



March 2009

VOLUNTEER VOICE

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"There is no such thing in anyone's life as an unimportant day."

Alexander Woollcott

If you haven't had the chance to look over the new plan...here it is for you. To see the document in it's entirety, please see: http://coastmentalhealth.com/Library/docs/CS_StrategicPlan.pdf



COAST STRATEGIC PLAN 2008-2012

BUILDING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY AND GROWING THE REACH

Mission

Coast promotes recovery of persons with mental illness.

Vision

A Society where Possibilities Become Reality.

Looking Back from 2012...

- Coast will have a leadership team for the future and is strategically addressing Human Resources
- Coast moves from a player to leader in housing for more diverse populations (EPI, aging in place, forensic)
- Coast will have expanded geographically but with growth managed effectively.
- Coast will be known for its leadership in recovery/psychosocial rehabilitation, for innovations and for

expanding the horizons for persons with mental illness

Building Capacity:

- Strengthen HR & Organizational Systems
- Develop Sustainable Funding for long term growth & development
- Respond to needs of culturally diverse clients and advancing culturally appropriate recovery services
- Strengthen communications capacity & clarify our "brand"

Growing the Reach:

- Greater Housing capacity & alternatives
- More Employment & Education Opportunities
- Expanded Community Supports for engagement & integration
- Knowledge & Innovation; developing, evaluation, and advancing best & promising practices & influencing policy

NOTES ON THE SIDE:

Hi there! This is the first newsletter in a year, due to a few factors...I took a break from the world of "recovery" and worked in prevention for a few months. But this should be the first of the return of the regular newsletters! Which makes the article on Recovery (starts on page 3) rather timely, I suppose. I should try to focus on prevention in another newsletter! Please let me know if there is anything you'd like to see in these newsletters...or if you'd like to stop receiving them. Otherwise, I'm glad to be back, and I look forward to working with you, in one form or another, very soon!

-Val

ANNOUNCEMENTS

RESOURCE CENTRE TOURS

March 17, noon-1pm
April 21, noon-1pm

CLUBHOUSE TOURS

March 11, noon-1pm
April 8, noon-1pm

For a Tour, e-mail:

Tours@coastmentalhealth.com
for more information or to re-
serve your spot

OPEN VOLUNTEER POSITIONS

Coast is currently recruiting
volunteers for the following
positions:

- **Punjabi Speaking 1-1 Companion**
- **Signing 1-1 Companion**
- **Life-skills 1-1**
- **Exercise Companions (group and 1-1)**
- **Games Night Leader**

SHARE YOUR STORIES

You are invited to share your
stories of volunteer experiences
at Coast—to be shared in future
issues of the Volunteer Voice.
We'd love to hear what others
are doing!

INTERESTED? WANT MORE INFO?

CONTACT VAL MAYNE
VOLUNTEER/HR COORDINATOR
604-675-2313
valm@coastmentalhealth.com

Update on...



Who Inspires You?

Exerpts from Debbie Sesula's Speech from the Courage Media Launch on January 7, 2009

Being nominated for and then winning the Courage To Come Back Award was a real honour. I remember when I got the phone call of acceptance I cried - I was so shocked.

Then the flurry of activity began with the other recipients up until the gala. What an unforgettable night and experience of celebrating. Celebrating who we are as people, in addition to celebrating all those who loves and supported us along the way.

I was the recipient in the mental health category. So often we hear about the negative aspects of living with a mental illness. The Courage Award turns that around by bringing to light that recovery is possible. My struggle with mental illness took away seven years of my life, but as the clouds started to clear and the sun began to shine, having a mental illness has been a gift. If I had not gone through what I had, I would not have the strength, resilience, compassion, and depth of understanding that I now have because of my experience of living with a mental illness.

Winning the Courage To Come Back Award was also a gift. A gift in recognizing not only what we, as recipients, have gone through and what it took to come back, but also a gift in recognizing and acknowledging the positive aspects and contributions of people facing adversities.

Hearing stories of recovery can and does provide inspiration to others who are facing similar struggles. They see and hear how someone else has conquered adversity and that just might instill a glimmer of hope. Hope to carry on, hope to reach out for help because there is hope and there is help. Where I was and where I am today is like night and day. I climbed out of the darkness into the light. And that climb continues. We, as recipients, are living proof of recovery in action. For me, recovery is an ongoing process.

Let's celebrate together the upcoming 2009 heroes for the Courage to Come Back Awards.

For information on purchasing tickets, see:

<http://www.coastmentalhealth.com/>

RECOVERY...from: Recovery, More than Symptom Reduction

presented by Chris Summerville, D.Min., CPRP; January 2009

"Don't tell me that recovery is not evidence based. I'm the evidence." - unknown

"I remember looking out at the back yard and seeing everybody walking around, and something hit me that life was wonderful. Something just hit me at that moment, and it stood in my mind, all these people are just wasting our lives. The backyard was packed. It was a sunny day. And I said, 'We're wasting our lives sitting in this place. I think from that day on is when I realized that something clicked. That life was worth it. That I needed to work on things. It hit me that I had a problem. I had to trust my judgment and just work at things and feel what inside told me to do. What I felt to get myself better...I decided to quit smoking and start exercising. But before I quit, I started exercising in the back yard. Instead of my walking around smoking, I decided to start jogging around. I concentrated and put my mind together and started jogging once or twice...I finally got, in the behavior treatment unit, a doctor who listened. So every time I asked to lower the meds, he actually did it. It was helping. I was able to run more and somehow I realized the running caught up to my brain that was going so fast. I just couldn't put the two together. Finally, the running actually synchronized the both of them, I

