

- Consumer Operated Services -

There are currently 27 Self-Help Centers in the 21 counties across the state, all of which are consumer-operated and provide dedicated space for mental health consumers to grow in their recovery through self-help, socialization, peer support, opportunities for employment, and specialized wellness programs. In Spring of 2007, DMHS funded three new centers in areas of high need: inner city Camden, Southern Ocean County, and Paterson—all of which will be fully operational in the Fall of 2007 providing services to include: self-help and mutual aid support groups for consumers, cultural awareness and bilingual staff, enhanced resources for consumers who are dually-diagnosed, mobile community outreach, and faith-based satellite services.

Over the last two years, with additional state resources, Self-Help Centers' budgets were able to more than double in size. Full time Center Managers were hired at every center, which has proven to be a stabilizing force for change and growth at the centers. Although these center managers are required to accept a great deal of responsibility for the physical plant and for the well-being of the membership, the retention rate for the position is impressively high. This is primarily due to the DMHS funded Self-Help Leadership Training Academy and to the support and skills of the full-time Life Coach who was hired to assist the Center Managers in performing their duties by providing them with supportive counseling, mentoring and training necessary to handle the stresses associated with the demands of a management position.

With the additional funding, twelve of the Centers have moved to enhanced space thus far, and four of the other centers are slated to move in early FY '08. A particularly exciting initiative is that one of our premier centers, serving Atlantic County, has been able to purchase a 3,000 sq. ft. facility in Pleasantville, NJ with capital dollars provided by the DMHS. These moves are a significant accomplishment due to the increasing difficulties faced by agencies in procuring properties to lease/purchase due to zoning laws and municipal restrictions as well as the escalating rents, utilities, insurance, and other rising costs. Another essential component to the Centers operations is that each center was able to procure at least one late model van to provide transportation services to consumer participants.

Over the last several years, the Self-Help Centers in New Jersey have successfully incorporated significant changes as the Wellness and Recovery model has become an integral part of the overall mission and is being used more actively to inform the service delivery model. Centers now provide an increase in the amount and the variety of activity provided both at the Center itself and off-site. All of the Centers have Wellness Associates from the Wellness Institute available to provide groups and trainings for facilitators and members on a myriad of health and health-related topics chosen by the Center 2 to 3 times per month. Topics include: conflict resolution; group facilitation/group process issues; wellness and recovery issues from self-esteem to WRAP; cultural competency and diversity; learning about the healing arts; peer support; health promotion (smoking healthy eating, substance abuse), and preparing for education and employment.

A particularly exciting development for New Jersey's Self-Help Center model has been the development of an accountability system called Self-Help Outcomes Tracking (SHOUT), which is in the final phases of implementation. This data tracking system was developed specifically to monitor utilization and to support outcomes evaluation for participants of Self-Help Centers. SHOUT is in the process of being installed with full implementation to take place by Fall of 2007.

In addition to these services, there are other service innovations in select Centers across the state that not only serve the population of that particular area well, but also hold great promise for replication should additional funding become available. Some of these service innovations include:

Self-Help Center/Enhanced Model

The DMHS has awarded funding for two enhanced Self-Help Centers: A Way to Freedom (Sussex County) and the Hudson County Self-Help Center located in Jersey City. A Way to Freedom previously responded to a reduction in mental health services in their county by starting a psycho-educational group at the Center facilitated by a staff member. The goal of the Center is for the consumers to take charge of providing the groups on a weekly basis while focusing upon principles of recovery, wellness and personal empowerment. Their goal is to increase this popular group to once/week as part of the enhancement. The primary goal of the center enhancement is to expand services and a sense of cohesion for mental health consumers in this rural county. A Way to Freedom is located in Newton. An additional van and drivers have been added in order to reach consumers who can be quite isolated and lack public transportation. In collaboration with the Sussex County Mental Health Administrator, Center representatives will work with local service providers on strategies for outreach to consumers in Sussex County. Center representatives are also looking to meet with churches in the Sussex area to obtain free or low cost "satellite" space

that can be open in that part of the county 2-3 times per week. The unique geography and lack of services in Sussex County are the challenge and opportunity for growth.

