

Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network  
**Peer Support and Wellness Center**  
A Peer-Operated Crisis/Respite Alternative

**An Overview:**

**Development and Operations**

*The Peer Support and Wellness Center is a project of the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network in partnership with the Consumer Relations and Recovery Section. It is funded through a contract with the Georgia Department of Human Resources' Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Addictive Diseases. The following is a condensed version of the annual and mid-year reports submitted to the Department of Human Resources (DHR), Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Addictive Diseases (MHDDAD), Consumer Relations and Recovery Section.*

Peer Support and Wellness Center Annual Reports  
Jayme Lynch, Director

FY 2008

The Peer Support and Wellness Center was developed through a grant provided by the Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Addictive Diseases (DMHDDAD) of the Georgia Department of Human Resources. After receiving the contract the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network (GMHCN) hired Jayme Lynch, CPS to fill the position of Director for the Peer Support and Wellness Center (PSWC). Various respite and wellness models were researched and a study tour was conducted. Jayme Lynch, Sharon Jenkins Tucker, Executive Director of GMHCN and Carol Coussons de Reyes, DMHDDAD, Consumer Relations and Recovery Section Director participated in the study tour to Maine and New Hampshire. They visited existing centers with similar philosophies. Comprehensive and valuable information was gathered from this tour, and it was diligently used in the planning and development of the PSWC. In addition, Jayme and Sharon met with Shery Mead, the creator of the *Intentional Peer Support* model that was going to be used at the PSWC, to plan for training the PSWC peer workforce and other interested Certified Peer Specialists (CPS) in Georgia.

In November 2007, GMHCN leased a beautiful, spacious house in a residential neighborhood near downtown Decatur, within easy walking distance of the Avondale MARTA Train Station. The house has 4 bedrooms, 2 1/2 baths with safety bars and high-seated toilets, a well appointed kitchen, dining room, living room, office, full basement, garage, yard, and a wheelchair accessible ramp to the front door. The landlord was happy to have GMHCN lease his house for the PSWC and he has been very supportive of our efforts. Jayme, Carol and Sharon interviewed and hired CPSs and other interested peers for the job openings for 2 full-time and 4 part-time employees to operate the PSWC 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Two peers who were not already CPSs were hired conditionally with the understanding they would complete the CPS training and certification. The house and office were fully furnished including the purchase of furniture, washer and dryer, phone system, computers and printers. Everything was installed for use by peer staff and peers. A filing system was set up.

Several trainings were held for the newly hired peer staff. The first was a 5-day *Intentional Peer Support* training with Shery Mead and Chris Hansen from New Hampshire. Both facilitators were instrumental in the development and training of the existing Respite Centers in New England. They continue to be ongoing consultants to those Centers and have made themselves available to the PSWC on an ongoing basis. A second training was facilitated by Shela Silverman from New Mexico for the Warm Line, which has become a new service for all mental health peers in Georgia who desire peer support over the phone. The final training conducted before the Center opened was CPR/First Aid. Additional peer staff trainings since the Center's opening have been the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network Policies and Procedures, OSHA, People First

Language, Statewide Peer Wellness Initiative and Establishing Community Connections with the Local Community.

In June 2008, Sherry Mead and Chris Hansen facilitated a second *Intentional Peer Support* training for three new employees and other interested parties, and Shela Silverman facilitated a second Warm Line training. One full-time employee was enrolled in the *Intentional Peer Support Facilitator's* training for July 2008. After she completes the training she will train the PSWC peer employees in the Intentional Peer Support Model. Three new employees were hired after March 2008, and all but one was a Certified Peer Specialist. The third was enrolled in the CPS training for July 2008.

The Peer Support and Wellness Center opened its doors with a Grand Opening celebration on January 30, 2008 to over 75 visitors from peer centers, community mental health centers called CSBs, recovery programs, housing programs, supported employment agencies, DHR, and community organizations. The doors were opened the following day to peer participants interested in the scheduled Wellness Activities offered during the PSWC's hours of operation, which are Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 am-6:00 pm. Since then, the hours have been extended for evening activities and outings in the community. Additionally, on January 31, 2008 three respite beds were made available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week after completion of a Proactive Interview by interested participants. The 24/7 Warm Line also began its toll-free operations for the entire state of Georgia.

