

Expect Recovery (Make It Happen)

Published Quarterly

For consumers and staff interested in Recovery

Northern Lakes CMH Recovery Definition

“Recovery is a personal journey of hope, purpose and growth. It is the process of setting our own directions in life. We accept the responsibilities of meeting challenges, using our own abilities, strengths and determination.”



Embracing Transformation

The first few “action group” meetings were held via video-conference between the Houghton Lake, Traverse City, and Cadillac offices on Tuesday, April 12, and the Grayling, Traverse City, and Cadillac offices on Friday, May 13. Similar to the previous Learning Community and Recovery Council Meetings, it was opened by reading the NLCMH Recovery definition and by sharing celebrations and/or positive things about yourself. These groups have been discussing/planning various important things like the annual Recovery Celebration (see page 2 for more information) and all the many important things that go with it (i.e., helping with the theme, decorations, awards), helping to plan upcoming Mini-Conferences, hearing about possible new recovery classes, Stigma Busting, and much more. This is a chance for you to get involved!

The next meetings are **June 15, 10am-12pm** (Cadillac, Houghton Lake, and Traverse City) and **July 12, 10am-12pm** (Cadillac, Grayling, and Traverse City) via video. We are encouraging EVERYONE to attend (staff and consumers alike).

The first Mini-Conference was held in Traverse City on May 24 and it was a great success with over 40 people attending (see page 2 for more information)! We hope as many people are able to take advantage of this opportunity in our other office locations. With your support and continued help, we move forward daily and keep our recovery train rolling! Good job everyone!

~Mary Beth Evans, CPSS, NLCMH Recovery Coordinator

Dates to Remember:

Mini-Conference Schedule

10am-3pm
June 23 Cadillac
July 19 Houghton Lake
Aug 23 Traverse City
Oct 27 Cadillac
Nov 16 Grayling

Other Special Opportunities:

July 28 – Annual Consumer Conference
 (Lansing, MI)
Sept 20 – Annual Recovery Celebration
 (Hagerty Center –
 Traverse City)
Nov 2 – Art of Recovery
 Art Show
 (Inside/Out Art Gallery –
 Traverse City)



“You are caught by what you are running from.”
 – Sam Keen

Treat Yourself!

The summer mini-conferences in May, June and July are all focused on topics that people have said are important to them.

For example, after learning that people with mental illness live on average 25 years less than people without mental illness, many individuals have expressed a desire to improve their health. Summer is a great time to learn about making changes in one's diet to be healthier. Our gardens and farm markets overflow with an abundance of foods that are fresh, nutritious, tasty, and in rhythm with our seasons – all available locally to nurture our spirits as well as our bodies. There's a segment in the mini-conferences on how to purchase food wisely, basics to have in your pantry, benefits of eating low on the food chain (a plant based diet), and *Superfoods* – foods that pack the most flavor and health benefits per dollar.

In addition to taking care of our insides (losing weight, lowering cholesterol, exercising our muscles), we can also feel better when we take care of our outside appearance. A mini-conference segment on "Your Best Look" shares tips for both men and women on how to give yourself a lift by presenting yourself well.

Many people are interested in testing the waters and exploring the possibilities of re-entering the world of work – maybe with a job, maybe as a community volunteer. There's a segment in the mini-conference about finding a good fit for yourself in the community – where to start, and how to deal with the stress that may also come with extending yourself in new situations and looking at new challenges.

We hope you'll make the mini-conference a time to indulge yourself a bit, learn something new, and open your thinking to the possibilities that are available for your future. We hope to see you there!

Mini-Grants Awarded!

Northern Lakes Community Mental Health (NLCMH) offered mini-grants to help transform the public mental health system to one based on recovery principles by strengthening consumer choice and enhancing personal recovery.

Many people with a mental illness put themselves out there and applied for funding to make their dreams come true – and seven grants were awarded! Congratulations to the successful applicants! The grants will allow for:

1. A book celebrating the recovery of Traverse House members.
2. Personalized physical evaluations and individualized exercise programs for Traverse House members.
3. Purchase of tools and supplies to create a garden producing healthy food and exercise for Club Cadillac members.

4. Purchase of four YMCA Memberships to be shared among Club Cadillac members.

5. Learned Optimism and Resilience Training Workshops for community members in several northern Michigan communities.

6. An educational mailing to employers promoting the employment of people with psychiatric disabilities.

7. Art of Recovery sessions in Cadillac area open to community members.



Recovery Celebration ~ September 20

The time has come again to celebrate all the hard work and dedication we have put forward in our recovery movement at NLCMH. This year's celebration is being held at the Hagerty Center in Traverse City. This is when we recognize people for their efforts in supporting the recovery movement at NLCMH and/or for assisting in an individual's personal recovery. If you would like to nominate someone to receive an award, make sure you fill out a nomination form to recognize the hard work and dedication someone has helped you with. Also, make sure to include specific information about the behaviors or actions that you have observed the person make which have helped an individual to recover, and/or helped Northern Lakes CMH be more recovery-oriented as an organization. This celebration will focus on the recovery movement at NLCMH, what we have accomplished so far, and how we continue to move forward with more positive changes. Be on the lookout for the

Recovery Award Nomination Forms coming out soon and we hope you will save this date as a day to focus on all the positives we have throughout our agency!!