Hudson County Self-Help Center has not only moved into new space, they've hired a new Self-Help Center Manager and created a new position, Services Coordinator, to provide enhanced services to county-based consumers. The Services Coordinator has made significant inroads with local agencies, mental health providers and hospitals to introduce the idea of consumer-run services and enhanced Self-Help Center programming. Throughout August, 2007, over 30 consumers attended three consumer forums conducted by the Services Coordinator and the Self-Help Center Regional Coordinator. Through this participatory process, they were able to gain vital input about services for the enhanced program, "The Annex," and the Center that can be implemented to create consumer-run services that meet both consumer and community needs. Some of the activities identified by the center constituents at the forums for "The Annex" include supported employment, alternative therapies such as Yoga, martial arts, and Ti Chi, financial literacy, budgeting and money management services, parenting classes, computer literacy training, legal advocacy, cooking, music therapy, fitness training, behavior management, and emotional coping groups. There are kitchen facilities, meeting areas and work space at the Center and meeting space and office space for visiting service providers and peer support at The Annex. Members have worked with facilitators and staff to create a comfortable environment that feels safe and provides room for many activities. Three vans and Jersey City's public transportation system help members reach the Center and they've increased trips and outside activities to provide experiences some consumers can't access otherwise.

Boarding Home Outreach

The Boarding Home Outreach (BHO) project is designed to provide support, social/recreational activities and an opportunity to connect with other consumers living in boarding homes and rooming houses. BHO provides transportation to the Centers as well as local community and statewide events. BHO also gives boarding home residents a chance to be involved in advocacy and educational events. This project has provided a mechanism for Self-Help Centers to provide support, socialization and other services to this often underserved population.

The BHO Project operates in the following counties: Atlantic, Ocean; Monmouth; Middlesex; Essex; Union; and Camden. Typically, there is a minimum of one BHO activity per week at each Center. For SFY'08, there will be a continued emphasis on integrating boarding home residents into all Self-Help Center activities. The SHOUT Program was expanded last year to track all boarding home residents and program utilization.

In Atlantic County, there has been a successful Boardwalk Outreach Program, which involves a partnership with the Atlantic County Mission to identify homeless individuals who are in need of linkages to a variety of social services. Representatives of the Center provide linkages for these individuals as well as provide recovery meetings at the Mission for the residents of the shelter, and Spanish-speaking groups for Hispanic consumers.

MICA Link

Consumers with a co-occurrence of severe mental illness and substance abuse comprise a large and underserved percentage of the mental health population we serve. The MICA Link Project began as a way to address the significant needs of this group of consumers by providing technical assistance, training, support and information. Consumers are exposed to activities that can act as an alternative to drinking or drugging. Trainings focus on wellness and recovery addressing the whole individual - physical, mental and spiritual.

Consumer-Run Transportation Services

Riverbank Transportation Services has been operating over the past five years out of the Riverbank Self-Help Center to provide transportation to consumers who lack transportation to and from work. This consumer operated service has enabled the consumers to become providers of service. The service operates 7 days a week from 7 am-10 pm. It serves approximately 22 consumers per week. The service also employs three drivers and one dispatcher, all of whom are consumer providers. Since its inception, it has provided transportation services to nearly 400 consumers returning to work.

Roads to Recovery is-a consumer operated transportation service, operating out of Riverbank Self-Help Center, that provides transportation to consumers with co-occurring issues who need to attend meetings, or groups. They serve approximately 25 consumers per week. The service operates 6 days each week with a dispatcher and a driver, who are consumers.

Leadership Training Academy

The Leadership Training Academy (LTA) Project was developed to provide a training program and a training/networking site for consumers who participate in Self-Help Centers. The site is located in North Wildwood in Cape May County close to The C.A.R.E. Self-Help Center. The LTA has been operational for a number of years and last year served over 350 individuals. The LTA offers various events including trainings, networking, mini-conferences, meeting, and recreational activities. The LTA site is a relaxed atmosphere that allows consumers to meet and discuss issues, receive technical assistance, and learn techniques in handling operational challenges associated with managing Self-Help Centers. Other popular trainings have focused on alternative therapies, such as Reiki and Meditation that complement other treatment choices. The Self-Help Group Clearinghouse, GROW, Consumer Advocacy Partnership and the PACT Team of Cape May have used and will continue to use the site for meetings, conferences and retreats.

