

THE PIPELINE

SINCE 1991

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2019 EVENTS

GMHCN Board Meetings Face-to-Face Meetings

Macon, January 23
Macon, May 16
St. Simons Island, August 19

Board Retreat
October 17-18

Conference Calls
March 21 and July 18

2019 Certified Peer Specialist Trainings

Macon, Feb. 4-14
Augusta, May 13-23
Albany, July 15-25
Columbus, Sept. 23-Oct. 3
Atlanta, Dec. 2-12

Mental Health Day at the Capitol

Atlanta, February 8

Recovery Symposium

Jonesboro, February 23
Ludowici, April 6

CARES Connect

Flower Branch, Feb. 25

2019 CPS Continuing Education Forum

Macon, April 9, 10, and 11

Georgia Consumer Council

Spring Meeting, Decatur,
April 15
Central State Hospital
Memorial Ceremony,
Milledgeville, October 6

Georgia Peer Support Institutes

Unicoi State Park,
Helen, May 7-9
St. Simons Island,
November 13-15

Alternatives Conference

Washington, D.C., July 7-11

Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network Annual Summer Conference

St. Simons Island
August 20-22

CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR CERTIFIED PEER SPECIALISTS A NEW YEAR WITH NEW OPPORTUNITIES

The beginning of the new calendar year means many different things to different people, but for Georgia's Certified Peer Specialists, it means it is time to begin planning for continuing education for 2019.

As Georgia's Certified Peer Workforce (including Certified Peer Specialists, Certified Peer Specialists—Addictive Disease (usually known as Certified Addiction Recovery Empowerment Specialists, or CARES), Certified Peer Specialists-Youth, and Certified Peer Specialists-Parent) has grown, the need has developed for a uniform way of tracking continuing education to monitor the status of Certified Peer Specialists in or entering the workplace. To that end, the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network, the Georgia Council on Substance Abuse, and the Georgia Parent Support Network, under the leadership of the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, have been working together

to build a streamlined and comprehensive system for monitoring Continuing Education Units that serves employers and Certified Peer Specialists well, while not overburdening the nonprofit agencies that will support the system through data entry and administration.

According to Tony Sanchez, Director of the Office of Recovery Transformation at the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, "The vitality of Georgia's Certified Peer workforce can only be maintained over the long-term if all of us with a CPS credential, including myself, continue to enrich and update our knowledge and skills. Best practices change over time, and dynamic continuing education programs help to ensure that Georgia's peers are always receiving the best possible peer support."

To support Certified Peer Specialists in securing the required annual 12 Continuing Education Units, GMHCN has expanded its content on the GMHCN.org website to include additional online CEU resources, and starting February 20, 2019 will begin providing educational webinars that offer CEU credit. The first webinar will address Certified Peer Specialist employment, including how to prepare for, secure, and maintain meaningful employment, among the top concerns identified by peers at the Annual Summer Conference and at CPS Listening Forums held across the state in the summer of 2018. This is in addition to the annual Spring CEU Training, which will be held in Macon again in 2019 (April 9, 10, & 11), the CEU opportunities available at the Annual Summer Conference, and other sources.



For more information on Certified Peer Specialist Continuing Education, please visit <https://www.gmhcn.org/cps-continuing-education>, call the office in Decatur at 404-687-9487, or email ceu@gmhcn.org.





TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE: TRANSFORMING PEER SUPPORT SERVICES

Since the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network first brought Trauma-Informed Care trainings to Georgia through a grant from the John and Polly Sparks Foundation in 2016, Georgia's Certified Peer Workforce has become increasingly more aware of the prevalence and impacts of trauma, and better able to advocate for trauma-informed care in the places where they serve Georgia's peers.

The trainings, which have been funded through the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities since the fall of 2017, provide a wealth of new information and for many, a fresh perspective on the role trauma plays in our mental and physical wellbeing.

According to Roslind Hayes, CPS, CARES, who is the lead training facilitator, "Most everyone comes to the Trauma-Informed Care training with their personal understanding of how they have experienced trauma, or how they perceive trauma to be experienced in the lives of people they know, and those tend to feel like very singular experiences, because of how deeply personal they are. And while the details of each traumatic experience are unique, the symptoms of trauma are very much universal, though they may not all be realized by each person who has a traumatic experience. Learning to recognize and respond to the effects of trauma, learning how to listen to another person's trauma story, is very empowering. We learn that we can recover from trauma, and that our systems of care can continue to learn how to better support people who have experienced trauma."

Pam Brooks-Crump, CPS, CPS-AD, who is the coordinator for the Trauma-Informed Care trainings, is especially impressed with the power of language in providing trauma-informed care. According to Pam, "Just changing the question from "What's wrong with you" to "What happened to you" is incredibly powerful. It takes the blame away from the person who experienced the trauma. Whether it is an assault, or a car accident, or a military experience, or whatever, the person who is managing the effects of trauma doesn't have to defend their feelings anymore. When we give people the space to share their truth about what happened to them, a whole world of opportunity for healing and growth opens up."