Wellness Activities involve physical, mental, and spiritual wellness, education, and socialization. The various group topics include Cooking/Nutrition, Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP), gender specific Trauma-Informed Peer Support, Double Trouble in Recovery (DTR), Acting Group, Aroma Therapy, Creative Writing, Spirituality, Peer Support, Pathfinder's Employment Group, Sports and Swimming, Computer Skills Training, Negotiating Peer Relationships, and Social Group Activities.

Participants report experiencing much satisfaction from the array of Wellness Activities offered. They discuss the sense of peace and belonging they feel when they first walk through the doors. When asked what they liked best about the Center, comments included (from the Evaluation and Feedback Form):

- "Talking with others about my feelings and present struggles"
- "...to have someone to talk to"
- "...activities"
- "Every aspect of the center. I liked it all"
- "The caring of the staff"
- "I enjoy the group activities"
- "The cooking class and the WRAP group"
- "...rest"
- "...support in a loving atmosphere"
- "WRAP"
- "...the peers, informative groups, and the common support"

"...this whole experience was pleasant, with superior staff interaction"  
"...the solitude and fellowship with staff and clients"  
"Wellness recovery group and cooking"  
"...the food, the companionship, cooking class"  
"Saturdays - the complete day"  
"To have someone to care and to help me"  
"...computers"  
"...the staff"  
"Peaceful Atmosphere"  
"...doing my typing and artwork"  
"...the care and concern shown by staff"  
"...positive and supportive people"  
"...the peer support"  
"...the staff and other people"

Community partnerships and networking are a top priority of the Peer Support and Wellness Center. During the first months of operation, the Center focused on, and continues to focus on, establishing partnerships with various businesses and organizations in the community. Participants have benefitted greatly from these partnerships by learning about the Center through these various organizations and discovering a new innovative approach to wellness through peer-supported community connections. Many participants have spent much of their lives in segregated day-treatment programs and assisted housing, and the PSWC has afforded them several opportunities to participate in community activities. Its goal is to continue building partnerships with local business owners and community leaders to ensure easy and affordable access for all peers to enhance their mental, physical, and spiritual wellness in community settings.

The PSWC also has three Respite Beds to be occupied by Guests as an alternative to psychiatric hospitalization. Respite Guests may stay in a private room for up to seven days, and many have reported that they would have otherwise been hospitalized. Guests comments about their reasons for needing Respite (from the Evaluation and Feedback form) include:

"Upon entry, I was in a very dangerous, emotional state in need of time to readjust my thinking from a chaotic situation"  
"...too much stress, verge of breakdown"  
"...provided respite and group counseling services to avoid a severe manic depressive state stemming from living in a highly concentrated drug environment"  
"I get very depressed at the Disabled HUD House where I live"  
"I've been under so much stress where I live, when I come to the Center I keep a level mind"  
"It is better for me to have peers to talk to than to have doctors talking down to me. I don't want to think about what I would do without this."  
"I was having suicidal thoughts when I first came, and the future was rather iffy."  
"This respite period helped me to refocus on the lifestyle changes I needed to make, and the groups were very therapeutic."

"It has been a place where I can calm down."

"I needed mental and physical rest."

"I had to come off a medication, and if I had stayed at home, the stress may have sent me to the hospital."

Success stories are abundant and ongoing at the PSWC. For example, Kelly came into Respite for seven days because the recovery house he was living in was full of residents who continued to drink and use drugs. Kelly was stressed by the atmosphere and was concerned about his sobriety. He wasn't a candidate for psychiatric hospitalization, yet he was beginning to break down because of his living situation. A Respite bed was ideal for him so he could have the time and space to make other living arrangements and to remain sober in the process. With much peer support along the way, Kelly was able to secure new and affordable housing. Now when he comes to the PSWC, he is full of smiles and gratitude. In a thank you card, Kelly wrote: "You will never begin to understand the positive force you've come to be in my life. Your concern and assistance instills hope within me to persevere in the struggles of life. God bless you all, Kelly."