The LTA Training Program components provides mental health consumers involved in Self-Help Centers instruction on policy and procedures, advocacy initiatives and education focused on the wellness and recovery model as well as self-sufficiency. The training curriculum is developed by CSP outreach staff drawing upon "best practice" models in the consumer self-help field. The curriculum is presented at central and northern region training sites and individually at local Self-Help Centers. The off-site training provides a tailored follow-up on training issues and learning opportunities related to geographical location and specific needs.

GROW

GROW is a community mental health movement organized and led by people recovering from mental illness. This 12-step program assists those "sufferers" who want to take responsibility for their problems by providing them with a group method to assist them in making good choices while receiving support from a caring and sharing community. The GROW groups are conducted for two hours followed by a half-hour period of socialization; and orientation groups meet every other week. All members have the opportunity to participate in a monthly social activity held on the weekend. GROW workers conduct workshops on specific features of the program and training courses for group organizers and recorders. A leadership workshop is conducted at least annually and presentations are offered for professionals and consumers in the community by GROW leaders and field workers. GROW groups are located throughout the southern and central regions of the State. There are currently 17 groups meeting weekly. During the past year, GROW groups were initiated in the Self-Help Centers in Glassboro, Plainfield, and Englewood. GROW groups are now located throughout the three regions of the State. For SFY'07, GROW has offered to move further into the northern region of New Jersey where they have received invitations from various groups and individuals in the last couple years. GROW will be invited to sponsor a group in the new enhanced Center recently relocated in Hudson County, as well as, in the new Center to be opened in Patterson.

The Consumer Advocacy Partnership

The Consumer Advocacy Partnership (CAP) is a project operated collaboratively between CSP-NJ, the Mental Health Association (MHA) of New Jersey (MHA-NJ), Coalition of Mental Health Consumers Organizations (COMHCO), and the Consumer Provider Association. The project is designed to develop the pool of consumers who are motivated and train consumers to assume advocacy efforts statewide. Specific program components include education, information and referral, organizing/networking, public policy, and coalition building. The project provides a method to address important system issues that impact the lives of mental health consumers and create opportunities for consumers to impact systems change. The Consumer Public Policy Committee consists of approximately 14 consumers statewide representing CSP-NJ, MHA-NJ, COMHCO, CPA and consumers at large. Activities include leadership education and advocacy training, and networking and education throughout the 27 Self-Help Centers statewide. CAP was very involved in the transitional planning for the mental health system and has been active at the legislative level in educating state legislators concerning issues that are important to consumers including parity, the problems that would inherent with deductibles for persons receiving Medicaid as well as violence in the state hospitals. Presently a decision is being made to invite the Depressive Bipolar Support Association (DBSA) to participate.

The Coalition of Mental Health Consumer Organizations (COMHC)

COMHCO is a Statewide Membership Organization whose purpose is education, empowerment and advocacy on behalf of mental health consumers in New Jersey. The organization began in 1986 with a handful of consumers and presently has a membership of 1,350. Membership is open to all mental health consumers as individuals or as representatives of a consumer organization. They offer a supporting membership for non-consumers who have no voting rights. One trustee represents the board from each county. Each trustee also serves as county liaison and is

responsible for distributing information to county consumers and agencies and reporting back to the board any local issues and concerns. Each Self-Help Center also has a representative who brings information back to the membership. There are 20 monthly membership meetings, quarterly trustee meetings, and several standing committees to provide an effective information network. For the first time, COMHCO was able to have meetings/workshops in all four state hospitals with over 80 in attendance at each of these events.

