

The Key Update Volume 2 No. 3, September 2005

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ed Knight Receives 2005 USPRA Chairperson's Award

Dr. Ed Knight, vice president of recovery, rehabilitation and mutual support of ValueOptions in Colorado Springs, Colo., and a longtime activist in the consumer/survivor movement, has received the 2005 Chairperson's Award from the United States Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association. The award recognizes his significant contributions to consumer empowerment, self-help, and self-determination through his teaching, writing and research.

Ed Knight is the former CEO of the Mental Health Empowerment Project, Inc., which has helped start over 600 self-help groups for mental health recipients in New York State. He consults on rehabilitation, self-help and recovery throughout the country, and is a winner of the National Mental Health Association's Clifford Beers Award. "For many years, Ed Knight has been a key leader and organizer in the self-help and advocacy movement of people with psychiatric disabilities," said Joseph Rogers, executive director of the National Mental Health Consumers' Self-Help Clearinghouse. "His keen intelligence and tireless advocacy, coupled with his soft-spoken and persuasive manner, have helped win hearts and minds."

Mental Health Community Mourns Carol Mowbray, Ph.D., Researcher in Psychosocial Rehabilitation

Carol Mowbray, Ph.D., whose research substantiated the importance of psychosocial supports in helping people recover from mental illnesses as well as the key role that consumers play in the provision of recovery-oriented services, died after an illness on August 23 at the age of 57.

Dr. Mowbray started her career in state government in Michigan. After 15 years of work in research administration, planning, and evaluation, she joined the faculty of Wayne State University in Detroit. She subsequently became a professor on the faculty of the School of Social Work, University of Michigan, and director of the School's Center for Research on Poverty, Risk and Mental Health. Dr. Mowbray conducted major studies in supported education for adults with psychiatric disabilities and her work advanced the cause of education supports for consumers across the country. Dr. Mowbray also made distinguished contributions to research on psychosocial rehabilitation, consumer-providers, and women's mental health and mental illness. "Dr. Mowbray's death is a great loss to the mental health advocacy and research communities," said Mark Salzer, Ph.D., of the University of Pennsylvania. "She was a wonderful and caring person who freely shared her time and thoughts with many of us. I am overjoyed that Carol was recognized before her death by having the U.S. Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association name its Young Investigator Award after her. She has inspired a new generation of researchers, including myself, by her pioneering and collaborative efforts in many, many areas. We will all miss her very much."

At this writing, a memorial service is planned for August 30. Another, also open to the public, will take place on September 9, in Ann Arbor, Mich. To find out more go to <http://carolsupportnetwork.blogspot.com/>.

Source: http://www.med.umich.edu/depression/college_2005_biosprn.htm

SAMHSA Offers Knowledge Dissemination Conference Grants

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP), and Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT) are accepting applications for SAMHSA Knowledge Dissemination Conference Grants, also called SAMHSA Conference Grants (Request for Applications [RFA] No. PA-06-001, receipt dates January 31 and October 31). The purpose of the grants, which provide a maximum grant award of \$50,000 for a 12-month project period, is to disseminate knowledge about practices within the fields of mental health services and substance abuse prevention and treatment and to integrate that knowledge into the real world. For more information: http://www.samhsa.gov/grants/2006/RFA/PA_06_001_Conference.aspx

Source: CMHS e-list. To subscribe, visit the Consumer Survivor page of the CMHS Web site at: <http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/consumersurvivor/>

NEWS AND REPORTS

California Mental Health Services Act Advances Recovery from the Consumer Perspective

The passage of Proposition 63 in California last November initiated the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), possibly the most expansive funding structure for community mental health services ever enacted by a state. Among the directives of the MHSA are consumer involvement and a recovery focus at all levels of planning. “Consumer participation in the planning for MHSA dollars has been extensive at both the state and county levels,” Bill Compton, long-time consumer advocate and executive director of Project Return, told The Key Update. “We’ve been at all the meetings helping keep the process on track with recovery as the Act was designed, and ensuring that funds do not get diverted to involuntary treatment. And the response has been good. People are really listening to us.”

