

Consumer Input
September 7, 2016

- One of the members present who is taking peer provider classes reported on a visit to Sunny Hills in San Anselmo and the importance of visiting the services in Marin County. This is part of the requirement in the Peer Provider Curriculum.
- The meeting date changes of the joint Mental Health Advisory Board and AOD Board make it difficult to attend the meetings. The issue about posting the agendas in advance and the Brown Act requirements to do so, was also raised.
- The Advisory Board Applications are on outdated software and are difficult to use, posing a barrier to consumer staff, which would like to apply.

Integrating Peer Providers into the Treatment Team

- The issue of clinical staff being county employees and peer staff being contract employees was raised. The disparity in wages and health benefits, create barriers to obtaining affordable health care for some Peer Providers.
- CAM has reportedly reduced the number of shifts Peer Providers can work and this has created economic hardship for some providers.
- A process of cultural transformation is necessary to successfully integrate Peer Providers as integral and valued members of the treatment team.
- Education on Peer Culture and human diversity was suggested.
- Members are hopeful that the Peer Certification Standards will be adopted at the state level soon.
- Case consultation for Peer Providers was proposed.

Transportation

- Poses a barrier for access to treatment and to participate in community planning processes.
- The van at Enterprise Resource Center is not big enough for many who want to participate in community activities, to participate, resulting in decrease in access to many.
- The lack of availability of services in Novato was raised.
- The challenge of planning to allow time necessary to use Whistlestop was raised and makes accessing services more challenging.

Communication

- There is not a system to advertise Peer Provider Positions, resulting in hiring processes, which are not available to all who might apply.
- How do Consumers organize to ensure their voices are heard? One suggestion was a letter writing class, so that their skills as effective communicators are increased.
- Grant writing workshops for Peers would also support their efforts.
- More on-line resources and communication is suggested.

Housing

- Shelter system closes down in the summertime
- Many rely on non-profit Ritter Center for a place to receive their benefit checks and for shelter but the facility is poorly maintained and may be closing.
- Education for the Board of Supervisors and Community on NIMBYism is suggested.

Information regarding how to participate in Destination Dignity in Washington, DC was requested.