Upcoming Events

CPS Trainings
Macon, GA
March 9 - 13, 16 - 19, 2015

Augusta, GA
June 15 - 19; 22 - 25, 2015

Albany, GA
September 14 - 18; 21 - 24, 2015

Savannah, GA
October 19 - 23; 26 - 29, 2015

Atlanta, GA
December 7 - 11; 14 - 17, 2015

GMHCN Board Meetings
Conference Call
March 12, 2015
July 16, 2015

Macon, GA
May 14, 2015

St. Simons Island, GA
August 31, 2015

Georgia Peer Support Institute
Unicoi State Park
Helen, GA
April 20 - 22, 2015

Epworth by the Sea
St. Simons Island, GA
November 11 - 13, 2015

CPS Continuing Education
Intentional Peer Support
Middle Georgia State College
Macon, GA
May 27 or 28, 2015

Mental Health America Annual
Conference 2015
Hilton Mark Center
Alexandria, VA
June 3 - 5, 2015

9th Annual GA School of Addiction
Studies
Hyatt Regency
Savannah, GA
August 24 - 28, 2015

Georgia Mental Health Consumer
Network Annual Summer
Conference
Recovery Revolution: Taking Back Our Lives
Epworth by the Sea
St. Simons Island, GA
September 1 - 3, 2015

MENTAL HEALTH DAY AT THE CAPITOL 2015 :

“RECOVERY IS GOOD BUSINESS”

On Tuesday, January 20, 2015 upwards of 500 people gathered at the newly-built Liberty Park behind the state capitol for “Mental Health Day at the Capitol.” The rally is sponsored annually by the Behavioral Health Services Coalition which is made up of stakeholders interested in the advocacy for the rights of persons living with behavioral health challenges. The theme of this year’s rally, “Recovery is Good Business.” Why is it good business? It’s good business because 400,000 Georgians remain unable to get insurance coverage and closing this gap would generate $276 million dollars a year in state and local tax dollars. Closing this gap would also create 38,000 new jobs. Ellyn Jeager, Director of Advocacy and Public Policy, Mental Health America of GA, said during the Information Educational Session of Mental Health Day at the Capitol, which started at the Five Points Freight Depot: “Consider the Capitol our home; come often. Tell legislators not just what’s wrong but also what’s right with our recovery......we want quality lives, ending stigma and discrimination. We want to live in recovery. Become an advocate of recovery, the strongest advocate you can be.”

Mental Health Day at the Capitol is an opportunity to meet your local legislator and share your recovery story with him or her—letting them know recovery has allowed you to return to work, return to school, or kept you from visiting emergency psychiatric rooms or crisis centers. MH Day is also an opportunity to hear peers share their personal recovery stories. Brent Hoskinson, CPS, Co-Chair of the BHSC and Chair for Mental Health Day at the Capitol, said the most exciting part of the day for him was hearing others share their personal stories of their recovery journeys. If you haven’t been to Mental Health Day at the Capitol we invite you to join us next year.
GMHCN PARTNERING WITH DBHDD AND GDOC FOR FORENSIC PEER MENTOR PILOT PROJECT

*Forensic Trained CPSs/CAREs to work with ‘returning citizens’ within prison settings*

On January 12 - 16, 2015, 10 CPSs/CAREs spent one week at the Metro Transitional Training Facility, part of the Georgia Department of Corrections Metro Transitional Center facility. No, they weren’t in jail or prison, but they were part of the first class of candidates trained as Forensic Peer Mentors and received the certification of Forensic Peer Mentors. For 40 hours the candidates were trained to support returning citizens with the challenges of transition out of the GDOC system back into the community. The training is a partnership of the Georgia Department of Corrections, the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network, and the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, spearheaded by Dr. Terri Timberlake, Director of Adult Mental Health. The partnership is also part of a pilot project where four of the ten candidates will be hired to work in two prisons, Lee Arrendale State Prison in Alto, Georgia and Phillips State Prison in Buford, Georgia.

