



Recovery Zone:

A system in transformation.

Chuck Hughes, Editor

Fall 2007

PARTNERS IN HOPE HITS THE GROUND RUNNING

The long-awaited MHS-funded Partners in Hope program has been launched. Consumers have been trained and employed by ADMHS and are now participating in the service delivery system. The Partners In Hope program is also engaged in training core staff in the integration of consumer and family members, assisting in the building of a supportive infrastructure to ensure a successful role for client culture.



CONSUMERS FIND THEIR TRUE CALLING

HopeLine Opens!



Monday-
Friday
3-7 PM

Toll-Free 1-866-778-0822

A Peer Recovery Specialist is available in your region. Call 681-4506 for details.

The Partners in Hope consumer-run HopeLine is now available Monday-Friday 3-7 pm. The service is being coordinated by Bob Quinn, who also works with the Prop634Me advocacy organization and serves as the California Network of Mental Health Clients (CNMHC) South Region Coordinator.

Additional peer support is offered Monday-Friday 8:00 AM to 5:00 pm by peer recovery specialists in Lompoc, Santa Maria, and Santa Barbara.

Supported by the Mental Health Services Act (MHS) funds, Partners in Hope is administered by the Santa Barbara County Department of Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Services (ADMHS) and overseen by Sharon Kuehn, ADMHS Consumer Empowerment Program Manager. For more information, please contact Sharon at 681-4506; skuehn@co.santa-barbara.ca.us.

Promoting wellness and recovery through peer support activities in Santa Barbara County.



ALTERNATIVES 2007

Spanning the Recovery Movement:
Consumer Control & Choice

St. Louis, Missouri | October 10-14, 2007

PARTNERS IN HOPE PARTICIPATES IN NATIONAL CONFERENCE

By Sharon Kuehn

The power and excitement of gathering with 770 leaders and activists in our national consumer movement can change lives. Although only four Santa Barbara consumers attended the conference, the voices of local advocates here in Santa Barbara County were clearly reflected in the themes that emerged at this annual conference on consumer leadership in mental health.

The importance of unifying our voices in local, statewide and national consumer organizations was a core value in every workshop and event. To achieve the goal of consumer-driven services, we must put principles before personalities, and speak with a unified voice.

Emerging Best Practices

The emerging best practices highlighted at the conference included a variety of holistic approaches:

- *Trauma-informed treatment:* recognizing that persons diagnosed with mental illness are usually survivors of trauma, and can heal better when trauma-informed treatment is used.
- *Self-Directed Care:* Persons are able to choose the services they receive from a wide variety of traditional and non-traditional services, including career development and holistic health options. Life

coaches are assigned to help clients choose services that will help them reach personal goals.

- *Personal medicine:* When clients identify what they value most (e.g. their reason for getting up in the morning, such as caring for a child or playing a musical instrument) and this activity, purpose, or relationship is viewed as central in their recovery; medications are used in support of personal medicine and adaptation, rather than compliance, is key.

- *Energy medicine:* Recognizing that our bodies are energetic fields, a variety of tools to help people work with and improve the flow of energy, both ancient and some new techniques, are being explored.

- *Shared Decision-Making:* Peer Support staff work in clinical settings to help clients reflect on their well-being and needs, in order to maximize value of MD time and improve recovery outcomes.

Partners in Hope

We are fortunate to have the opportunity through Partners in

Hope to offer the alternative of wellness and recovery through peer support. The Partners in Hope Peer Recovery Specialists and the HopeLine staff are trained to recognize the innate wholeness and value in each person who asks for services or support. We see the person, not the diagnosis, and we recognize symptoms as the result of trauma and distress.

Holistic Perspective

This holistic perspective helps us to focus on the real issues at hand: what a person wants and needs. Our peer recovery team is trained to help persons in

recovery identify their own needs, and to self-advocate and strategize to get those needs met.

We hope that our approach will model a new direction in mental health services, and that, as Partners in Hope is integrated into existing services, that the clinical services will begin to reflect this wellness orientation, that all people with mental health issues will be welcomed to step up into a circle of wholeness and recovery community.

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PEER SPECIALISTS INCREASE RECOVERY OPTIONS

Partners In Hope spent the month of August training 12 clients to be a peer recovery specialists. Some were brand new to the peer support community, while others were long-time veterans.

As the MHSA liaison to the Partners in Hope services, I had the opportunity to audit some of the trainings. The intensive five-week training was packed with useful information. As a result, the Partners in Hope program now has 12 peer recovery specialist ready to assist their fellow consumers in various recover endeavors.

Partners in Hope Peer Specialists are a wonderful starting point to help you learn how to apply self-help principles to take charge of your own life.

Three of the newly trained Peer Recovery Specialists now work in clinics assisting clients in finding services and self-help groups in each of the three regions of the county.

Silvia Perez is the Peer Recovery Specialist in Santa Maria; Debbie Hunt works in Lompoc, and Maureen Mina in Santa Barbara. Call Sharon Kuehn, ADMHS Consumer Empowerment Program Manager, 681-4506, for more information.

In fact, there are now a smorgasbord of resources that clients may use to find the right services. Partners in Hope Peer Specialists are a wonderful starting point to help you learn how



to navigate through the maze of programs and services.

Some of the remaining peers now work full- and part-time manning the Hopeline. They provide guidance and support, referring callers to services and support groups.

Research shows that peer support enjoys a great deal of success. Not only is a peer easier to approach than an "authority figure," peers are often considered the most powerful influence in a person's recovery.

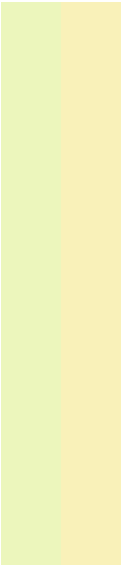
Peer recovery specialists are trained to see their peers as whole and fully capable of using wellness tools and self-advocacy to improve their own lives. The fact that the recovery specialists are consumers themselves allows them to relate better to those whom they assist by sharing relevant personal experiences. As Sharon says, "We know that recovery is possible, because we are working on that journey ourselves. You have options and choices. We will stand by you while you make the best choice for yourself." Don't hesitate to try us out.

—Chuck Hughes

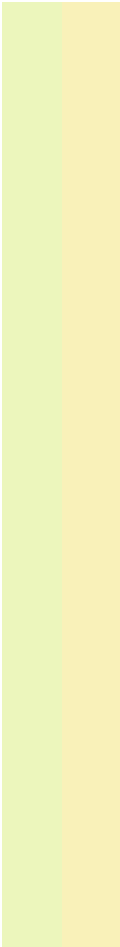
*Along your road to recovery,
what is the most effective tool
that you've learned to use?*

Your peers would love to discover what works for you. Please submit your comments on this question to: Chuck Hughes, Editor, *Recovery Zone*, P.O. Box 21511, Santa Barbara, CA 93121; chas96099@yahoo.com. We'll publish a sampling of comments in a future newsletter.





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PO Box 34242



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