COMHCO has strong working relationships with many other organizations and agencies that provide support, information and advocacy on behalf of mental health consumers throughout the State. The trustees and members also represent consumers on boards, councils and advisory committees, such as the: Olmstead Council; NJ State Mental Health Advisory Board & Council; NJ Mental Health Council; CSP-NJ; MHA-NJ; NJ Protection & Advocacy, Inc.; PAJMI Council; Regional Redirection Advisory Committees; State Consumer Advisory Council; NAMI-NJ; and County Mental Health Boards.

The premiere event each year is the Annual New Jersey Consumer Conference. The conference has continued to grow with over 375 consumers attending last February. The theme of this year's conference was "Paving the Road to Success - Transforming Your Route to Recovery". The keynote speech was given by Judy Chamberlain, a work renowned consumer leader and Kevin Martone, Assistant Commissioner for the DMHS. This conference provides an opportunity for consumers to spend a weekend networking, attending workshops on current issues, and gaining essential skills necessary to help in the recovery process. The value of this conference is reflected not only in the attendance and participation in the event, but by the support received from the county mental health boards, mental health agencies, and state psychiatric hospitals. COMHCO also provides a quarterly mailing to consumers, Self-Help Centers and individuals that include meeting announcements and information on state and federal issues concerning mental health. This year's conference theme is "Sowing the Seeds of Mental Wellness".

The Institute for Wellness and Recovery Initiatives

Collaborative Support Programs of New Jersey (CSP-NJ) has been a well-established trend setter and innovator in the mental health industry, especially in areas of housing, support services, self-help, social enterprise, and economic development. The agency has been a leader in mental health systems transformation in NJ and has many wellness initiatives including an employee wellness committee, a Wellness Coordination Team for the Self-Help Centers, and the Institute for Wellness and Recovery Initiatives. The Institute for Wellness and Recovery Initiatives was designed to promote and provide innovative, state-of-the-art services aimed at creating wellness, recovery, and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with and organizations serving persons with special needs. The institute offers training, workshops, educational opportunities, and consultation in the State of New Jersey and is expanding to join the ranks of national leadership in the mental health consumer movement. This institute provides oversight for training, research, and publications with CSP/CEC. Other services include: the annual wellness and recovery conference; seminars; consultation; technical assistance; and educational materials and publications. Components: Training - including internal and external agency training, state hospital, community mental health centers, business and community; Public Education Project included Anti-stigma, Public Education Project with the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ)...We are working with UMDNJ-SHRP on research initiatives for a quality of life project, Self-Help Center outcomes, and peer-delivered services.

Recovery Network Project

The Hospital Recovery Network Project provides opportunities for mental health consumers to reach out to state institutions to educate both consumers and staff about recovery and recovery-related resources available in the community. This project is partially funded through a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA) Grant, which grants funds for monthly presentations at three of the four major state facilities: Ancora, Trenton and Greystone.

The content of the group presentations provide a clear message of hope and present the array of self-help, wellness, and recovery resources. The purpose is to share experiences and resources so that persons with a mental illness currently living at the state hospitals can access recovery and wellness resources in their present environment and when they return to the community.

- Recovery from Serious Mental Illness is Possible!
- Wellness if Possible and is an On-Going Process!
- Self-Help and Recovery Services are Effective in Promoting Wellness!
- Access Personal Planning for Recovery and Wellness!

The groups are delivered by people who have entered a recovery journey and therefore can provide proof that recovery is possible. Information, experiences, and the message of hope for a positive future is offered. There is a strong emphasis on things people have done and can do to improve their sense of personal empowerment in terms of creating their own plan for recovery and wellness. Ideas, experiences, and resources are shared to help participants plan for their personal recovery while in the hospital, with a goal of returning to the community. The project is designed to empower consumers to effect changes in their own recovery so they move back into the community and maintain a strong connection to a greater array of natural community supports and self-help resources. They emphasize how consumers can assume personal responsibility for recovery and improve their quality of life and successful integration into the community.

The DMHS has continued to provide additional costs for personnel, stipends for consumer presenters, supplies, and materials so the recovery network groups can be conducted weekly rather than only monthly. With the additional DMHS funding, the project has been implemented at four state facilities (rather than the three hospitals initially targeted in the SAMHSA grant). The DMHS is providing funds for three presentations per month at the three facilities (Trenton, Greystone and Ancora) and four presentations a month at Hagedorn (not initially included in the SAMHSA grant). The projections for number of group presentations in the state hospitals and community are listed in the last section of this report.