Peer Support Is Central to Recovery

A new Canadian report confirms that consumer/survivor initiatives (CSIs) play a vitally important role in recovery from mental illness. “Consumer/Survivor Initiatives: Impact, Outcomes and Effectiveness,” developed by several Canadian mental health organizations, shows that involvement in CSIs helps people reduce their use of hospital, emergency, and other expensive services, and aids in their recovery. For example, the report noted that the average number of hospital days for people involved with a CSI dropped from 48.36 before their

involvement to 4.29 after.

"This report is the first to make the case so clearly: CSIs are good for people with mental illness, and they're good for the health care system as a whole," said Shawn Lauzon of the Ontario Peer Development Initiative. The study defined CSIs as programs operated by and for people with psychiatric disabilities and/or recipients of mental health services. They include peer support, employment and training, advocacy programs, and other programs that help people gain control of their lives and work toward recovery.

The full report is available at <http://www.ofcmhap.on.ca/>.

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

War's Mental Wounds Command New Attention

The New England Journal of Medicine published an Army survey that found that 15 percent to 17 percent of those who had served in Iraq suffered symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). If that trend continues, 70,000 returnees or more could potentially end up with symptoms.

One such soldier, Staff Sgt. Mark MacPherson, spent a year in Iraq, with a scout platoon that acted as bait for insurgents, to enable counterattacks. A former environmental consultant, MacPherson returned from the war with a combination of PTSD and concussion-caused brain injury, another diagnosis that is increasingly on the rise for returning soldiers.

The Department of Veteran Affairs has reported that of the 360,000 soldiers who have been discharged from fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan, almost 10,000 have received an interim diagnosis of PTSD. The stigma of mental illness, pronounced among combat soldiers, prevents many from seeking help, especially when deployed. Only 23 percent to 40 percent of Marine and Army troops who met the criteria for mental disorders actually sought assistance.

Source: http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/localnews/2002402228_ptsd26m.html

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

Internet Dating Site Helps People with Mental Illnesses Meet

No Longer Lonely Online, a free Internet dating site, was created to help people with psychiatric diagnoses find companionship. According to its creator, Jim Leftwich, the site functions much like the large commercial dating sites, where a user creates an anonymous profile and can then search for romance or friendship based on geography and physical and personality attributes.

“As someone with schizoaffective disorder, I know that first dates can be quite stressful,” said Leftwich, who was diagnosed in 1992. “For those with mental illness, the problem is compounded by fear of disclosure and stigma. As every member of [nolongerlonely.com](http://www.nolongerlonely.com) has a mental illness, it is hoped that removing these barriers will improve the social lives of its members.”

Leftwich says that privacy and anonymity are strictly maintained on the site, which he calls an “online social community for adults with mental illness.” Users can choose whether to display a photo or not. According to Leftwich, the site is the only one of its kind on the Internet, and its current membership is some 2,600. No Longer Lonely has already sparked one wedding between members and at least four other engagements, Leftwich says.

For more information: <http://www.nolongerlonely.com> or webmaster@nolongerlonely.com.

New Jersey Launches Postpartum Depression Anti-stigma Campaign

In an effort to help women cope with postpartum depression, New Jersey has established a Web site and is airing a series of television spots. The spots feature New Jersey First Lady Mary Jo Codey, who has been open about her own experiences with postpartum depression. “Postpartum depression is treatable,” says Codey. “But first you have to ask for help.”

Web site: <http://njspeakup.gov>. A video of women sharing their experiences with postpartum depression is available at <http://www.state.nj.us/health/fhs/ppd/video.shtml>.