Each Trauma-Informed Care training is open to all of Georgia's Certified Peer Specialists, including CPS-Mental Health, CPS-Addictive Disease, CPS-Youth, and CPS-Parent. Each training is limited to 15-20 participants, and lasts for two days. For more information on Trauma-Informed Care, please visit <http://www.gmhcn.org/trauma-informed-care>.

What happened to you?

Pam Brooks-Crump, Claudia Hamilton, and Roslind Hayes take a break from a Trauma-Informed Care training held at Living Proof Recovery in Rome in November 2018.



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?

I would have to say some of my biggest challenges before I discovered recovery through peer support was the unbelief that I had in myself. I had accepted on a really deep level that I would always be in and out of jail, prisons, and various mental health facilities. I truly did not believe that recovery was an option for me. As much as I wanted to be present as a father and as much as I wanted to live a life of fulfillment I truly did not know what that looked like. Hopelessness was a pretty good description of how I felt most of the time.



Hank Arnold, CPS-AD,
Executive Director, Coweta FORCE

What helped you move forward?

There were so many things that contributed to my wellness. The 12-step community played a major role in my acceptance of self and willingness to move into a course of action I'd never been open to before. It was around this group of recovering people that I learned the value of vulnerability and connection to others through that identification. I was able to take what I learned in that fellowship and apply it in a church community where I became very active and connected with others. Also, being of service in the places that served me allowed me to live out my gratitude, meet and love people right where they were. My family was a huge support as well. Learning how to be a father and be present allowed me the opportunity to show up for my children in a way I'd never known before. As I continue to show up to my responsibilities and walk through the door of opportunities that opened along my path I gained something that I'd lost along the way, self-respect.

What is life like for you now?

I am immersed in a faith and 12-step community. I'm a devoted husband and father of five. I'm a recovery advocate and Director of Coweta FORCE, a Recovery Community Organization that is peer-founded, lead and supported. We offer peer-based recovery supports and connections to all community members that have been affected by addiction. Recovery is more than not picking up a drink or a drug. Recovery is a way of life and a spiritual freedom that requires maintenance and awareness. Being plugged into the recovery community allows me to maintain my recovery while taking part in someone else's. This is truly the best life I've ever lived.

What keeps you hopeful?

I've been afforded the opportunity to live a life that is surrounded by hope. Today I am an asset in all areas of my life. I get to interact and be in relation with my peers on a daily basis. I have a family that supports my efforts and vision. I get to instill positive characteristics and set an example for my family that is built on integrity. I have the opportunity to be a part of a national recovery movement and I get to see recovery, wellness, and connection take place every single day. I know there's more healing and restoration to take place for myself and others in this process. I'm looking forward to seeing my community get well.



Learn More About How Certified Peer Specialists are Impacting Georgia's Communities

Hank is far from alone in the work he is accomplishing in Newnan. There are peer support organizations emerging all across the state, from Divas Who Win in Athens, to Rise to Recovery in Decatur, all the way down to Face to Face Recovery in Jesup. The Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities has put together a map and a list of all of Georgia's Addiction Recovery Support Centers, Family Support Organizations, Transitional Youth Centers, and GMHCN's own Peer Support, Wellness, and Respite Centers.

Learn more at <https://dbhdd.georgia.gov/peer-recovery-information-support-centers>

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YOUR ART HERE

The Pipeline is seeking creative work from peers to include in future editions. We are looking for poetry, photography, drawings, paintings, or any other personal expression you may want to share with others.

Questions and digital submissions may be sent to info@gmhcn.org, and copies of original artwork may be mailed to The Pipeline at the address above.



A note from Sherry

I am pleased to announce we have a new logo for the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network, shown here, which was unveiled online on January 1, 2019. A group of designers competed to have their designs selected as finalists, which were then opened up to an online vote by peers, allies, and supporters across the state, as well as GMHCN employees, who were also encouraged to cast a vote.

I'm really very pleased with the new logo. I think it captures the spirit of the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network. It reflects the diversity, strength, resilience, and hope that are a part of everything we do here. Chris Johnson, GMHCN's Director of Communications, who shepherded the logo from concept to completion, is equally delighted, and he believes "the new logo will serve us really well for years to come. The stylized G, incorporating the heart shape, is a pretty straightforward message-We love all Georgians."

Thanks to all of the peers, allies, supporters, and employees who voted for the winning logo, and helped to move us forward in our efforts to reach all Georgians with the message that recovery and wellness are possible for everyone.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sherry".

