

THE PIPELINE

SINCE 1991

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2020 GEORGIA EVENTS

GMHCN Board Meetings
Face-to-Face
Macon, May 18
St. Simons Island, August 17

Conference Call
July 13

Board Retreat
November 5-6

Certified Peer Specialist Trainings

2020 Trainings
Augusta, May 11-21
Statesboro, July 13-23
Columbus, Sep. 21-Oct. 1
Atlanta, Dec. 7-17

Certified Peer Specialist Elevating Language CEU Forum

Decatur, June 13

Whole Health Action Management

Duluth, June, 2020

Georgia Peer Support Institutes

Helen, May 5-7
St. Simons Island, Nov. 11-13

GMHCN 29th Annual Summer Conference

St. Simons Island
August 18-20

5th Annual Ken Whiddon Memorial Golf Tournament

Jekyll Island Golf Club
October, 2020

Training dates and locations for Trauma-Informed Care and other trainings are being updated as we receive information from public health officials, and adapt to online delivery where appropriate.

Please visit gmhcn.org or call 800-297-6146 for more information.

FIFTY YEARS OF COMMUNITY FRIENDSHIP

Since Community Friendship, Incorporated (CFI) first began providing psychosocial rehabilitation program services in 1973, much has changed in the world, and in the realm of mental health services. Not only have there been five new editions published of the “Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders”, the foundation of treatment and diagnosis in the clinical services profession, there have also been significant changes in the way public behavioral health funds are distributed. So too has there been a sea change in public perception about mental illness, and the opportunities available to people living with mental health concerns. Throughout these changes CFI has remained an anchor of the mental health recovery community in Atlanta, and a national model for the integration of peer support into recovery-oriented mental health services.



Jean Toole, CFI President & CEO

At a time when many organizations are experiencing discomfort as a result of changes that are being enacted or considered at the state and national level, *The Pipeline* asked CFI to share about how it has thrived through the many changes it has experienced over the years. Their response, which included a lot of time and resources, demonstrated their organization’s unofficial motto: “When in Doubt, Do the Friendliest Thing”. What we learned is that CFI has been able to be so resilient as an organization because it embraces the values it promotes in its services—a willingness to grow and change while remaining true to itself.

And CFI has grown tremendously through the years. An abbreviated list of the services CFI currently provides includes psychosocial rehabilitation program services, vocational rehabilitation, supported employment, residential services at nine locations, trainings, homeless outreach and case management, peer support, intensive case management, whole health and wellness, and community transition planning.

According to Jean Toole, the President and CEO of CFI, the organization has been able to grow into a comprehensive provider of recovery-based mental health services by “staying focused on what we do, and staying true to our vision. We are here to serve people, and help them have a better life. We just keep doing the work that is important to the people we serve. We are fortunate to have such a well-rounded network of resources, from staff to community partners, to the ability to diversify our funding opportunities. We have grown tremendously as an organization, incorporating new technologies, new ideas, and increasing efficiency in our workflow processes. What has not changed is our primary focus, which is always the person sitting in front of us, who has come to us for support in achieving a better life. CFI believes that keeping our focus on the people we serve will enable us to continue the work we do.”

When GMHCN launched the Certified Peer Specialist Project training in 2001, CFI began sponsoring participants, and from that very first training, Certified Peer Specialists have been an important part of the CFI workforce. Today, approximately 23% of CFI’s workforce is people with lived experience recovering from behavioral health concerns. Sherry Jenkins Tucker, GMHCN’s Executive Director, is very appreciative of the support GMHCN has received from CFI over the years, saying “the early and successful introduction of Certified Peer Specialists at Community Friendship was very beneficial to the development of the peer support workforce in Georgia. Our state is recognized as a leader and innovator in peer support, and through its early embrace of recovery-focused services, Community Friendship helped make that possible. It is always an honor to be able to collaborate with CFI. Jean Toole’s leadership, and friendship, are very important to me personally, as well as to GMHCN. We are all better off because of the work of CFI.”