Another Respite Guest who was struggling with roommate issues that had led to a recent "disturbing" hospitalization prior to utilizing the PSWC wrote a thank you letter to the Wellness Center staff. She wrote, "Thank you for your kindness and thoughtful support. You have empowered me and helped build my self esteem. When I first arrived I was stressed and had a low self esteem. All you CPSs said kind words, compliments, and gave me supportive feedback. Thanks for being an effective listener. My hope is to always continue to live for the Lord. May Heaven bless you always for helping me share wisdom and utilize my strengths. Thank you. I am feeling much better. Linda, CPS."

The Warm Line is operated by Peer Staff 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for callers around the state who need peer support regardless of where they live or the time of day. Peer Staff are trained to actively listen to callers, share their experiences, and empower callers to discover their own solutions. A partnership with the Georgia Crisis and Access Line (GCAL) has been established to transfer crisis calls, if they should arise, from the Warm Line to GCAL while the Peer Staff remains on the line with the caller. This feature has been used successfully several times with callers in crisis, and the callers have received the crisis intervention they requested.

Attendance at the Peer Support and Wellness Center grew from 87 visitors in February 2008 to 323 visitors in June 2008. As of June 30, 2008, the PSWC has had 48 Respite Guests with a total of 230 Respite nights. All have reported a new sense of direction and hope after being in Respite. Warm Line calls have increased from 87 in February 2008 to 118 calls in June 2008 and Warm Line calls totaled 410. As the numbers grow, so does the need for additional employees to continue to provide the quality assistance requested and desired by peer participants.

The hope that the Peer Support and Wellness Center brings to all who visit is apparent within the first visit, often within the first hour. All are greeted by handshakes, a grand tour and a white dove named Angel. Most people are pleasantly surprised by such an innovative

and "outside the box" philosophy regarding self-direction and mental health recovery. It is everyone's hope that the PSWC will become a model for other centers to come in Georgia and around the country.

#### Mid-year Report for FY 2009

The Peer Support and Wellness Center (PSWC) has continued to develop and grow in the areas of staff training, community partnerships, Warmline calls, Respite utilization, Wellness Activities, and peer participation.

Staff trainings have been ongoing and highly productive, enabling peer employees to increase their skill levels as well as develop leadership roles. In July 2008, one fulltime peer employee attended the *Intentional Peer Support (IPS) Facilitator's Training* in Connecticut with Shery Mead and Chris Hansen and has since trained and certified all new peer employees and several other interested peers. The GMHCN IPS facilitator consults regularly with Shery Mead to retain the integrity of the IPS model and conducts ongoing staff trainings and reinforces the use of the IPS model on a regular basis.

Additional staff trainings include:

- "Grievance Policies and Procedures" facilitated by Sherry Jenkins Tucker to instruct peer employees in the process by which they or any peer participant may follow to report any unsatisfactory experience they may have had at the PSWC.
- "Statewide Peer Wellness Initiative" with Charles Willis providing information and ideas to peer employees and peer participants about how to achieve and maintain wellness of mind, body, and spirit in spite of the high morbidity rates among individuals diagnosed with mental health issues. These morbidity statistics do not determine the fate of peers who choose to practice wellness in their daily lives. Charles gracefully informed everyone on ways to achieve and maintain wellness, and this training, as well the follow-up training, was well received by all.

The PSWC routinely presents at workshops, conferences, and mental health organizations. In August 2008, GMHCN sponsored 33 PSWC peer participants and peer staff to attend the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual GMHCN Summer Conference at St Simons Island, GA. All PSWC peer staff who attended the conference were co-presenters of a workshop about the PSWC, passing out packets of information, showing a 20-minute promotional video, and answering questions from workshop attendees. The majority of participants and staff who attended the conference had never been to a conference before, and many made comments about what an incredible experience it was for them.

In October 2008, one PSWC employee, with the assistance of two other employees of GMHCN, disseminated packets of information, presented a Power Point presentation, showed a promotional video, and answered questions at a workshop at Alternatives 2008 in Buffalo, New York. This presentation gave the PSWC national exposure and interest,

which sparked phone calls and emails from national consumer leaders expressing much interest in developing a PSWC in their areas.

