



# The Mental Health Recovery Roundup

## Mental health recovery is for everyone.

Volume 3, Issue 4 - 2010

*"The task is not to become normal. The task is to take up your journey of recovery and to become who you are called to be"*

- Patricia E. Deegan

The King County Mental Health, Chemical Abuse and Dependency Services Division (MHCADSD), in partnership with the mental health agencies in King County, and the people who participate in services, is building a recovery oriented system.

In 2005, the King County Council passed an ordinance requiring the mental health system in King County to better support the recovery of the people who live with mental health challenges in our community.

The Council further directed MHCADSD to implement the 2005-2010 King County Recovery Plan. The Recovery

Roundup is provided to give the community updates about our progress.

We try to incorporate the fundamental components of recovery in our initiatives, including empowerment, peer support, strengths-based, holistic, non-linear, person-centered, self-direction and individualized, respect and responsibility, and, perhaps most important, hope and resilience.

Mental health recovery is about wholeness-not just getting meds in check and symptoms reduced. To reach recovery and healing, each person with mental illness must be cared for as a "whole person," which means addressing the needs of mind, body and spirit.

Recovery is not the same as "cure" and getting the "old life" back. Recovery is a healed life with mental ill-

ness - a new "normal" with new direction and different dreams.

As people continue on their recovery journey, many report their symptoms decrease and they learn ways to cope with remaining symptoms.



System change for recovery is a work in progress. 2011 will be a year to "take a deep breath", review our accomplishments, measure our progress, and turn to planning for the future.

To celebrate the completion of the 2005-2010 King County Recovery Plan, this issue of the Recovery Roundup includes 3 recovery stories of people who



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live in King County. Each person lives with the challenges of mental illness and is in recovery. They've built a life that is more than their illness.

Going forward, we'll need everyone's voice and wisdom to realize our vision for recovery. We'll keep you posted as opportunities are developed.

Thank you for your support!

## 2010 - A Focus upon Employment as a key to recovery



Making a contribution, meeting new people, and having a reason to get up in the morning can open the door to recovery.

People who have a mental illness and work report feeling better about themselves, having fewer symptoms, and more money in their pocket.

King County addressed employment in different ways to encourage the system to help people get back to work. Consumers and providers talked about what the barriers were and identified strategies to address them. Approaches included:

- "Recovery: Make it work" An employment

conference for consumers and those who support them .

- Shifting incentives for employment to the number of people getting jobs
- Providing 2 retreats for agency senior management about work
- A recovery retreat for psychiatric practitioners

- Setting a long range goal for 40% of people who receive services having jobs.
- Recovery Celebrations and the Recovery Poster Art contest include the key of employment
- Involving consumers on fidelity review teams for Supported Employment

# Recovery Stories - The lived experience of Recovery

My name is Julie. I am not bitter about my illness. I call it a blessing and a curse. A blessing because it has taught me so much about life and a curse because it has caused so much pain.

A blessing is that while I was always compassionate, having been through all that I have been through in the last 8 years, I find I am able to be patient with most everyone and everything.

A curse is that I have been through two major bipolar episodes with psychotic features and both times have had to completely rebuild my life from scratch.

Sometimes I find myself holding the breath of my psyche. I find myself waiting for that next time I find myself with another broken relationship and in shambles mentally, physically and emotionally. My biggest trigger is LOVE!

Both episodes occurred at the end of marriages when things were breaking down and I was too stressed out and overloaded with the stimuli around me. I was not diagnosed right away. The psychiatric nurse practitioner treating me did not tell my parents right away what a diagnosis was but just said that we'll wait and see the course of her illness and be able to better say as it progresses.

After a couple of months of being on medications used to treat bipolar I disorder she finally told my parents that it looked like my diagnosis was bipolar with psychotic features. A diagnosis is necessary for communicating quickly to other providers what you have experienced in the past but could change over time. Mine may change but she waited and told my parents what she could. I thank her for the good care

that I received and for her treatment of my parents as caring family members.

My parents took care of me 24/7 for two months after both the episodes I had. I wanted to go to the hospital the second time but they came and got me after 4 days and I was so delusional that I left. Even with them in my corner, I have been on several insurances and tossed in the mix of the system.

I have been to provider after provider and on and off Medicaid. I know the difficulties I have been through and I only hope our system continues to maintain and not decrease the services available.