Local, state, and national leaders agree. Throughout the years, CFI has received many accolades recognizing the value of the work they do, including the 2018 Behavioral Health Exceptional Recovery-Oriented Service Award from Georgia’s Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities. “We are proud of the recognition our programs have received,” says Toole, “but our real pride comes from seeing the impact we have, working together, in the lives of the people we serve.”

Learn more about CFI at www.communityfriendship.org



GEORGIA RESOURCES

The Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network typically uses this space to describe one of our projects or trainings. However, we know from our conversations with peers around the state that access to other resources is becoming increasingly critical to maintaining our wellness through these challenging times. With this issue we are providing contact information with phone numbers for resources so that those who receive the printed version of *The Pipeline* and have limited access to the internet might still be able to get or maintain access to supports and services.

NATIONAL RESOURCES

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
1-800-273-8255

GEORGIA PEER SUPPORT

Peer2Peer Warm Line
888-945-1414, 24 hours daily
www.peer2peer.center
<https://www.gmhcn.org/online-wellness-resources>

CARES Warm Line
844-326-5400, 8:30am-11:00pm daily
<https://gasubstanceabuse.org/cares-warm-line/>

GEORGIA SUPPORTED HOUSING STATEWIDE

<https://dbhdd.georgia.gov/residential-support-services>

DBHDD Region 1
Toll Free: 877-217-4462

DBHDD Region 2
Toll Free: 866-380-4835

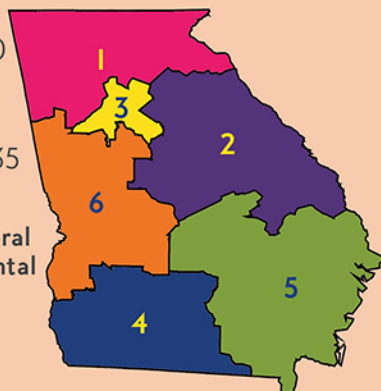
DBHDD Region 3
Toll Free: 404-244-5056

DBHDD Region 4
Toll Free: 877-683-8557

DBHDD Region 5
Toll Free: 912-303-1670

DBHDD Region 6
Toll Free: 706-565-7835

Department of Behavioral
Health and Developmental
Disabilities Regional
Resource Locator Map



COMMUNITY RESOURCES

United Way of Georgia
For access to local resources across the state
Dial 211 from anywhere in the state
<https://www.unitedway.org/local/united-states/georgia>

Georgia Crisis and Access Line
Access to behavioral health support across the state
800-715-4225 24/7/365
mygal.com

Georgia COVID-19 Hotline:
For information about the coronavirus in Georgia
844-442-2681
<https://dph.georgia.gov/>

Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning
For access to child support and care services
888-442-7735
<http://dec.al.ga.gov/>

Electronics Benefits Transfer Questions
888-421-3281
<https://www.connectebt.com/gaebtclient>

Georgia Department of Human Services
Family and individual support including food stamps,
Medicaid, TANF
Toll Free: 877-423-4746
<https://dhs.georgia.gov/>

Salvation Army of Georgia
Emergency financial, housing, and homeless services
770-441-6200
<https://salvationarmygeorgia.org/>

Lions Lighthouse Vision and Hearing Services
404-325-3630
<https://lionslighthouse.org/>



THE PATH TO WELLNESS

How we got to where we are, in our own words.

What challenges were you facing before you discovered peer support?

Many of my challenges started when I was much younger. I thought living with a mental diagnosis in the real world meant my life was over. I was so lost and felt so worried before I discovered peer support. It teaches me that life has purpose and recovery is possible through all challenges.

What helped you move forward?

Support of my family and friends and the staff at Community Friendship, Inc. My peers at the CFI Peer Support Program who have poured support into me. I try to stay focused and look beautiful each day in my life, which can sometime be a struggle. I must not let life set me back. My biggest help was to write poetry, and helping others both near and far. I also like to give back to my fellow peers, who keep me motivated when I am down!

What is life like for you now?

