

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."



NLCMH's Positive Change Efforts

The State of Michigan has faced a lot of budget cuts in the Mental Health field recently. With Recovery and Anti-Stigma projects growing and funding minimizing, there have been some changes to NLCMH's previous block grant work plans. I am, however, confident that we will continue to grow in a positive way based on our new work plans.

In the new work plan, Dr. William Anthony from the Boston University Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation will be coming to NLCMH in the Spring for a two day intense training and consultation regarding our Recovery Blueprint for Change. Dr. Anthony will help us further our transformation plans and help us put our plans into action. This will help us meet our first Recovery work plan goal of System Transformation truly occurring as a result of our change efforts and recovery change plans.

In the Anti-Stigma grant, we developed 15 short videos on anti-stigma, recovery, community acceptance and messages of hope (*see the stars of our videos on the right side*). These are now available on our new YouTube channel: <http://www.YouTube.com/northernlakescmh>. We are also developing a longer video to use in public presentations and orientations.

I look forward to moving forward with more growth in Recovery and know that NLCMH will be nothing but successful in this change effort.

~Mary Beth Evans, CPSS, Recovery Coordinator



"Leaders are born and made: being born is the more mysterious part." ~William Anthony

Colleen's Recovery Corner:

Celebrating the Holidays: Working our Recovery Skills

(Colleen is the Director of the Office of Consumer Relations at the Michigan Department of Community Health in Lansing)

This is the time of the year that many consumers feel down, sad, or depressed. Some of these “blues” come about from the expectations of holiday “Joy and Happiness,” and feelings that families are what the holidays are all about. Consumers often feel disconnected from their families of origin. Memories of childhoods that were not the stereotypically “perfect” ones cloud our thoughts, further emphasizing our traumas of past years. Anything less than the “Happiest Feelings” are not promoted.

Many consumers who have sadness also have the onset of additional depression with the days being shorter and the clouds blocking out the sun – the beginning of SAD, seasonal affective disorder.

What have we learned about recovery is that we CAN get through the holidays. One thing to remember is that even in recovery, we may have days that we slip back into our “down” feelings. Don't beat yourself up, realize that it is OK and that you have not “failed” recovery but are experiencing recovery through a nonlinear process. Hang in there, knowing that with the passage of time, hopeful and pleasant feelings will come back.

Look with awareness at your family dynamics and prepare yourself by taking care of yourself in advance. Prepare to use your learned coping skills so that you are not caught off guard when individuals in your life do not act in healthy ways. Do not get sucked into communications with others that bring up your fear, anger, or depression. Stand your ground, advocate for yourself, and treat others with respect and dignity – as you also need to treat yourself.

Keep your hope alive as you know that holidays will eventually pass. Your spirit of sadness will also pass. Don't give in to negative feelings and work on expressing yourself with positive people, positive self-talk and a positive outlook. Turn the holiday season into a learning experience where further understanding of family dynamics can, in turn, help better your understanding of yourself and the role you play in your family. Acceptance and understanding of your past is important in leading you into the positive steps of your recovery now.

Let the holidays ring in, and ring out – and you will move into the winter months more prepared, stronger, and more hopeful. Let the season begin...

The Five Factors of Mental Wellness:

Our individual biology and the brain structure that we were born with and which develops as we age may be the only limiting factor in how far we can pump up our mental wellness, but within each of our individual structural limitations, there is room to improve our mental fitness. It is not unlike the limitations we each have for how fast we can run or walk or move in some other fashion. We all start with a different body, but we all can learn the skills for quicker movement.

Resiliency researchers and experts have said that resilience is the overriding characteristic which predicts how well we handle challenges to our physical or mental health. The equation for mental wellness is:

**Mental Wellness =
self-appreciation + resilience +
affiliation + negotiation +
mental and physical exercise**

The issue for each of us is where do we stand with respect to each factor and do we want to pump up our mental wellness or not? Each of us has that choice. There are brief explanations as to what the equation factors mean:

Self-Appreciation: the ability to assess both our strengths and weaknesses and to appreciate our unique and individual contributions

Resilience: the ability to deal with, recover from, overcome or “bounce forward” from hardship, misfortune, change or shock

Affiliation: the ability to allow ourselves to get close to other people and negotiate give-and-take alliances and friendships and build mutually supportive social networks

Negotiation: the ability to see that we may not have all the answers and to allow ourselves to learn from others, from experience, and alter our beliefs based on new data.

Mental and Physical Exercise: exercising our brain and our body

<http://www.mentalwellness.ws/>

Mental Illness: The Stigma of Silence

By Glenn Close



Mental illness and I are no strangers. From Alex Forrest in *Fatal Attraction* to Blanche Dubois in *A Streetcar Named Desire* to Norma Desmond in Andrew Lloyd Weber's *Sunset Boulevard*, I've had the challenge -- and the privilege -- of playing characters who have deep psychological wounds. Some people think that Alex is a borderline personality. I think Blanche suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder and everyone knows that Norma is delusional.