7th Annual ‘Walk a Mile In My Shoes’ Rally at the State Capitol

Over 2,000 people gathered at the State Capitol in Lansing on May 11th for the Annual Walk a Mile In My Shoes Rally.

The rally is a walk for mental health and developmental disability advocates from around Michigan to gather at our state Capitol and educate the public and legislators about mental health. We want people to know that WE MATTER and that we have many wonderful things to contribute to society. This year, Mary Beth Evans (NLCMH Recovery Coordinator) was the emcee for the day and Justin Rankin (from Roscommon County) was the DJ!

Good job everyone on a VERY successful Rally!

Crawford County – Kim with Flag Bearer Heather: “CMH Services are our safety net. I hope our lawmakers hear me when I say that protecting our safety net services is not only the right thing to do but is good business – and will save the state money in the long run. No more cuts! Walk A Mile In My Shoes!”

Roscommon County – Christine with Flag Bearer David: “We are easily forgotten to some people, but we won’t go away. We will put a voice to our needs. We’ll shout until we are heard. We don’t ask for much, we just ask for respect and understanding. Walk a Mile In My Shoes!”

Grand Traverse County – Richard with Flag Bearers Lee and Brandalyn: “In Grand Traverse County there is not enough affordable housing for people with mental health issues or low income families. We need more housing options to support people’s recovery. Walk A Mile In My Shoes!”

Leelanau County – Toni with Flag Bearer Susan: “Times of stress are NOT times to cut mental health funding. If anything, mental health funding should be INCREASED to help people even more. Walk A Mile In My Shoes!”

Missaukee County – Kelly with Flag Bearer Deanna: “We believe that every single person in the world has value. We also believe it is right and good to help people who are less fortunate. The poor, the lost, and the wounded all need our support. Walk A Mile In My Shoes!”

Wexford County – Frank with Flag Bearer Malinda: “I am more than my illness. Don’t put labels on me. Walk A Mile In My Shoes!”



Asking for Help Can Be Difficult

For many consumers, asking for help when one is having a hard time can be difficult, especially if trauma is involved. There can be many reasons why one does not ask for help depending on how our caregivers responded to our childhood requests for assistance.

We may have been shamed, blamed, or punished for our innocent pleas for help. Maybe we were shunned or ignored, teaching us that no one was going to help and we were abandoned.

Or maybe our family instilled the need to convey the image of “be strong” and asking for help was against the family code of conduct. “What will others think?” can also be the demanding rules of the family. Or in some cultures, there is a “no talk rule” where family members are shunned or punished for talking about the “family secrets.”

Breaking out of these habits takes courage and strength and it can be done.

This inability to rely on others for help can be a barrier to recovery. “Similarly, for severe trauma, it has been said that healing can take place only in the context and content of relationships.” (Herman, 1992) Without relationships to support us, teach us, and nurture us, we remain in pain, stuck in the left-over emotions of trauma and retraumatization.

Learning to ask for help is critical in mastering our mental illnesses, traumas, and substance abuse. Learning to trust that our needs will be met when we ask for help can be a big risk. But risk taking in order to dissolve the pain and heartache of trauma and mental illness is worthwhile. We need to remember that we were not responsible for what happened to us as children, but we are responsible as adults for how we deal with childhood issues. No one else can do it for us, unfortunately. It is up to us to solve our own pain, which means learning to ask for help. Yes, we need to solve our own pain, but we do not have to do it alone.

One must also learn where to go for help. Calling a mental health agency can be confusing and intimidating. The first step is to be specific in saying what type of help you want. What is good about a mental health agency is, once in the door, they have many different kinds of programs and therapists and the staff is trained to direct you to the help you need specific to your issues.

Explore your own experiences of the past in asking for help. Learning to remember the reactions and feelings you had in response to asking for help can assist in pointing what emotional barriers you currently have when going for help today. Reframing your asking for help into new questions, creating new contexts of asking for help can overcome the old emotions connected to asking.

Role playing and rehearsing asking can be helpful in overcoming anxiety in asking. Many people who grow up in nurturing environments cannot comprehend the courage it takes to ask for help, and to keep asking for help until one gets the exact right help they need can be challenging. But asking for help is a crucial coping skill that leads to a full recovery.

The risk in asking for help can seem overwhelming. But asking for help can set you on a recovery journey that changes your life. Begin today by asking for help in a non-threatening situation that can lead to bigger requests. Don't let your life be led by shame; you deserve to have the life of your dreams.

~Colleen Jasper~

*Consumer & Director of the Office of Consumer Relations
at MDCH in Lansing*



“They do not want to hear what their children suffer. They’ve made the telling of the suffering itself taboo.” (Alice Walker)