

Finding Our Voice

Empowerment Training Series

Teleconference 1: November 13, 2006
Summary Notes

Facilitating: Dan and Michele
Notes: Laurie Curtis

REMINDER: Next training is January 24, 1:00 p.m. through January 26 12:30 p.m..
Same place in Culver City.

Present:

Kern County: Bridget Dailey, Julie Spencer
Los Angeles County: Antelope Valley: Chris Camilleri, Nadine Stauffer
Los Angeles County: Downtown: Mark Escarcega, Jose Flores
Los Angeles County: San Fernando Valley: X
Los Angeles County: Van Nuys: X
Orange County: Linda Kay, Sue Watson
Riverside County: X
San Bernardino County: Loretta Ross, Dave Miller,
San Diego County: X
Santa Barbara County: Bob Quinn, Chuck Hughes
NEC: Judene Shelley, Judi Chamberlain, Dan Fisher. Laurie Curtis
CNMHC: Michele D. Curran

Announcements:

WEBSITE is up! <http://www.power2u.org/california.html> Laurie will send out notice/hyperlink after the conference call. We welcome suggestions and ideas for what to put on it. Send content ideas to Judene at j.shelley@comcast.net. Michele will send Judene CNMHC content on advocacy.

Judene also set up a Yahoo Group for the email list today. We can start sending messages to the whole group. Judi said that a listserv does not work well if it generates too many messages per day. Please keep the number of messages down because people tend to ignore them. Judene will send everyone email invites for the list serve. The yahoo group will also keep archives/history of messages and other information people want to add.

Project Updates:

What is going well in your projects and plans? What are you most proud of?
One challenge you have faced/are facing and how you are addressing it.

Kern County (Bridget & Julie):

Started their warmline October 30, 2006: Friendship Support Line. Mailed 600 promotional flyers. Anticipating increase in the calls as people learn they're there. Bridget and Julie are employees of Kern County MH system and the warmline was created with MH service funds in Kern County. Great support from system as well as volunteers who helped with flyers. Clients from drop-in center also volunteered to help. Staffed 2-8 p.m. Monday - Friday. Survey at end of call says that they are glad we are there, that we helped and that they will tell others about us. Have a three-year plan and budget to get it established.

Made application to present panel at Client Forum in January. Looking forward to participating in this.

COMMENTS: Impressive!

Do you do other work out of the office or only the warm line? We also work with Consumer Family Learning Center in their support groups, work in community to talk up Friendship Line. Telephone number is local and also have 1-800 number: 1 866 574 9418. Free calls on both.

How did you do get it launched? Is it all client run? Right now run by all client staff of Kern Co MH. No family groups involved. Initial impetus came from management at Kern MHC who envisioned the program five years ago. Their studies identified need to take pressure off the crisis/emergency line. We do friendship, life counseling, recovery focused conversations.

Do you do training? Set up training manual with input from others. Initially drew from San Diego, Santa Cruz County, and Vancouver WA warmline training manuals. Our manual is not electronic at this point, hardcopy only. Many people might like access to it, could it go on the project website? Make sure original sources are cited and recognized. If using large pieces of other people's work and putting it on line, it is courtesy to ask first.

LA County: Antelope Valley (Chris)

Trying to network and find way as a client/psychiatrist; looking for a project. Linking with Project Return re recovery, empowerment, and peer support. Will speak at Client Forum on being a person in recovery as well as a psychiatrist. Speaking at own clinic and trying to do education there, but not more broadly at this point. Looking for training opportunities.

COMMENTS: Can sign up for CNMHC speaker's bureau -- always in search for people with your skills. Challenging to engage supervisors/directors in the idea of recovery even in own agency. Doing education right where you work - sometimes most difficult. We need to educate our psychiatrists: We need to tell them "I believe in my own recovery, want to have hope, and want him to believe that this is possible as well". Pat Deegan's paper from NEC website re this topic will be put on the Finding Your Voice website. Jose has a contact at Kaiser for Chris.

LA County: Downtown (Mark, Jose)

Project Return has just relocated and this has kept us busy. Project Return: The Next Step, 6055 E. Washington Blvd. 900 City of Commerce, CA; Telephone: 323 346 0960 x 210. Last week applied to county with proposal to open up two new discovery centers. Discovery centers provide skills (computer and craft skills) and socialization. All client-run. Adventure discovery groups are returning.

