



Minutes: Council on Consumers, Youth and Family Members in the Behavioral Health Workforce
Date: April 28, 2010 9AM to 11 AM Focus on Recovery-United, Middletown

Members Present: Lila Coddington, Bobbi Fox, Roberto Garcia, Lois Lewis, Mary Lourie, Heather McDonald, Kate Mattias, Vicki Molta, Jim Pisciotta, Ryann Pridham, Millie Seguinot, Tammy Seaman, Lezley TwoBears, Lyn Lawrence, Jessica Wolf

Members Absent: Amina Hines, Cheryl Jacques (ex), Diane Mazar-Roberts (ex), Ted Pappas, Priscilla Ridgway (ex), Hannah Sellers, Lisa Spikes (ex), Melodie Slocum (ex)

Note: ex. = excused (contacted Conveners in advance regarding inability to attend)

Others present: Pat Rehmer, DMHAS Commissioner; Barbara Bugella, DMHAS, Lauren Siembab, DMHAS; Kimberly Guy, FOR-U, John Oyola, FOR-U

TOPIC	REPORT / DISCUSSION	CONCLUSIONS / NEXT STEPS
1. Introductions	Lyn convened the meeting at 9:00 AM. Members introduced themselves. Lyn welcomed Commissioner Rehmer, Barbara Bugella, and Lauren Siembab and thanked them for attending the meeting. Lyn thanked Mary Lourie for assistance with today's Minutes.	
2. Announcements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Alternatives Conference to be held in Anaheim, California is accepting applications for consumer scholarships with a May 15 deadline. • The NYAPRS (New York Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services) conference will be in September at the Hudson Valley resort – this is a consumer-focused, highly recommended event. • Lyn announced that “Ban the Box” proposed legislation, making it easier for individuals with criminal justice histories to obtain employment, passed the CT House of Representatives and will go to the Senate. • Lyn and Lila reported on the recent, informative CT AHEAD-sponsored conference on students with disability and higher education. Attendance was excellent and the information provided very useful. • Jessica circulated information about a NARSAD conference in New York City on May 1. • Members were reminded about the Capitol Region Educational Council (CREC)-sponsored annual conference April 29 on learning disabilities. FOR-U/C-RECS is a co-sponsor and presenter. 	Lila will distribute information about student rights.

<p>3. Approval of Minutes</p>	<p>The Minutes of the March 31 meeting were approved.</p>	
<p>4. Discussion with DMHAS Commissioner Pat Rehmer, Barbara Bugella & Lauren Siembab</p>	<p>Lyn introduced the discussion, explaining that the February 19 letter to the Commissioner described the topics the Council wished to address in an effort to have a dialogue about ways to partner with DMHAS. Jessica offered a brief overview of the Council’s mission and work since May 2008 and then addressed the first Council priority, seeking continued funding for the C-RECS project. A packet of information about C-RECS work and accomplishments to date was distributed. During the discussion, FOR-U/C-RECS staff spoke about the positive outcomes of the project in employing individuals in recovery in the behavioral health workforce. FOR-U is continuing to prepare for Ticket-to-Work status. Lyn then spoke about culture change sought by the Council in order to increase receptivity to and retention of people in recovery in the workforce. Mary Lourie addressed the need for accountability from DMHAS towards its funded agencies in attaining desired goals.</p> <p>Commissioner Rehmer then addressed a number of key points, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C-RECS is an important, successful model; sustaining it is important • Current economic circumstances are very challenging • Health care reform will bring major changes • A variety of federal and state funding options for C-RECS can be explored • The Department is moving more towards a community support rather than a case management model • Community Support Program Teams will include peer recovery support specialists. Recovery Pathways Teams will be created as somewhat separate from CSP Teams. Over time, Recovery Pathways Teams will be composed entirely of persons in recovery and will provide a different level of support to those who can move away from being “embedded” in the treatment system. <p>Council members noted the importance of career ladders, and having numerous recovery support specialists working together to avoid tokenism; it takes time to shift organizational culture; with more persons in recovery incorporated into the workforce, a self-reinforcing process is underway, although much more is needed to attain a person-centered, recovery-focused system.</p> <p>Discussion addressed the greater flexibility of private non-profit agencies in some respects relative to state-operated agencies. Council members noted that some state-operated agencies, such as SWCMHS, have been front-runners in employment of persons in recovery. FOR-U/C-RECS staff noted that some agencies are not cooperative in moving towards a person-centered focus and in employing individuals in recovery. Commissioner Rehmer commented that difficult economic conditions contribute to agency resistance. She emphasized, however, that DMHAS is holding agencies more accountable. Council members stressed that agencies need to be held accountable and that the responsibility for change cannot be put primarily on people in recovery as employees. The Commissioner discussed “report cards” that will be on-line as of February 2011 for all DMHAS-funded agencies, offering important information about performance and outcomes and providing information relevant to continued funding. A Council member suggested that</p>	<p>The Commissioner will follow up with Heather McDonald regarding possible funding to continue C-RECS.</p> <p>Jessica and Barbara Bugella will also be in communication about C-RECS funding options as well as Learning Management System possibilities for modules about people in recovery employed in the behavioral health workforce.</p> <p>Council minutes will be circulated to the Commissioner and her staff attending today for review and additional follow-up about suggested ideas.</p>