What is a Forensic Peer Mentor? (FPM) It is a CPS or CARES specially trained to work within the GDOC’s prison system supporting returning citizens—with behavioral health diagnoses—who will soon transition back into the community. What are some of the things returning citizens will need that the Forensic Peer Mentor can support them with? The returning citizen may need to hear about the lived experience of a person who has been through some of the same situations they have. To have qualified for this training the CPS/CAREs had to have lived experience of being in jail, prison or both. The Forensic Peer Mentor can then share their recovery story to inspire the returning citizen. The FPM can share such things as a WRAP plan with the returning citizen, preparing them for the challenges of reintegrating into the community. Some of the challenges may be ordinary things some of us take for granted: a place to live, a job, money to live on, identification cards, successful interaction with a parole or probation officer; making sure that the returning citizen has access to behavioral health services and medication, if necessary. The FPM can support the returning citizen with signing up for benefits or social services the returning citizen is eligible for. Just becoming reacquainted with family members, particularly after long periods of incarceration, can be traumatic for some returning citizens. The goals are to support the returning citizens reintegrate into society, decrease the recidivism rate with the criminal justice system, and support the returning citizen to become a productive and successful member of society.

The training was conducted by Michael Little, Forensic Peer Specialist Coordinator, who is from Philadelphia, PA. Mr. Little was contracted by DBHDD to provide the curriculum and training. He has lived experience with the criminal justice system and has provided this training for the city of Philadelphia and the state of Hawaii. The hope is that the pilot will be successful and that the work of the Forensic Peer Mentor can be continued throughout the GDOC system, which will trigger more trainings and more FPMs to provide peer support within the prison system.
Help Wanted

DBHDD Adult Consumer Satisfaction Survey Hiring Begins mid-February

Next month peer teams will conduct the annual DBHDD Consumer Satisfaction Survey. GMHCN is hiring temporary part-time peer surveyors and team leaders in every DBHDD region in the state. There are 6 DBHDD regions in Georgia. The applicants must be dependable, have good reading and communication skills and should work well with others. The job pays $60 a day for peer surveyors, and $70 a day for team leaders plus 50c per mile mileage reimbursement. To qualify for either position, candidates must have personally received Mental Health and/or Addictive Disease services.

Candidates for the positions must be able to approach peers at DBHDD adult behavioral health centers and assist them as they fill out surveys. For many, the survey is the peer’s only opportunity to give direct personal opinions regarding the satisfaction with their treatment. Statewide Team Leader Training and surveying will start early March. Surveying will continue until all six regional quotas have been met, which will probably be in early June. If you are interested, please call GMHCN at 404-687-9487 and ask for Nigel and he will assist you with filling out an application for the position or you can complete an application for the position and send it to Nigel Greenaway, GMHCN Consumer Satisfaction Survey Coordinator, 246 Sycamore Street, Ste. 260, Decatur, GA 30030.

CALLING FOR PROPOSALS, CALLING ALL PROPOSALS, CALLING ALL PROPOSALS, CALLING ALL PROPOSALS, CALLING ALL PROPOSALS, CALLING ALL PROPOSALS, CALLING FOR PROPOSALS, CALLING FOR PROPOSALS

The Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network is starting its preparation for the 24th Annual Statewide Consumer Conference to be held at St. Simons Island, GA September 1-3, 2015. The theme for this year’s conference will be centered around “Recovery Revolution: Taking Back Our Lives.” If you have an idea or concept related to this theme and/or Wellness and Recovery, please send us your name and names of the presenters, a proposed title for the workshop, and a brief description of what the workshop will be about. All proposals must be submitted by May 29, 2015 and will be considered by the planning committee. Please email your proposal to Michael Harrell at Michael@gmhcn.org or mail it to his attention at GMHCN, 246 Sycamore Street, Suite 260, Decatur, GA 30030.

“Recovery”

When I think about recovery I think of a new start
Changes of the mind and changes of the heart.
It’s all about beginnings and trying something new,
Taking off the blinders and having a different point of view.
I know change is hard but you’ll find it’s worth the while,
Your self-esteem will grow and you’ll find your smile.
So let peace be your guide and together we will fly,
Above the pain and sorrow if you’ll give it one more try!

by Shanna-Rae M. from SERV (Social, Educational, Recovery, Vocational) Behavioral Health System, Inc., N.J. “Recovery is Sheer Poetry” – March, 2009