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The Key Update

The free monthly e-newsletter of the National Mental Health Consumers' Self-Help Clearinghouse

Volume 1 No. 5 – October 2004

<http://www.mhselfhelp.org>

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RESOURCES FOR CONSUMER-RUN ORGANIZATIONS AND SELF-HELP GROUPS...

Article on Evidence-based Practices in Peer Support and Peer-Provided Services Phyllis Solomon, Ph.D., of the University of Pennsylvania has written a new article for Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal entitled, "Peer Support/Peer Provided Services: Underlying Processes, Benefits, and Critical Ingredients." The article is now available for free on-line: <http://www.bu.edu/prj/spring2004/solomon-etal.html>. This article concisely reviews the body of research on the value of peer-provided services and peer support and makes a persuasive argument for why mental health systems benefit and save money by investing in peer support. Citing research throughout the article, Solomon outlines the critical elements of peer support within traditional services, peer-delivered services, and peer-run and peer-operated services. Her descriptions can be used by advocates of peer support, service providers, and policy makers to establish the basis for meaningful discussions about how all stakeholders can benefit when peer support services are taken past the level of token support to be implemented as important parts of a system's strategies to become more recovery-oriented. Cite or paraphrase this article in your next grant proposal or advisory board meeting.

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HUMAN RIGHTS...

Man with Psychiatric Disability Sues for Right to Vote

A lawsuit challenging the Missouri Constitution and state law has been filed to obtain the right to vote for people who have a guardian because of "mental incapacity." The suit arises out of the refusal by a federal judge to allow Steven Prye, a former law professor diagnosed with schizoaffective disorder who has had a guardian since December 2003, the right to vote. According to a story by the Associated Press (AP), ("Missouri Judge Denies Vote to Mentally Ill Man," 10/27/04), U.S. District Judge Ortrise Smith said it would be risky to presume that Prye, who recently moved from Illinois, is competent to vote and "any outcome that permits a potentially invalid ballot to be cast should be avoided." The suit argues that the Missouri law is in violation of the U.S. Constitution's due process and equal protection clauses and the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law notes that, because 26 states have a similar prohibition, the lawsuit could have national ramifications. The Bazelon Center and the American Civil Liberties Union are helping the Guardian and Advocacy Commission, an Illinois state agency, represent Prye.

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Source: Mental Health E-News, New York Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services

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PARC CORNER – OLDER ADULTS & MENTAL HEALTH

PARC Corner

The Stress of Caregiving

Many of us are caregivers: we care for our parents, our spouses, our children, and our relatives. Caregivers often spend all of their time taking care of others and not enough time taking care of themselves. Caregivers are burdened with physical and emotional demands that can leave them feeling stressed, exhausted, isolated, and anxious. Caregivers may often feel guilty and overwhelmed when they try to do everything on their own. Take the PARC stress test on [www.positiveaging.org](http://www.positiveaging.org) to see what your stress level is and to get recommendations on how to cope.

<http://www.positiveaging.org/consumer/popups/stresstest1.html>

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MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT AND SERVICES...

FDA Orders Black Box Warnings on Antidepressants Used by Children

The FDA has ordered a "black box" warning that must be carried on all antidepressants, linking the drugs to increased suicidal thoughts and behavior among children and teens taking them. The agency additionally is creating an information guide to advise patients of the risk, as "black box" warnings are seen primarily by doctors.

<http://www.fda.gov/cder/drug/antidepressants/default.htm>

Source: AP

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