There are no additional funds for monitoring and evaluating this project; however, the Institute Director is working the faculty at UMDNJ and the psychiatric rehabilitation staff, to design a program evaluation protocol we hope is funded by the University Foundation.

Hearts and Mind Program

As a component of the Institute, CSP-NJ is following up on the New Jersey Alliance for the Mentally Ill in order to initiate the Hearts and Mind Program. The wellness associates have been providing follow-up on self-care, preventive cardiac care, and advocacy for integrated medical care for consumers of mental health services. The wellness menu of services focused on nutrition, exercise, overcoming addictions, and confronting societal stigmas. We have helped some centers join with the YMCA and have helped others to purchase exercise equipment in order to get in "better shape" and promote weight-loss and improving consumers' cardio-vascular health.

The Hearts and Mind curriculum has assisted the Wellness Team in providing a structured approach to better physical and emotional health. Self-Help Center members continue to report a desire to be more physically fit but have few opportunities to work on improving their overall health. This program will provide a mechanism and the motivation for those interested in becoming mentally healthy and physically strong. Wellness staff has been equipped with an intensive coaching training so they can better motivate and support individuals in achieving these lifestyle goals. The project will foster create a collaboration between the consumer movement and the family movement bringing the two groups' perspectives and expertise together to assist Self-Help Center members to live healthier lifestyles.

Financial Services

Financial Services is a program initiated by CSPNJ and its affiliate Community Enterprises Corporation (CEC) to provide a menu of financial services to consumers who may or may not be experiencing credit problems. These services include budgetary services including bill paying, savings and budget planning for approximately 150 persons. The services also include an Individual Development Account (IDA) program where 20 + persons are saving for small business development, home ownership or secondary education and have an incentive match from CSP sported by Federal funds and CSPNJ monies. An interest free loan program is offered for persons who have short term emergencies or needs that are connected to their Recovery and/or Wellness. A short term matched savings club for household items, a computer, vehicle needs, clothing etc.

Financial Literacy Training

Financial Literacy Training – as part of a financial services program at CSPNJ this training program has assisted consumers in becoming more aware of their budgetary needs as they have explored savings and credit issues, banking, checking loans and incentive savings plans. Modules are often presented by banking personnel who offer incentives for "unbanked" members to open accounts. At least 20 consumers have met their asset savings goals of small business development, home ownership or tuition payment for secondary education and benefited by participating in this service.

Consumer Connections

Consumer Connections is a national award-winning program that provides training to consumers who want to become peer providers in the mental health field. Graduates from this program have gone on to secure positions as peer counselors in psychiatric emergency screening centers, case managers, residential support worker, support hotlines, and Self-Help Centers. This year Consumer Connections launched a 60 hour Peer Specialist (PS) certification, a 36 hour Criminal Justice Institute, and an 18 hour Psychiatric Screening specialty training to complement its existing Community Mental Health Associate (CMHA) certification and co-occurring disorder and specialty trainings. These new initiatives provide more options for consumers to pursue careers in the mental health system. Consumer Connections is working with the Veterans Administration in New Jersey by providing training opportunities for ten veterans, and is working with the VA to expand peer training.

Certified WRAP Training

MHANJ provided a weeklong Certified WRAP™ (Wellness and Recovery Action Plan) Facilitator training in which 13 of the 18 participants were Consumer Connections graduates from across the State. Each attendee was awarded a new credential at the end of this process – CRE – Certified Recovery Educator, and is now authorized by the Copeland Center to facilitate WRAP™ groups, or assist individual consumers with developing their own WRAP™ plan. These trainers will assist us in our goal of developing a peer recovery community across the State that is grounded in the principles of wellness and recovery. These peer wrap trainers will be providing WRAP training in partial care, co-occurring, self help centers, and other community programs, and assist consumers in developing their own WRAP and advanced directives.