I became a peer counselor 2 years ago. I worked for 6 months part-time, got my certification and now I work full time for a non-profit mental health agency in Seattle.

I have been able to find a life that I can be proud of. In my late 30s I have an apartment of my own, work in a rewarding job and my confidence, that has taken many blows over the years, is finally rising. A picture of recovery is not the same for everyone. I have friends who live on disability and work or others who are not able.

Recovery is not a linear path. It is a circle where the beginning and end meet to complete the circle. No matter where on the circumference, whether you are closer to your version of health or farther than you've ever been before, you are a whole person the entire time.

My boyfriend and I recently broke up. I was so afraid that I would get sick

but I have never been sick while on meds. I worked with my provider to increase my medications, took a few days off work when things were rough and I have been doing just fine. It's only been two months and we are working on decreasing my meds again. I see a counselor once a week, my provider once a month and counsel with peers (who are not clients) when I am feeling low. I am mending well with the aid of the great health care that I now receive.

We are losing funding for our programs in Washington state and I worry about jobs and the lives of the people that we serve. What will happen to the imperfect system that I have struggled through? How difficult will it be for those that need help in the years to come? Being a part of and navigating the system for me has been difficult enough.

Anyone reading the Recovery Roundup is probably someone who would agree with my sentiment. The question is how do we get others to turn their heads and see the system as what it is. That I, just as easily as the next person, could've ended up on the streets, in jail and costing the system much more money in the long run with a life much less fulfilling and satisfying.

All I know is to not be afraid to tell your story and to educate people on what the facts are. Like they say, show this to one friend who voted differently than you and discuss with them the ideas and facts about mental illness and our current system.

Change at the grassroots level is one individual at a time!



Recovery stories spark hope that can give people the courage to take their first steps on their recovery journey. These stories are testament to the strengths and resiliencies of people who live with the challenge of mental illness. We are grateful to the authors for sharing their stories.

My name is Diana Cooper. I am a Peer Support specialist & a Consumer of Mental Health & thank you for reading my story.

Starting at the age of 5 I suffered many traumas in my life and as a result of those traumas I was in and out of jail from the time I was 15. I quit school. I was addicted to psychoactive drugs, continuing to go in & out of jail and became homeless until 1998.

In 1998 I decided that I really needed help because what I was doing was not working. So, I went to the DSHS office and was found eligible for GAU and ADATSA.

Through this program, I went to inpatient treatment at Cedar Hills Alcohol

& Drug treatment center (no longer in operation.) During the time I spent at Cedar Hills I continued to have the nightmares and suicidal Ideations even after the first 28 days of being clean & sober. I spoke to psychiatrist and was diagnosed with Post traumatic stress disorder and major depression and started medication; which worked. But I could not have done it without the GAU ADATSA.

After the 128 day stay at Cedar hills treatment center I moved in to a clean & sober housing program through Pioneer Human Services here in Seattle. I continued Mental Health care & out patient treatment for the Substance abuse and taking medications for the PTSD night terrors. After 1 yr in clean & sober housing I moved in to King County Housing for disabled

adults. Through this program I was able to afford my housing with the GAU benefits. I was no longer homeless.

Through the support & dedication of the counselors in Mental Health & Substance Abuse programs I was able over come barriers that prevented me from having a quality of life. Though their support today I am a Certified Peer Counselor, I volunteer for The Warm line. I own my own home & I am in college going for the AAS degree in Human and Social Services along with Chemical Dependency counseling.

*"I could not have done it without the help from these programs."*



My recovery story began when my mother suspected that I was mentally ill, and I went to see a psychiatrist. I did have a problem, but that psychiatrist only thought I had suffered from depression, because that's all I told him about. So I didn't get the right diagnosis. I mixed the anti-depressants he gave me with alcohol, which resulted in me ending up in front of a judge. The judge read the police report and ordered me to have a psychiatric evaluation.

But my recovery didn't really begin until I finally stopped drinking. And once I stopped drinking, I was able to hear all the ways that people with mental illness act--and I decided that I wasn't going to be that way...that I

was going to learn to act like someone who didn't have a mental illness. Of course that isn't really what recovery is, but it was a start. I didn't know then that recovering would take me 15 years of dealing with one symptom or problem after another...and all the financial, relationship, personality and other problems that my mental illness had brought along with it or had been with me from the beginning.

