

MHSA Advisory Committee MHSA Input  
Barbara Coley  
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Barbara Coley is the Mental Health Director of Community Action Marin (CAM). This is a position which she assumed less than a year ago and is growing into the position. She has been an active participant in the consumer movement since the 1980's. There has been a core group of individuals who have supported this movement over time. Some of the tools which are available to consumers have recently been reintegrated such as Wellness Recovery Action Plans, and Crisis Plans which are being taught and supported at the Enterprise Resource Center (ERC). There has been a collaborative effort with Tod Paler, who manages the Psychiatric Emergency Services.

Some of the work of coordinating the consumer community had been led by Barbara, but in her new role and her move from the ERC to 1108 Tamalpais educating/organizing consumers has become difficult. There is currently is a need to recruit a person/staff at the ERC who can coordinate consumer participation in MHSA planning efforts.

Many important needs are being met at the Enterprise Resource Center. Older adults are make up a large number of the attendees. Other creative programs include: The art gallery, the community garden, which is within walking distance of the ERC, they participate in the Art Walk in San Rafael. Courses in Peer Counseling are offered at various levels;

1. Introduction to Peer Counseling, including understanding diagnoses, how to become an effective listener, and making referrals to resources.
2. Case Management, working with clients to support their recovery, Medi-Cal and Cultural Competence.
3. Abnormal psychology
4. Medication
5. Treatment Planning

Classes are taught by a Marriage and Family Therapist with lived experience and are conducted over the course of 12 weeks, they meet 2 days a week for 1.5 hours each class.

Peer Companions are trained volunteers which accompany isolated individuals in a social activity in the community one day a week.

Outreach Teams function within the community to connect the homeless MI with Odyssey the County Homeless Program.

Advocacy for a pay ladder for Peer Providers has resulted in better wages and opportunities for advancement. Many of the staff of ERC have worked their way from participants to staff members.

Greater communication between County Behavioral Health Staff and ERC would improve consumer knowledge, interest and participation in MHSA and other planning activities.

ERC staff are being trained in Motivational Interviewing techniques and also have access to Relias on line classes.

While ERC is not a peer run organization, CAM is setting up an Advisory Committee of individuals with lived experience which will be advising the board of CAM on Mental Health Programs.

Limitations:

- ERC is in Central San Rafael, it is not accessible to consumers in all of Marin.
- TAY and young adults do not participate in large numbers in ERC.
- Bi-lingual, Bi-cultural staff are in limited supply

Recommendations for consideration:

- Establish a Consumer Affairs liaison, who can coordinate all aspects of consumer culture, education, liaison, advocacy, outreach, training, coordination of participation in planning processes.
- Solicit organizations and businesses which would provide space to establish ERC drop in centers in other areas of the county.
- Create age specific programming and hours to attract younger clients to ERC.
- Create culture specific programming to attract ethnic and sexual minority groups to ERC.