COMMENTS:

So many interesting things happening in CA, maybe it would be good to organize fieldtrips to see what each other are doing. Kern County Consumer Learning Center did a field trip to Discovery Center and Village in Long Beach. Everyone was impressed and excited.

Discussion about Wellness v. Discovery Center approaches. Michele states that this is highly contentious and competitive right now and a very difficult issue in LA. CNMHC has a plan for looking at and addressing this.

LA County: San Fernando Valley (no one present)

LA County: Van Nuys (no one present)

Orange County (Linda and Sue)

Turned my apartment into an office. Have a website: www.occlients.org. It already has links

to CNMHC and NEC. Also have a Yahoo email list. On website have a chat box to send information to a direct person. Looking for feedback from the group. It functions as a blog where people can begin to ask questions, respond and so forth. Have huge email list. Connecting with MHA, NAMI. Education is one of our projects, but want to make sure it is consumer run. An RFP coming up for doing the education and training in this county and want to support CNMHC network to get this contract.

Pushing for a consumer-run program rather than the Wellness Center currently proposed... Consumers not involved in any part of the planning for current proposal. Planners say it will be consumer run, but why not start with consumer involvement? It's a great idea, but not what we necessarily wanted. How do we get input on this?

Mixed support for activity. Go to many meetings, MH Board. Getting support from Medical Director and a few others. Intense dynamic with local administrator: "the more we try to educate her, the more she resists". Very unproductive at the moment.

COMMENTS: Dan looked at the training RFP sent by Linda and Sue and was disappointed that professionals have been designated as the trainers. Assured that consumers will also become trainers. Orange County is cutting out external advocates and hiring consumers to do internal advocacy work.

Advice: Do everything you can to get language changed in the Education/Training proposal so that mental health consumers will do the training. Refer to New Freedom Commission Report, it is all in there. Look at workforce development -- says MH consumers should provide the training in recovery. Letter writing can be helpful, suggest specific alternative wording changes. Dan offered to help with specific language changes. Suggests putting proposal up on the website and get input from others in the group. If it doesn't say explicitly that MH consumers will be providing the training as well as helping with selection and preparation of curriculum, it will be more of the same.

Note, training on empowerment, recovery, advocacy is not just for consumers, but needed by providers, administrators, community and others. Often we get offers to train consumers, but not providers. We're trained by organizations to advocate for that organization.... we are being split.

On NEC's website, Judi has an article, "Confessions of a Noncompliant Patient" which is now on the Finding Our Voice website as well.

**Riverside County no one present
San Bernardino County (Dave, Loretta)**

Taking a "shotgun" approach: Try a lot of things, hit the mark sometimes; sometimes you don't. Efforts include having consumers on upper level committees (including two that report to the director directly). Participating on agency hiring panels for upper level management. Have a totally consumer driven newsletter for 1300 for clients and stakeholders. Dave is now the editor. Tried to push through CASRA and Alternatives Conference -- met with red tape. But the administrators did make a real effort to push them through. Learned that it takes a lot of time to take new ideas and push through an old system. Executive Director thinks at some point there will be a consumer forum for only San Bernardino. Planning to develop a website.

Working with a group of consumers to be interviewers for a survey. Doing a fantastic job. Did the NAMI walk; had many consumers involved.

Consumers will be involved on committees which will include transformation committee (how to be recovery/wellness/resilient/consumer involved). Also meeting for workforce development to figure out criteria for "expert pool" to help consumers. Moving forward, very exciting. A new person involved with Clubhouse Development for County. Excited about this - expanding the model as "client run".

Learning about paperwork. Three paid positions for peer support, counseling, mental health workers. The positions will be paid up to \$40,000-\$60,000 per year, but may have a range of part time.

Consumers as trainers. Attending a training of trainers.

San Diego County: no one present

Santa Barbara County (Bob, Chuck)

Consumer empowerment person has been hired at MHSA. Getting consumers on panels: such as consumer-family advisory council. We want to swamp them with consumers -the more there, the more involvement. Consumer empowerment meeting -- beginning to make some gains with the director. "63 for Me" now has 100 members. Working to get consumers involved in MHA - "Keeps us honest" they say.

Linking with mental health website and individual website groups. Bob will send the link to Judene. Chuck wrote up article on the training and publishing it in a newsletter. MHSA is bringing out an insert in their newsletter for consumer art, poems, etc. Involved in a housing workshop group with Maureen. Housing is an important issue.

COMMENT: Keeping us honest" -- what are they doing when we're not there.