The PSWC has also given individual house tours and presentations to local and national leaders who are curious and interested in finding innovative approaches to systems transformation.

Leadership opportunities for staff and participants are foundational at the PSWC. Employees have acquired new leadership roles in the areas of respite services, house tours, hospitality, domestic organization, and housing resources development. These roles serve to promote the smooth operations of the PSWC, and all employees are trained in these leadership skills. This process has added a level of mutual support to the general environment of the PSWC and provided added efficiency and consistency for all participants.

Participants have also developed leadership roles at the PSWC. Many Wellness Activities are facilitated by peers who express an area of interest and demonstrate expertise. Several peers have contracted with the GMHCN to facilitate activities for a small stipend. Other Wellness Activities are routinely facilitated by interested participants which helps to maintain an environment of mutuality and self direction. Participants are also invited to attend community activities and events that promote wellness, advocacy and peer support.

Participation at the PSWC has greatly increased with regard to Wellness Activities and Warmline Calls. In July 2008, 423 participants attended Wellness Activities, and 125 callers utilized the Warm Line. Respite guests totaled 14, using a total of 61 respite nights. In December 2008, 571 participants attended Wellness Activities and 953 callers utilized the Warm Line. Respite guests totaled 13, using a total of 71 respite nights.

Holidays are met with excitement and celebration for all who wish to participate. The PSWC recognizes the holiday season, accommodates cultural and social diversity, and involves participants in every aspect of the preparation. The 2008 year-end holiday season was especially magical. Many participants were present for Thanksgiving dinner, cookie decorating on Christmas Eve, caroling, gift shopping, tree decorations (in which most were hand-made by participants), and meal preparation. Small gifts were provided and placed under the Christmas tree, and on Christmas Day, every participant had several gifts to open. Many said that they would not have had a gift to open otherwise, and everyone expressed much appreciation and enjoyment with the gifts they received.

Participants continue to express satisfaction with their experiences at the PSWC. Some comments from the Evaluation/Feedback form include:

"I was having a lot of difficulty coping with my home situation. A friend told me about this place, and it has kept me from going into the hospital."

"Respite is a lot more comfortable than hospitals, and no one is controlling."

"The best part is the peace you find and feel when you walk through the door."

"Respite is no comparison to hospitalization. In the hospital setting, the treatment approach is to fix one with meds. Here [at the PSWC] I am given the opportunity to explore choices and move toward my strengths."

"I was free to do things in and out of the house instead of being restricted. I can choose how to help myself, seeking coping skills, info. online, talking with peers, journaling, walking, etc."

At least once per month, employees engage in co-supervision meetings with other employees, which serves to maintain mutuality among coworkers and troubleshoot issues that may arise in the work environment. The meetings are conducted between each employee with every other employee on a one-to-one basis. The Project Director also participates in one-to-one co-supervision meetings with every employee, as well as with Sherry Jenkins Tucker, Executive Director of GMHCN, on a weekly basis. These meetings ensure cohesiveness, mutuality, and understanding among all involved, regarding the day-to-day operations of the PSWC.

Employees also submit a bi-monthly "Work Report" describing their experiences working with participants at the PSWC, on the Warmline, and in the community. This report concludes with a sampling of their comments:

"On Saturday, I received a Warmline call from a woman who requested someone to talk to while she was in the middle of a much energized state and had not been able to sleep all last night. After a couple of minutes I realized we had connected because she mentioned the fact that I actually 'got' what she was talking about. She mentioned to me that she was in a wheelchair but that she was able to walk sporadically. She also expressed her frustration about having to rely on her husband to do things for her. I shared my story about my bouts with feelings of helplessness and being completely at the mercy of others. We talked about ways she could possibly move toward self reliance. We came up with the MARTA L-Van for people who have physical disabilities. She was very excited about this and said she was going to contact them for more information. She also said she had been to the Peer Support and Wellness Center and loved being there. She looks forward to being able to come back again. At the end of the conversation, she thanked me for taking the time to talk to her. I was able to express mutuality by thanking her for allowing me to assist her, explaining that by being of service to my peers, it helps me in my own recovery."

