

Expect Recovery (Make It Happen)

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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.”



Opportunities Abound To Support Your Recovery!

Being in a group can provide you with the support and power you need to support your recovery. There are several opportunities for you to join in to meet people, learn new things, and move your recovery forward.

The choices include attending a Learning Community meeting (meets monthly in each CMH office), Pathways to Recovery Group (meets weekly for about 6 months), art group (meets twice per month), MI-PATH Group for chronic illness self-management (meets weekly for 6 weeks). We’re also starting music groups and smoking cessation groups in most offices starting this month. The schedules are posted on our web site (see the community and consumer calendars under the Support tab) or you may contact Mary Beth Evans, Recovery Coordinator, at (989) 366-2950, or your case manager for details. All these groups are FREE – give them a try because you have nothing to lose but much to gain!



Smoking Cessation Sensation!

Congratulations to these seven graduates of our first smoking cessation group in Houghton Lake, led by Barbara Lane, RN. Everyone has either quit or is very close to it! There are new groups starting in Grayling and Cadillac this month. Save money and get healthy!



“Life is not about waiting for the storms to pass... it’s about learning how to dance in the rain.” – Unknown

Colleen's Recovery Corner: Wellness Means BOTH Mind and Body

The mind/body connection is now beginning for mental health consumers. The importance of wellness includes health for both the mind (mental) and the body (physical). What doctors are now understanding is that the mind affects our physical health (like learning positive messages and thoughts), and our body affects the mind (like physical exercises is effective in overcoming depression.)

As a consumer, I assumed that wellness and health involved only my thoughts (mental) and moods (feelings), so I worked hard on understanding my mental illness and turning it into mental health. Years went by and I did stay healthy and out of the psychiatric hospital. However, in the mean time, my physical wellness was deteriorating into potential serious problems. My blood pressure, bad cholesterol, and my sugar were all too high. I was a walking time bomb waiting to happen. My moods were ok, but I was chronically at low grade unhappiness.

My physical exam jerked me into a shocking awareness that I would not live into my elder years if I did not learn to take care of my physical wellness along with my mental wellness. Then the mental health community was also shocked into action when a study conducted by the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors Council (NASMHPD) confirmed the fact for many mental health consumers: Individuals with mental health disabilities died on the average of 25 years younger than the "normal" population (Morbidity and Mortality in People with Serious Mental Illness October 2006 © NASMHPD). I took this research outcome personally. I joined weight watchers to lose the 50 pounds that had slowly attached itself to my bones and muscle. Weight loss was also instrumental in lowering my blood pressure, my cholesterol, and my blood sugar (I first learned about my physical indicators at the Consumer Conference Health Fair at the Kellogg Center last year).

I learned that my weight loss had to be a lifestyle change for me. Dieting was not going to work because as soon as I lost the weight

dieting, I declared myself a success and was out at Meijer's buying mint ice cream and diet pop (of course I thought the diet pop cancelled out all the sugar calories from the ice cream!). This yo-yo eating was also damaging and destructive to my wellness. Finally realizing that weight loss had to be a lifestyle change and that I needed support, I joined Weight Watchers. I am beginning to lose weight again and controlling it by making healthy choices and with exercise.

Let's face the facts . . . I hate to exercise! I force myself to exercise ½ hour per day but I am learning about staying motivated and that each day I am exercising, it is actually utilizing my mental wellness. It is so much easier for me to exercise when my thoughts and moods are positive. The energy from my positive mental wellness gives me the strength to exercise daily, especially when I choose exercises that I like (this is critical to keep me exercising everyday).

Through my lifestyle change, I have also learned the importance of understanding the physical side effects of my psychiatric medications. This has helped me to have a more realistic attitude in dealing with my physical wellness. Some medications actually add pounds and others may affect one's blood sugar (or vice versa). Understanding one's own medication is very important in helping us to realistically shed those extra pounds.

After all of this, I have finally realized that consumers should not ever have to choose between mental and physical wellness and that our brains are hardwired together. The connection between mental wellness and physical wellness cannot be separated out. They affect each other and "wellness" means a holistic dynamic involving both.

Good luck, consumers, in your recovery journey to both mental and physical wellness.

Peace,
Colleen Jasper

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



New Recovery Class: Music with Tom Stokes!

Tom Stokes, pictured at left, held a Music Celebration at the Traverse City office on July 15. The purpose of the celebration was to see if there was interest in starting a music group at Northern Lakes. There was a lot of interest, and a lot of fun was had that day, too. Tom tested people's voices, and led the group in some rhythm games and sing-alongs of some old favorites. He will be starting groups soon in each office, so watch for flyers and details to come. He says there will be "no pressure," and you can start wherever you are – no prior singing experience is needed. Give it a try and see what you think!

Advocates Speak at *'Walk A Mile In My Shoes'* Rally at State Capitol

Over 2000 people gathered at the State Capitol in Lansing in May to advocate for mental health and developmental disabilities issues and funding. Our six County Representatives and six Flag Bearers did a fabulous job making statements on the steps of the Capitol.