	<p>agencies that are not meeting expectations should be offered consultation and technical assistance to help them improve. The Commissioner also noted the importance of independent education and advocacy.</p> <p>Council members and the Commissioner explored approaches to culture change, including highlighting experiences of persons in recovery working in the field in DMHAS new employee orientation and in other training settings. Barbara Bugella encouraged consideration of these ideas through the on-line Learning Management System. She noted that people in recovery are actively involved in CVH employee orientation. Commissioner Rehmer emphasized her view that increased visibility of lived experience as a means of culture change is an area that she is interested in expanding. The group also discussed issues related to staff disclosure as part of this process. The group also discussed supported education and the receptivity of young adults to seeing lived experience as an asset in employment. The Behavioral Health Career Pathways project currently underway will result in useful information to help guide interested students into behavioral health careers.</p> <p>Another suggested idea was to collect information about exemplary practices that are occurring throughout the state but are not yet being offered fully in any one location. A composite model could be designed to offer descriptions of many innovations and demonstrate how innovations can support employment and recovery oriented culture change. DMHAS could make the information available to help stimulate positive, effective action and encourage continued implementation of innovative practices and culture change. Innovations could include supported education, human resources practices, and supported employment/C-RECS that serve to advance the employment of skilled people in recovery into paid positions in the workforce, various models of peer support, such as Intentional Peer Support, Recovery University, and Pathways to Recovery, noting the commonly shared and unique features of each. Similarly, models of supported employment including C-RECS life-coaching, Individual Placement and Support, and traditional BRS vocational services would be presented. The composite model would also suggest how integration of innovative practices may occur, thereby assisting agencies in finding ways to encourage recovery rather than reinforcing illness in order to obtain services; rewarding agencies for supporting these positive outcomes. The final area of potential Council/DMHAS collaboration concerned working with the media, to present positive stories about people in recovery rather than negative, inflammatory, stigmatizing articles.</p> <p>On behalf of the Council, Lyn thanked Commissioner Rehmer, Barbara Bugella, and Lauren Siembab for attending the Council meeting and offering many thoughtful comments and suggestions in a collaborative, constructive way.</p>	
<p>5. Other business</p>	<p>Lyn and Jessica noted that with the impending end of the Transformation Grant in September 2010, the Collaborative Workforce Management Team has developed a proposed restructuring plan to streamline the Collaborative going forward. Feedback on the proposal is requested from all Councils.</p> <p>Heather McDonald announced that she will be on leave from mid-May to mid-September.</p> <p>Lila requested that anyone writing a vignette for the Career Pathways project please send it as soon as possible.</p>	<p>Council members will receive the proposal electronically for feedback at the next Council meeting or in writing or by telephone to Lyn and/or Jessica.</p>

6. Next Meeting	The next meeting will be Wednesday, May 26, 2010 from 9-11 AM at FOR-U in Middletown.	.
7. Adjournment	The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 AM.	