"I did some research on full spectrum lighting and how beneficial it is emotionally, mentally, and psychologically. I made the suggestion to Jayme that over time we change all the lighting in the Peer Support and Wellness Center to full spectrum, especially since we are heading into the winter months where there



is less sunshine. She agreed and asked me to research what specific items we would need and find a place to purchase them. I completed that assignment on Wednesday and turned it into Jayme. This is really going to benefit everyone who comes to the Center."

*(The PSWC currently has full spectrum lighting in the kitchen and office, with full spectrum bulbs waiting to replace the current bulbs after they burn out.)*

I got a Warmline call from 'G' today. She was tearful and very stressed out about not having a job. She has been job searching for five months now and feels like she is at the end of her rope. We discussed the different methods she has used like the internet, filling out applications in person, job fairs, and temp agencies. I told 'G' about *Pathfinders Employment* that meets here and encouraged her to come for support. I told her about respite, too, and she said she was really happy to hear about respite because she didn't know she had that option. She said she plans to come by for a tour and do a Proactive Interview. I assured her that this time will pass, and she is not alone. We will be here to support her."

"'W' is in respite right now. He is a very nice person and his story is a little sad. His wife died a few years ago. He used to be an engineer, but ECT treatments have given him major memory problems. He had to resign from his job and move in with his mother-in-law. He expresses anger over the fact he was given so many ECT treatments and what it has done to him. He prefers respite over hospitalization and is glad to have found this place. He told me he would probably have been in the hospital had he not come to respite."

"It was a rainy day, and we peers played a game. We talked and we laughed. What a good day, just doing the simplest things. To me, that is having a good support day. Not talking about the past. Not talking about our health. Just plain talking about everyday things, simple things, and to see everyone in a good mood."

"I went to the 6th Annual Women's Health Summit. It was a great event - lots of good speakers. It really shows that our health care system is now moving toward focusing on wellness instead of sickness or disease. Brenda Wood was the keynote speaker, and she was very powerful. She told personal stories about her family and how she has come to value wellness through her own life experience and that of her family members. I also went to two workshops. One was about balancing time and the other was about nutrition and exercise. I learned a lot and am glad I had the opportunity to go. Overall there was some great information, and it just reaffirmed that we are on the right path here at the Wellness Center. At the conference they talked about a lot of things that we already do at the Center such as treating a person as a complete human being - physically, mentally, and spiritually."

"I took a Warmline call today. It was 'D'. She was very upset about the State coming to take her brother (who has a developmental disability) into their custody. She misses her brother and does not know when she is going to see him again. She is also worried about how her mother is going to handle this change. After talking with 'D' I established a connection and learned more about her living situation. She said she lives alone and does not have any immediate support. I invited 'D' to come to the Wellness Center, and she came later that day and also decided to stay for a week of respite."

"I called the Warmline myself for the first time this week. It was the middle of the night, and I just needed to talk. It's great to have a support system available, even at the place where you work. From being on the receiving end of the call, I realized firsthand how important the Warmline is - just to have someone there to talk to that is there to support you at all hours of the night."

End of Report

*For more information, visit [www.gmhcn.org](http://www.gmhcn.org)*

Peer Support and Wellness Center Evaluation  
*Report compiled for the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network, Inc.*

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**Adam Darnell, Ph.D.**  
**EMSTAR Research, Inc.**  
**July 2008**

**Methods**

- Data collection using the Peer Support and Wellness Center (PSWC) Feedback survey, authored by GMHCN
- Completed surveys collected at PSWC from February to June of 2008
- A total of 78 completed surveys were received
  - Average age of respondents = 42 years old
  - Race: 55% African American; 32% Caucasian
  - County of residence: 47% DeKalb, 21% Fulton
  - Level of education: 57% HS grads; 30% college grads

**Results**

PSWC users indicated that the center tends to be utilized by persons who have a history of hospitalization:

- Average number of lifetime hospitalizations = 4
- Average days hospitalized past year = 24

PSWC services utilized:

- Approximately three quarters of respondents (77%) participated in group activities
- A somewhat smaller percentage (42%) utilized respite
- Average respite stay at PSWC = 3.2 days

Respondent views of the PSWC:

- One third (33%) of respondents thought their use of PSWC had helped prevent a hospitalization, and another third (33%) thought it might have
- Views on how PSWC helps prevent hospitalization:
  - It provides relief during stressful times
  - It provides social support from interactions with peers and staff
  - It provides an opportunity to seek refuge from life stressors
- Respondents also reported that without PSWC they would have been forced to cope with worsening symptoms on their own or would have been hospitalized
- Comparing PSWC to hospitalization, respondents favored:
  - The independence and flexibility offered at the center
  - The peaceful atmosphere
  - The quality of interaction with peers and staff
  - The non-institutional feel
- When asked what they liked most about PSWC, respondents frequently cited:
  - Interpersonal relationships at the center

- Activities
- Groups
- The majority of respondents (84%) felt that center activities were extremely or very effective in helping them reach their recovery goals
- The quality of staff interactions was regarded positively by all but one respondent

**Suggestions for Improvement:**

- Suggestions for improvement focused on more activity offerings, longer hours, accessibility, and food

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**Jeremy Lingle, M.S.  
Adam Darnell, Ph.D.  
EMSTAR Research, Inc.  
February 2009**

**Methods**

- Data collection using the Peer Support and Wellness Center (PSWC) Feedback survey
- Completed surveys collected at PSWC from July to December of 2008
- A total of 158 completed surveys were received
  - Average age of respondents = 42 years old
  - Race: 53% African American; 35% Caucasian
  - County of residence: 49% DeKalb, 23% Fulton

**Results**

PSWC users indicated that the center tends to be utilized by persons who have a history of hospitalization:

- Average number of hospitalizations prior to PSWC = 7.7
- Average number of hospitalizations since PSWC = 0.8.

PSWC services utilized:

- Four out of five respondents (81%) participated in group activities
- A somewhat smaller percentage (44%) utilized respite
- Average respite among those who utilized respite = 5.8 days.

Respondent views of the PSWC:

- One half (54%) of respondents thought their use of PSWC had helped prevent a hospitalization and another third (32%) thought it might have.

- Views on how PSWC helps prevent hospitalization:
  - Provides supportive environment, staff, and peers
  - Provides socialization and prevents isolation
  - Provides relief during stressful times
  - Provides an opportunity to seek refuge from life stressors.
- Respondents also reported that without PSWC they would have been forced to cope with worsening symptoms on their own or would have been hospitalized.
- Comparing PSWC to hospitalization, respondents favored:
  - The independence and flexibility offered at the center
  - The peaceful atmosphere
  - The non-institutional feel
  - The quality of interaction with peers and staff
  - Health-focus of services
  - Personal treatment.
- When asked what they liked most about PSWC, respondents frequently cited:
  - Activities
  - Interpersonal relationships at the center
  - Groups
  - Positive environment.
- The majority of respondents (96%) felt that center activities were good or excellent in effectively helping them reach their recovery goals
- The majority of respondents (98%) felt that interactions with staff were either excellent or good.

**Suggestions for Improvement:**

Suggestions for improvement focused on more activity offerings, longer hours, more staff, and food..

**EMSTAR**  


---

**RESEARCH, INC.**

**Peer Support and Wellness Center**

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is the Peer Support and Wellness Center?**

*The Peer Support and Wellness Center is a peer-run alternative to traditional mental health day services and psychiatric hospitalization.*

### **What criteria does a person need to meet to participate in the Peer Support and Wellness Center?**

*A participant must be at least 18 years of age and self identify as a person with mental health issues.*

### **What is a Respite Bed?**

*The Peer Support and Wellness Center has three respite beds which can be occupied by participants who need extra support and prefer not to be in a hospital setting. A respite bed can be used for up to seven days.*

### **How does a person access a respite bed?**

*A participant can come to the Wellness Center while s/he is feeling well and complete a Proactive Interview with a Wellness Center peer staff. Once the interview is completed, s/he qualifies for a respite at a future date upon request and dependent on bed availability.*