What is Recovery

Recovery is associated with **hope, acceptance and engagement** (Ridgway, 2001); **connectedness** (Ahern & Fisher, 2001; Frese & Davis, 1997); **self-determination and shared decision making** (Deegan, 2007; Deegan & Drake, 2006; Frese & Davis, 1997; Schauer, Everett, & del Vecchio, 2007); **supportive psychiatric relationships** (McGrath & Jarrett, 2004); and **peer support** (Solomon, 2004).

Recovery is a process.... an outlook.... a vision... and a guiding principle.

There is no one shared definition.

Hope is the overarching message.

A cure is not required - nor a return to full functioning, the absence of symptoms, hospitalizations... or being free of medications.

Recovery does not require the acceptance of a diagnosis.

It is the restoration of a meaningful, purposeful and quality life - despite a serious mental illness.

8. Recovery is self directed and self defined.

People in recovery don't generally think nor talk about the term "recovery."

They talk about:

Getting a job; making friends; having faith; living on their own; getting back their lives

Basic Assumptions of a Recovery Focused Mental Health System

A common denominator of recovery is the presence of people who believe in and stand by the person

in need of recovery.

A recovery vision is not a function of one's theory about the causes of mental illness.

Recovery:

-can occur even though symptoms reoccur. The episodic nature of severe mental illness does not prevent recovery.

-changes the frequency and duration of symptoms. involves growth and setbacks, periods of rapid change and little change.

Recovery from the consequences of the illness is

sometimes more difficult than recovering from the illness itself.

Recovery from mental illness does not mean that one was "not really mentally ill"

What Are People Recovering From? (Barriers and Hindrances)

- **The Illness**
- **The Side-Effects of Medication**
- **The Mental Health System**

Non-recovery philosophy; institutionalization and labeling; effects of poor/wrong/coercive treatment/interventions; inadequate supports and services in the community; services which focus on deficits and limitations, not strengths and competence; lack of access to comprehensive, coordinated, and continuous treatment.

- **The Stigma and Discrimination**

Social exclusion and the denial of rights; self stigma; loss of meaningful roles; mis-



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education about mental illness and media sensationalism; lack of opportunities for self-determination, social and community access and interactions; segregation; effects of unemployment, poverty, lack of desirable and affordable housing; violation of privacy and confidentiality.

- **The Learned Helplessness and Hopelessness**

Messages of hopelessness and crushed dreams; implied or spoken barriers such as “you’ll always need medication, or low stress employment” for example, can lead to negative self images and result in immobility toward recovery from psychiatric difficulties.

The Role of Service Providers

To create an environment (“triggers”) in which recovery can take place.

1. What consumers said as to professionals’ impact on their recovery:

Encourage my independent thinking...Treat me in a way that helps my recovery process...Treat me as an equal in planning my services...Give me freedom to make my own mistakes...Treat me like they believe I shape my own future...Listen to me and believe what I say...Look at and recognize my abilities...Work with me to find the resources or services I need...Available to talk to me when I need to talk to someone...Taught me about the medications I am taking...

2. Goal of the mental health system is not hospitalization, containment, symptom basement, but creating an environment in which recovery can take place, leading to life in the community.

3. Environmental factors: Systems Transformation

- Requires a changing paradigm with health care providers.
- Imparts a message of hope and belief that recovery is possible.
- Redesigns services to support recovery.
- Shifts from focusing on symptom reduction to supporting meaningful engagement and roles
- Builds on collaborative partnership.
- Establishes different measures of success including enhanced quality of life.
- Supports risk taking, choice, and allows for opportunities to fail.
- Create a positive culture of healing.
- Build on strengths, goodwill and compassion.
- Not an ‘add on’ service – redesign services with new focus-evaluate different measures.
- Recovery services share four common elements:

- Person-oriented (people not patients)
- Recovery not seen as a ‘service’ but an ‘attitude’
- Person involvement - partnership enterprise;
- Growth potential.

Service users are included in program delivery, system development and evaluation.

Focus is hopeful - look beyond symptom reduction.

Encourages natural support systems:

Include family and friend;

Encourage use of peer supports.

Recovery-oriented services address the range of these features and include services directed at a symptom relief, crisis intervention, case management, rehabilitation, enrichment, rights protection, basic support, and self-help.

Chris Summerville, D.Min., CPRP; Executive Director, Manitoba Schizophrenia Society;
Board Member Mental Health Commission of Canada

HEALTH + ACTIVITY...BALANCING MENTAL HEALTH

Join *Elly Litvak* on Abilities.ca in her forum on Balancing Mental Health!

In her words:

We're all individuals and keeping healthy and balanced is different for everyone. It's my belief that when we share our mental health challenges and strategies for healthy living we help others on their healing journey while breaking down the barriers and stigma of mental illness. What do you do to keep healthy and striving for a balanced life? I look forward to your ideas and experiences of balanced mental health.

See: http://www.abilities.ca/health_activity/2009/03/03/balancing_mental_health/

