

The Pipeline

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Upcoming Events

GMHCN Board Meetings

Face to Face:
Macon, GA
July 14, 2016

St. Simon's Island, GA
August 29, 2016

Helen, GA
October 20 - 21, 2016

CPS Trainings

Augusta, GA
June 13 - 23, 2016

Albany, GA
September 12 - 22, 2016

Savannah, GA
October 17 - 27, 2016

Atlanta, GA
December 5 - 15, 2016

Georgia Peer Support Institute

St. Simon's Island, GA
November 9-11, 2016

GMHCN Annual Conference

Epworth by the Sea
St. Simons Island, GA
August 30 - September 1, 2016

Alternatives

San Diego, CA
September 19 - 23, 2016

Georgia Consumer Council Memorial Service

Central State Hospital
Milledgeville, GA
October 2, 2016

Hope Takes the Stage

On April 16 at The Strand Theater in Marietta hope took the stage with a performance titled *Chronicles of Hope*. The performance was part of a larger recovery symposium held that evening and was a collaboration



between the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network, Cobb - Douglas CSB, the Georgia Parent Support Network, the Georgia Council on Substance Abuse and the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities. Taking the stage was a cast representative of the broad and diverse recovery community in the state. Each peer brought their own skills and abilities and had the opportunity to show what recovery means to them while having their expressions molded into a broader narrative. GMHCN was honored to have so many of its members and staff participate and the performance even included an appearance by recently retired Georgia DBHDD Office of Recovery Transformation Director, Mark Baker, CPS.

The event was directed by Alexia Jones and everyone we've spoken to has raved about the impact it had on them. The performers have spoken about the empowerment and the audience found a new source for hope. In addition to the stage performance that capped off the evening the evening also included artwork by peers and an open dialogue feedback session between the performers and the audience. Hopefully there will be similar performances in years to come. Please, go out and live your recovery and inspire hope in the community around you.

Tips for Promoting Recovery in Your Community

A question that we field a lot here in the offices of the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network is, “what can I do in my community to promote recovery” and the answer is really simple; anything you want! Of course, it depends on your particular community, but in the end you don’t need anyone’s permission to go out and show people that recovery is real and its worth it. Below is a list of things that you can do to help promote recovery in your own community:

- Speak to peers to find and join other recovery oriented events in your area.
- Coordinate with peers to create recovery oriented events like mutual support groups.
- Reach out to your service providers to see if they would be interested in supporting recovery in their community.
- Partner with recovery oriented organizations to participate or contribute to recovery oriented events.
- Reach out to your elected officials and let them know that behavioral health is important to people that they represent.

Remember, do not just promote recovery inside the behavioral health community. Everyone knows someone that has been or will be affected by behavioral health challenges at some point in their life. By going out and showing what we can do and that we are their family, friends and neighbors we can fight to erase stigma within our communities and in turn provide greater community support for behavioral health and recovery oriented services.



THERE'S NOTHING
WORSE THAN
SOMEONE SAYING,
"JUST SNAP
OUT OF IT."

COMING DOWN THE PIPELINE

- The Peer Support, Wellness, & Respite Center in Colquitt County has a part-time position open for a Certified Peer Specialist. If interested send a letter of interest and a resume to nick@gmhcn.org.
- The registration deadline for the GMHCN Annual Summer Conference is August 1st.
- There will be a technical assistance webinar for WHAM trained WHWCS on June 9 @ 11AM. Check the website or call for more information.
- The Peer Mentoring Project has an opening for a part-time peer mentor in North Georgia. If interested please send a letter of interest and resume to Gena Garner at peermentoring@gmhcn.org

The RESPECT Institute of Georgia Changes Minds and People



The RESPECT Institute of Georgia is a partnership between the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network, the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities and Mental Health America of Georgia. RESPECT is the brain child of Joel Slack who started the program in Missouri at the Fulton State Hospital which was a forensic unit in their system.

In the GMHCN office RESPECT is staffed by Jen Banathy (pictured below) and Denise Hardy with support from Shelia Corn. The Pipeline sat down with Jen Banathy who is the RESPECT Institute of Georgia Organizational Development Coordinator and has been working on the project for going on 4 years to ask her about her experiences and the experiences of others with RESPECT.

The goal of RESPECT is to empower peers to tell their recovery story in a way that is impactful for audiences and allows peers to influence policy and opinions of people throughout the state. Jen says that one of her favorite parts is the graduation at the end of the training; “the transformation.” She notes that on the first day of training she will see peers that may have “a lot of anxiety, apprehension, uncertainty.” Then after the third day people “are standing taller; their eyes are brighter and they’re speaking more loudly and clearly...I see transformation take place.” Additionally, she’s heard people say that “they understood recovery before the RESPECT Institute, but they didn’t really feel recovery until after going through the RESPECT Institute.” Jen herself was a product of this transformation. After graduating from the 3rd RESPECT Institute class in the state of Georgia she said that she felt empowered. It “allowed her to reflect on [her] own story and be comfortable with [her] story with no shame or guilt.”

RESPECT Institute graduates leave the training and go back to their communities armed with their story. Jen says that when people hear the stories from RESPECT graduates then “people are able to connect with our humanity; they’re able to look us in the eye and to see us as a person...We are educating our communities about what it means to be diagnosed...to be in the hospital...what recovery means to us...that we are moving forward with our lives” and they leave their audiences with words of wisdom.

RESPECT graduates now speak at meetings of DBHDD, The Georgia Behavioral Health Planning and Advisory Council, at service providers and wherever they are asked and is appropriate. There are 24 trainings throughout the state annually and over 700 peers have gone through the training in Georgia and those graduates have spoken to over 85,000 people. The trainings are targeted to groups of 6-10 people and are funded by DBHDD. If you are interested in attending or hosting a training please call Denise Hardy at (404) 687 - 8374 or email her at: denise@gmhcn.org.



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Sam Rapier to Give TED Talk

Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network's Sam Rapier, CPS will be delivering a TED talk at the 9th Annual System of Care Conference to be held on July 26-28 in Stone Mountain, GA. TED talks are the latest fad to hit the world of education and seminars. TED, which stands for Technology, Entertainment and Design has really become a format for public speaking that allows innovative individuals to present their ideas in a format that is both friendly to them and the audience. Each TED talk is about 18 minutes long. The idea being that it is "long enough to be serious, but short enough to hold people's attention" according to TED curator Chris Anderson.

Sam, who is the training coordinator for the Georgia Certified Peer Specialist Project, will be speaking about art as a form of recovery. Anyone that has attended a training with Sam or has visited the GMHCN offices in the past 2 years has undoubtedly seen Sam's work. He works in multiple mediums including sculpture and on canvas. Art as a form of recovery is also something he makes an effort to incorporate into his trainings, for the CPS project, by giving the attendees the opportunity to create art based on their recovery. Those individual pieces of art are then put together to create a larger piece of artwork for the training. Sam's talk will be on the first day of the conference during the opening keynote session.