I still face some challenges dealing with my mental health but I am still as normal as others, even while living in recovery! I am determined to fight for my life in recovery for myself and my peers in the CFI Peer Support Program.

What keeps you hopeful?

I stay hopeful by attending the Community Friendship Peer Support Program and being among my peers, because they treat me just like family! We all have something special inside and to see my peers smile and motivated each day. When I see someone in need, I enjoy helping others. I also enjoy drawing and painting pictures, writing poems, jewelry making, crocheting, and other arts and crafts.



Stacy Ann

THE 5TH ANNUAL KEN WHIDDON MEMORIAL GOLF TOURNAMENT POSTPONED

The Golf Tournament originally scheduled for May 2nd has been postponed until it is safe for us all to be together again. We are tentatively planning to gather in October. We hope to see you then. Please visit our website for the most up-to-date information.



Online Wellness @Georgia's Peer Support, Wellness, and Respite Centers

We know how important staying connected is for those of us with mental health concerns, so we are providing online wellness activities through Zoom. Not familiar with zoom? Please visit the gmhcn.org website, or call us at at 888.945.1414 for support or help with Zoom. We are here for you.

Monday

10am-11am The New Normal peer-led mutual support group
1pm-2pm Peer Connections wellness activity
2:30pm-3:30pm Double Trouble in Recovery

Tuesday

10am-11am The New Normal peer-led mutual support group
1pm-2pm Peer Connections wellness activity
2:30pm-3:30pm Y'All Recovery All Recovery

Wednesday

10am-11am The New Normal peer-led mutual support group
1pm-2pm Peer Connections wellness activity
2:30pm-3:30pm Double Trouble in Recovery

Thursday

10am-11am The New Normal peer-led mutual support group
1pm-2pm Peer Connections wellness activity
2:30pm-3:30pm Y'All Recovery All Recovery

Friday

10am-11am The New Normal peer-led mutual support group
1pm-2pm Peer Connections wellness activity
2:30pm-3:30pm Double Trouble in Recovery

ZOOM meeting ID:
341-153-3354
Dial-In Number
1-646-558-8656



“HOPE”

is the thing with feathers—
That perches in the soul—
And sings the tune without the words—
And never stops—at all—

And sweetest—in the Gale—is heard—
And sore must be the storm—
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm—



Emily Dickinson, 1861

I've heard it in the chilliest land—
And on the strangest Sea—
Yet, never, in Extremity,
It asked a crumb—of Me.

A note from Sherry

When we first started putting this issue of *The Pipeline* together back in December, we had no idea that a public health crisis was just around the corner that would transform nearly every aspect of our lives—our ability to go to work or school, to receive or provide peer support, to break bread with the people who matter in our lives, to participate in those important milestones that mark our lives, including graduation ceremonies, weddings, and even funerals. Less momentous but still important occasions that add meaning to our daily lives and connect us with others are equally disrupted: Attending a religious gathering, getting a haircut, or picking out a birthday card. Going out for ice cream. Going out at all.

So we are now even more grateful that our friends at Community Friendship agreed to be featured in this issue. When we asked them about their ability to continue providing services and supports over 50 years in Atlanta, we were thinking about potential changes in funding that were being considered at the state and national level. We were not thinking about a pandemic. But the answers they provided give us assurance as we move forward through these uncertain times. The best way for us to continue doing what we do in the future is to continue doing what we do best right now, when and as we are able. We are improvising, and innovating, as we have for nearly thirty years—just at a much more rapid pace than we are accustomed to. Just a month ago, online wellness activities were not even on our radar, but today they are providing critical peer support and connectivity.

So much change so quickly has been disruptive for us at GMHCN, as it has been for Georgia's peer community, and the whole state. We hope that everyone will regularly visit our website or Facebook to receive updates on our training opportunities and events, including our Annual Summer Conference. And remember that our Peer2Peer Warm Line is open 24 hours a day, every day of the year, at 888-945-1414. Please stay connected. I look forward to seeing you all soon.