Hats off to all for a great job!

Here are the statements they made to send a message to lawmakers about the importance of funding during these times of economic challenge:

Crawford County – In Crawford County, we don't want to have to "fail first" with the state's "preferred list" of drugs, before we can get approval to use the mental health prescriptions that we know work best. That's not the way to treat people. Let us recover, using the prescriptions we know work! Walk A Mile In My Shoes!

Grand Traverse County – In Grand Traverse County, we are afraid that mental health budget cuts will be devastating for people who are already struggling. Cuts will add more barriers for people who need treatment. In these troubled times, please don't add to our challenges! We need all the help we can get! Walk A Mile In My Shoes!

Leelanau County – In Leelanau County, we believe that Insurance Parity must be extended to all of Michigan's workers. Taking no action is a statement against Michigan's small businesses: working for a small business in Michigan is currently an act of recklessness. Walk A Mile In My Shoes!

Missaukee County – In Missaukee County, we think funding for healthcare is critical. Is it worth it to force people who are in pain to delay treatment -- and be on a waiting list -- in order to save some dollars? We know times are tough in Michigan, but please have a heart. Walk A Mile In My Shoes!



Congratulations to our County Representatives and Flag Bearers who made statements to a crowd of over 200 people!



Roscommon County – In Roscommon County, we think times are tough enough without even more budget cuts to CMH and other mental health programs. With a 100% cut to the Mental Health and Aging Project, staff will be cut, and people won't be able to get services. Walk A Mile In My Shoes!

Wexford County – In Wexford County, we believe an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. How can we cut the mental health budget, at a time when more and more people are needing help? People will be forced to go to hospital emergency rooms and psychiatric units instead of getting the help they need. Walk A Mile In My Shoes!

"The time is always right to do what is right."

– Martin Luther King, Jr.

Recovery Council is Important in the NLCMH Recovery Movement

Some key accomplishments of the Recovery Council:

Developed official Definition of Recovery – The definition is key to driving system transformation and keeping our vision on track. The definition is posted in all NLCMH offices, included in monthly CEO Reports to the Board of Directors, and read at all Learning Communities.

Provided key input to develop a policy on Promoting a Recovery Oriented Service System (adopted April 27, 2009). This policy applies to all NLCMH direct-operated clinical services and contractual providers. The policy formally expresses the concept of recovery as the overarching goal of the NLCMH service system. It provides guiding principles and a framework to achieve what we want.

Provided key input in developing the Recovery 101 curriculum. Offerings now include Pathways to Recovery, MI-PATH, WRAP and Art Groups. An exercise class was offered to assist in individuals' recovery and address people's holistic wellness, which was another Recovery Council task.

Discussions about holistic wellness helped drive development of the Living Well theme of last fall's consumer conference, where learning opportunities were presented on relaxation techniques. In addition, a smoking cessation group was started in Houghton Lake for consumers and their families and will be offered in Grayling and Cadillac starting this month.

Provided key input to developing the Virtual Recovery Center on the NLCMH web site. Recommended changes have livened up the site, made it feel more welcoming and helped to make the site a thriving place where recovery information is shared. The web site averages about 6,000 visits daily.

Provided valuable feedback on NLCMH use of the Recovery Enhancing Environment (REE) survey. This feedback was used locally by NLCMH and by the State Recovery Council to assist in for statewide adoption of the REE. NLCMH piloted the REE last winter and is now awaiting results. The Recovery Council will also assist in developing a new, comprehensive recovery evaluation plan for NLCMH once REE results are available.

Provided key input on block grant projects.

Provided recommendations on environment improvements which have been implemented, such as: recovery towers in each office, photobiographies throughout each office, inspirational quotes posted weekly, and artwork displayed in each office. Outside auditors and reviewers as well as visitors to the buildings regularly state that an expectation of recovery is apparent from the minute you walk through NLCMH doors.

Discussions have set the stage for making some changes to improve the access process and packet, with recommendations on using the 5 Stages video and various handouts.

Did you know NLCMH now has a recovery policy?



Northern Lakes Community Mental Health (NLCMH) was formed in 2003 to serve these six counties: Crawford, Grand Traverse, Leelanau, Missaukee, Roscommon, and Wexford.

Since the beginning, NLCMH has had a recovery-based Mission Statement – “Promoting the behavioral health of our individuals, families, and communities through programs that **promote recovery**, build resilience, create opportunity and improve quality of life.”

Now, NLCMH also has an official policy based on Recovery!

The policy was written with the help of the NLCMH Recovery Council. It applies to all NLCMH direct-operated clinical services and contractual providers. The policy is three pages in length and goes into depth about how NLCMH operates on a recovery-oriented service delivery system of care.

The policy begins by stating: “This policy is to formally express the concept of ‘**recovery**’ as the overarching goal of the service system, for persons with severe mental illness, directly operated or funded by NLCMH.”

To view a copy of the policy, please view our website at www.northernlakescmh.org. You can find it under New Initiatives/Recovery System Transformation.