I eventually learned that my alcoholic father had caused me problems which were very difficult to overcome and understand, before I could approach the world in a healthier way.

My strengths, my intelligence, my

charm and my help from my family only enabled me to avoid the worst effects of being mentally ill. In the end, until I began to really recover, my strengths and blessings made it more difficult to get help, because those strengths let me avoid facing my problems.

My recovery really began when I was able to go to work and face the world as if I were able to take care of myself without help. But none of us can live in the world without help from others. I began another step in my recovery when I accepted assistance from others. In turn I'm now helping other people who are facing the same challenges.



# A big THANK YOU! To the wonderful folks at Third Runway Café!

The Third Runway Café is a job opportunity and training center for Navos Mental Health Solutions. Maria Marez manages the café and catering offered by the Third Runway Café. She, together with her staff, catered many of the recovery events in 2010, including:

- 6 Recovery Celebrations,
- 2 recovery trainings for non-clinical staff, called, "Bringing Hope to Every Interaction"
- 3 week-long Peer Counselor Trainings

- 2 recovery retreats for agency executives
- a recovery retreat for psychiatric practitioners
- A 3-day Wellness Recovery Action Plan training
- The "Recovery—Make it Work" conference

The food was excellent and the service was friendly, reliable, and skilled. We're grateful! For more information about the Third Runway Café and Catering,

contact Maria Marez at 206-439-2593 or maria.marez@navos.org



# Valley Cities' First Client Art Show – Recovery at Work

More than 20 participants, ranging from age 8 to elderly, displayed their work at the first ever Valley Cities Client Art Show on October 14, 2010. The event was well attended by the community, clients, and staff. Many of the artists came to see the art on display saying it was a positive and affirming experience. Many said it was the first time their art had ever been publicly displayed. In addition to paintings, fabric art, jewelry, drawing, collage, and sculpture, there were poems that were read aloud during the event and a performance was put on by a talented teenage girl. The featured exhibit highlighted the original artwork of Valera Corliss, winner of the 2010 King County Mental Health Recovery Poster contest.



The art show helped the agency and community partners see how important art is in the recovery process.

The various forms of expression allow people to have numerous voices and opportunities with which to express themselves, allowing for a more fulfilling and complete recovery. Because this event was so successful, Valley Cities is planning more exciting and creative, recovery focused events in the future.



# 2010 Employment in Recovery Retreats for agency management

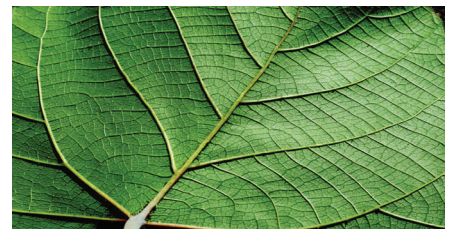
King County Mental Health, Chemical Abuse and Dependency Services Division sponsored three retreats for mental health agency staff in 2010. There were two retreats for executive staff, the agency directors and chief executive officers and another retreat for the psychiatric practitioners.

In June 2010, Spence Kline, the CEO of a mental health agency in Ohio,

"Neighboring", came to share his expertise and wisdom about how best to help agency staff retool to better help people find jobs. Several consumers also shared their stories about how getting back to work helped them in their recovery journey.

A follow-up retreat in October 2010 provided agency executives with an opportunity to hear from

Mark Ragins, M.D. He is the Medical Director at the Village in Long Beach, CA.



## 2010 Employment Conference

Most people with a mental illness report they'd like to go back to work. Understandably, people are concerned about the impact of earning money on their benefits. The good news is that it's possible to work and **keep your benefits**. People also have questions about the Americans with Disability Act and concerns about disclosure due to stigma.

In 2010, King County Mental Health, Chemical Abuse and Dependency Services Division, along with the South Seattle Community College sponsored a conference on employment for mental health consumers and those that assist them. On Friday, October 22, 2010 from 8:30 am to 1:00 pm in the afternoon, nearly 250 people gathered at the New Holly Community Center to learn about different aspects of employment.

The keynote speaker was Dr. Mark Ragins. He is Medical Director at the MHA Village, an award winning model of recovery-based mental health services in Long Beach, CA. With more than 20 years of clinical work, Mark has presented nationally and internationally on recovery oriented topics. His writings were featured in Steve Lopez's book, *The Soloist* and include "A Road to Recovery" and "A Guide to Mental Health Transformation on a Personal Level".