### **What is a Proactive Interview?**

*A Proactive Interview is an interactive dialogue between a Wellness Center peer staff and a peer participant. It is used to determine the type of respite supports preferred by the participant. It is completed while a participant is feeling well.*

### **Will participants still see their regular doctors?**

*Yes, and anyone else they choose to see.*

### **What about medication?**

*All Respite Guests are responsible for taking their own prescribed medications and keeping them in a locked box. The box and key are provided by the Wellness Center.*

### **What about meals?**

*The kitchen will be stocked for Respite Guests to prepare food for themselves at their convenience. Respite Guests are also free to bring in their own food. Meals are not provided for daily participants who are not in respite, and they are asked to bring in their own lunches. Community meals are prepared on occasion, in which all participants can partake.*

**Do you have doctors on call?**

*There are no doctors, nurses, case-managers, or clinical staff associated with the Wellness Center, although each participant is free to utilize his or her established medical and community resources.*

**Do you keep charts on participants?**

*Respite Guests have a file with their Proactive Interview emergency contact information. They have access to their file upon request.*

**Will you keep files on those who do not use the respite beds?**

*No. We have a guestbook for participants to sign as they come into the Wellness Center so we will know how many people participated each day.*

**There are several peers at our mental health center who I would like to refer to the Wellness Center. What is the process for referrals?**

*The Peer Support and Wellness Center accepts self referral only. Please feel free to distribute our literature to any peer who may be interested.*

**I want to come to the Peer Support and Wellness Center right away. What do I need to do?**

*Come to the Wellness Center between 10:00 am-7:30 pm any day of the week and sign the guestbook. We look forward to meeting you!*

**I do not have transportation. Can I still qualify for a respite bed?**

*The Wellness Center gives each Respite Guest a 7-day MARTA card. The Avondale MARTA station is a short walk from the Wellness Center. All other transportation is arranged by the Respite Guest.*

**What kind of training does the Wellness Center Peer Staff have?**

*All peer staff are Certified Peer Specialists or will be certified soon. In addition, all peer staff have completed Shery Mead's Intentional Peer Support Training with a certified IPS facilitator, Shela Silverman's Warmline Training, CPR/First Aid Certification Training and general orientation with the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network. Probably the best training, however, is the lived experience we all share as peers in mental health recovery!*

# Peer Support and Wellness Center

444 Sycamore Drive  
Decatur, GA 30030

A peer-run compliment to  
traditional mental health services

**Wellness Activities**  
11am-7pm  
Monday - Friday,  
Weekends  
10am-4pm

Activities are free of charge and include Aroma Therapy;  
Trauma Informed Peer Support; Double Trouble in Recovery;  
WRAP Planning; Creative Writing; Art Wellness;  
Jewelry Making; Financial Literacy; Housing Search Support;  
Cooking and Nutrition; Computer Skills Training;  
Pathfinders Employment; Sports & Recreation; & much more.  
Call or visit for specific schedule and times.

**Respite Beds**  
24 Hours a Day

The 3 respite beds are free of charge and can be occupied by  
an individual in severe emotional distress who feels that s/he  
would benefit from 24/7 peer support. Peers often use Respite  
to avoid a psychiatric hospitalization. An individual must have a  
Proactive Interview on file before s/he is eligible for Respite.

**Proactive  
Interviews**

A Proactive Interview is an interactive dialogue  
between a peer staff and a peer who may choose Respite at a  
future date. It is designed to establish a relationship among  
peers before a Respite stay is needed. A Proactive Interview is  
completed when a peer is doing well.

**Warmline**  
24 Hours a Day  
Local area codes 404, 770,  
678 dial: (404) 371-1414  
Out of area dial:  
(888) 945-1414

The Peer Support and Wellness Center's Warmline is  
"peer support over the phone"  
by trained peers, 24 hours a day.

The Peer Support and Wellness Center is a project of the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network in partnership with  
the Consumer Relations and Recovery Section. It is funded through a contract with the  
Georgia Department of Human Resources' Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Addictive Diseases.  
If you are interested in participating in the Peer Support and Wellness Center, please come by during hours of operation or  
call 404-371-1414.