Pivotal Book Exposing State Hospitals Available on the Web

“Out of Sight, Out of Mind,” by Frank L. Wright, Jr., originally published in 1947, is now available in its entirety, including photography, at the Web site of the Disability History Museum. A blistering expose of the terrible conditions in state mental hospitals of that era, “Out of Sight, Out of Mind” was originally published by the National Mental Health Foundation (NMHF) and has been out of print for many years. The book, based on some 2,000 firsthand accounts, grew out of the efforts of the NMHF, the seeds of which were planted by four conscientious objectors working at Philadelphia State Hospital in 1945. The four created a national campaign to improve the treatment of people with mental illnesses, which kicked off in 1946 with a Life Magazine article, “Bedlam 1946: Most U.S. Mental Hospitals Are a Shame and a Disgrace.”

In a foreword to “Out of Sight, Out of Mind,” former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Owen J. Roberts wrote, “Mr. Wright’s forceful book cannot fail to shock us, to awaken us, to impel us to action.” (Roberts, who chaired the NMHF, was one of 38 public figures, including Eleanor Roosevelt, who were NMHF sponsors.) In 1950, the NMHF merged with two other national groups – the National Committee for Mental Hygiene, founded by Clifford Beers, and the American Psychiatric Foundation -- to create the National Association for Mental Health, which is now the National Mental Health Association.

Sources: Disability History Museum, <http://www.disabilitymuseum.org/lib/docs/1754.htm>
Center on Human Policy Disability Studies for Teachers,
<http://www.disabilitystudiesforteachers.org/files/NMHF.pdf>

SELF-ADVOCACY AND SELF-CARE RESOURCES...

Handling Disputes with Health Care Plans

The Kaiser Foundation and Consumers Union have created a guide to handling disputes with health care plans.

The guide is divided into five sections, beginning with a general overview and progressing to a listing of individual state requirements. The first section of the guide explains the importance of understanding your coverage. It includes questions consumers can ask to sort out the details of their coverage in order to avoid disputes. Plans might include rules relating to referrals, pre-authorization or payment, which consumers should know about. Sections Two and Three explain in detail both internal and external review processes, both of which are often regulated by states. Internal reviews are regularly required before an appeal can be made for an external state review. Section Four reviews the outcomes of consumer requests for external review. It explains major mistakes people make in requesting external review and reports on the outcomes of external appeals. The last section is a listing of requirements by state, which consumers can use to understand their own appeals process, as well as telephone numbers for state resources.

The guide is not applicable to resolving disputes with Medicare or Medicaid.

A Consumer Guide to Handling Disputes with Your Employer or Private Health Plan, 2005 Update is available from the Kaiser Foundation Web site
<http://www.kff.org/consumerguide/7350.cfm> .

Participate in an Online Survey Study

A study on the postsecondary education experiences of people diagnosed with mental illnesses is looking for people interested in participating in a brief and anonymous online survey. If you have been diagnosed with a mental illness, are or have been a college student for at least one semester, and are 18 years old or older, then you are eligible to participate. Participants will be eligible to enter a raffle and win up to \$150. If you are interested, please go to <http://www.upennrrtc.org/research/education.html> for more information.

PARC CORNER

The Stress of Caregiving

Caregivers care for their parents, spouses, children, and/or 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 the Positive Aging Resource Center Web site to see what your stress level is and to get recommendations on how to cope:

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

JOB OPPORTUNITY

The National Mental Health Consumers' Self-Help Clearinghouse is seeking an Information Specialist.

Description: FT (37.5 hrs.) Responsibility for the provision of technical assistance materials to mental health consumers and consumer groups across the country, maintenance of an extensive library of educational materials, provision of training as requested, and participation in the development of ongoing Clearinghouse programming.

Qualifications: Bachelor's degree (B.A.) or equivalent; three to five years related experience and/or training or equivalent combination of education and experience. Experience in mental health arena and one or more of the following areas: customer service, social policy, public health or library science. Good oral and written communication skills required. Working knowledge of Microsoft Office Suite and Internet search skills desired. Training skills and knowledge of Spanish a plus. Consumers are urged to apply.

Please send resumes with cover letter to Cheri Marranzini, Director of Human Resources, MHASP, 1211 Chestnut Street, 11th Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19107, or e-mail to: cmarranzini@hasp.org. No phone calls please.

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