After the keynote, participants dispersed to various classrooms for workshops, including:

*Disability Benefits and Work*, presented by Julie Morgan from the Downtown Emergency Service Center & Kristi Lebow from the Harborview Mental Health Center. They shared the basics about work's impact on disability benefits and the good news about work incentives. These allow you to explore the responsibilities and rewards of the "working world" while increasing your current income!

John Evans from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation presented *Disclosing Your Disability & Requesting Accommodations*. As he shared, you need not hide your mental health disability from employers. John shared strategies for disclosing a disability and requesting reasonable accommodations.

*Discovery* was the title of a workshop presented by Janet Arthur & Dianne Graham of Sound Mental Health.



Questions they asked included: Thinking about going to work? Wondering what interests & skills you bring? The workshop helped attendees explore, find, and own the contributions they can offer an employer.

*An Employer Panel* was also offered. A group of employers discussed their experiences interviewing, hiring, and supervising consumers. They shared important insights from the employer perspective. Audience participation and questions were welcomed.

*Work Resources for Ex-Offenders* was presented by Terry Weber, Program Coordinator, Employment Offender Services. A prior criminal record does not close the door to employment. Terry discussed the assistance and opportunities available to those with criminal histories.

Everyone returned to the main conference room for a wonderful lunch prepared by Third Runway Café and Catering, a job opportunity business operated by Navos Mental Health Solutions. During lunch, a panel of consumers told their stories of struggles and successes of working. Though not always easy, these folks shared that work is not only possible but life changing.

For more information and resources, go to:

<http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/MentalHealth/Services/Employment.aspx>

# King County Mental Health Recovery is on the Web! Check it out:

<http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/MentalHealth/Recovery.aspx>

## Recovery

[Having a Voice](#)

[Leadership](#)

[Peer Support Services](#)

## King County Transformation Initiatives

[Mental Health RoundUp - a newsletter](#)

[Mental Health Recovery Plan &](#)

[Summary of Activities](#)

[King County History Recovery](#)

## Knowledge is power

[Children and Youth](#)

[Evidence based](#)

[Learning About your Illness](#)

[Money management](#)

[Older Adults](#)

[Psychiatric Medications](#)

[Stigma](#)

[Veterans](#)

## Wellness

[Social Support](#)

[Community Activities](#)

[Coping with Symptoms](#)

[Learning](#)

[Getting your Needs Met](#)

[Healthy Living](#)

[Recovery strategies](#)

[Stress and Recovery](#)

[Wellness Recovery Action Plans &](#)

[Advance Directives](#)

[Spirituality](#)

[10 + 1 Fundamental Components of Recovery](#)

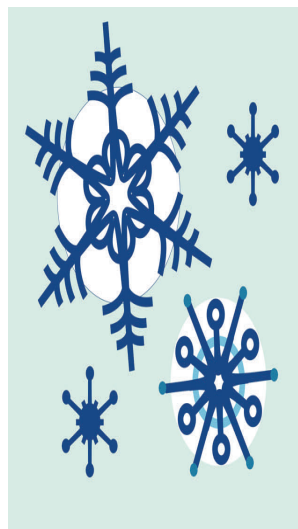
What you see to your left on this page is the site map, like a table of contents, of what you can find on the King County Mental Health Recovery Web page.

Go to the address above. When the page opens, you'll see a column in blue on the left side of your computer screen. The first line in that column says, "Mental Health Services". If you click there, you'll be taken to a Welcome screen that offers lots of information about mental health services in King County. You'll also see the word "Recovery" in the list on the left of the screen. When you click on that, you'll come back to the Welcome to the King County Mental Health Recovery page. There are 5 main sections within the Recovery page:

- [Having a Voice](#)
- [King County Transformation Initiatives](#)
- [Knowledge is Power](#)
- [Wellness](#)
- [10 + 1 Fundamental Components of Recovery](#)

There is a wealth of knowledge included in the many pages within the Recovery Web page. When you have time, explore! Check out the many sections. Much of the information is adapted from the Illness Management and Recovery curriculum. That curriculum was chosen by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration as an excellent source of information about recovery and wellness.

If you have suggestions for improving the Recovery Web page or additions, email Terry Crain at [Terry.Crain@kingcounty.gov](mailto:Terry.Crain@kingcounty.gov).



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