Protection Office

(614) 466-2596 voice and (614) 752-9696 TTY

Amy Price, Chief

Julie Hubbard, Executive Secretary

Kathryn Remer, CAP & TFB Lead

Deb Givens, PATH Lead

Doug Bailey, Employment Lead