I also have the challenge of confronting the far less entertaining reality of mental illness in my own family. As I've written and spoken about before, my sister suffers from a bipolar disorder and my nephew from schizoaffective disorder. There has, in fact, been a lot of depression and alcoholism in my family and, traditionally, no one ever spoke about it. It just wasn't done. The stigma is toxic. And, like millions of others who live with mental illness in their families, I've seen what they endure: the struggle of just getting through the day, and the hurt caused every time someone casually describes someone as "crazy," "nuts," or "psycho".

Even as the medicine and therapy for mental health disorders have made remarkable progress, the ancient social stigma of psychological illness remains largely intact. Families are loath to talk about it and, in movies and the media, stereotypes about the mentally ill still reign.

It is an odd paradox that a society, which can now speak openly and unabashedly about topics that were once unspeakable, still remains largely silent when it comes to mental illness. This month, for example, NFL players are rumbling onto the field in pink cleats and sweatbands to raise awareness about breast cancer. On December 1st, World AIDS Day will engage political and health care leaders from every part of the globe. Illnesses that were once discussed only in hushed tones are now part of healthy conversation and activism.

Yet when it comes to bipolar disorder, post-traumatic stress, schizophrenia or depression, an uncharacteristic coyness takes over. We often say nothing. The mentally ill frighten and embarrass us. And so we marginalize the people who most need our acceptance.

What mental health needs is more sunlight, more candor, more unashamed conversation about illnesses that affect not only individuals, but their families as well. Our society ought to understand that many people with mental illness, given the right treatment, can be full participants in our society. Anyone who doubts it ought to listen to Kay Redfield Jamison, a psychiatry professor at Johns Hopkins, vividly describe her own battles with bipolar disorder.

Over the last year, I have worked with some visionary groups to start BringChange2Mind.org, an organization that strives to inspire people to start talking openly about mental illness, to break through the silence and fear. We have the support of every major American mental health organization and numerous others.

I have no illusions that BringChange2Mind.org is a cure for mental illness. Yet I am sure it will help us along the road to understanding and constructive dialogue. It will help deconstruct and eliminate stigma.

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that by the year 2020 mental illness will be the second leading cause of death and disability. Every society will have to confront the issue. The question is will we face it with open honesty or silence?





Health Education Answers

Northern Lakes CMH's web-site is providing the Lilly Health Education Answers (<http://www.northernlakescmh.org/mentalhealth/?id=35>) area to help you understand and manage important health care issues.

Health Educations Answers is an interactive area with information on your health site also includes interactive wellness features. The site begins by helping you focus on your health and well-being, which begins in your home. You will learn about how to live safely and how to promote good health. In addition to information on wellness, Health Education Answers includes information on:

ADHD, Bipolar Disorder, Depression, Diabetes, Schizophrenia, Men's Health, Women's Health, Smoking, Addictions, and Weight Management

There's one fact about wellness you should remember. Your physical and emotional wellbeing both contribute to your quality of life. One of the best ways to improve your quality of life and promote wellness is to prevent sickness. Making a few simple changes can help prevent many illnesses. You can lower your risk for other conditions by having regular health screenings. That way many problems can be found early, when they are easiest to treat. You can also take an active role in preventing medical errors. And staying emotionally healthy can help your physical health as well.

Northern Lakes Community Mental Health is offering this information through their web-site to help you get well and stay well. The more you know about your own health and wellness, the better you can feel.



Did you know?



Holiday Fun Facts

Thanksgiving is not just an American holiday. Canada declared their Thanksgiving holiday in 1879. It is observed on the 2nd Monday in October.

President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed the first national Thanksgiving Day in 1863.

Christmas was declared a national holiday in 1890.

President Franklin Pierce was the first President to decorate the White House Christmas tree.

Since the 1970's, the Kennedy Space Center has made their shuttle landing facility available for emergency landing by Santa Claus should problems develop during his annual visit to children around the world!

Each year, Florida Christmas tree growers produce over 120,000 freshly cut quality trees for the holiday season.

Hanukkah is celebrated every year between the end of November and the end of December. It begins on the 25th day of the Hebrew month of Kislev, which varies from year to year on the Western calendar. The eight day celebration commemorates the rededication of the Jerusalem temple, and the miracle of the sacred lamp that burned for eight days on a single day's oil.

Kwanzaa is a seven day celebration of African culture begun by Dr. Maulana Karenga, a professor at California State University. Celebrated from December 26th to January 1st, Kwanzaa (which means "first fruits of the harvest") is meant to honor African heritage and present day life in America. The holiday ends with a large feast on the final evening called Karamu.