



THE VOICE

February 2008

CONSUMER VOICES ARE BORN
CVAB

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The VOICE is a monthly newsletter produced and distributed by CVAB, Inc.

The content of articles are the opinions of the writers and are published in the Voice so they may exercise their right to say something, and for your reading pleasure

The Voice welcomes all original contributions related to your recovery experience that you may want to share with our community. We'll treat each with respect and we'll try to print them as submitted but may need to edit for space. Our deadline is the 15th of each month. Thank you.

CVAB Reviews SAMHSA Kit

CVAB has been chosen by the State of Washington Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to review a new federal tool kit designed to help ensure that consumer-operated services and programs are developed according to rigorous standards based on scientific evidence from studies across the country.

CVAB is currently reviewing the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Consumer Operated Service Program Evidence Based tool kit, or SAMHSA COSP EBP KIT during January, February and March of 2008. The tool kit is dubbed "K.I.T." for "Knowledge Informing Transformation."

"Evidence-based consumer-operated services and programs are much more likely to provide the positive outcomes that mental health providers, patients, and mental health consumers in recovery expect," said Richard Kellogg, Director of the Mental Health Division (MHD) of the Health and Recovery Services Administration in DSHS.

Washington, Connecticut, and Missouri were selected for the field tests. Federal officials said the selection was based on the strength of the three states' commitment to evidence-based practices and commitment to fusing consumer voice into

their treatment plans and recovery process. Federal officials say feedback from the three states will help fine-tune the guidelines before these kits are implemented nationally.

"SAMHSA is particularly interested in knowing what materials were used, how effective they are in training, and what was found to be the most and least helpful," said Stephanie Lane, MSW, head of the Office of Consumer Partnerships in the MHD. "Consumer-operated services are especially important because they help break down years of misperception and stigma. They show the community that people with mental illnesses can and do recover." Lane noted that the information included in the kit include multi-media presentations - slideshows, video, compact disks, and computer Web sites.

The participants at CVAB, as the only consumer-run service agency in Washington, have the opportunity to use materials and provide feedback for EBP tool kits destined to be used around the country. CVAB staff has already begun to make use of the tool kits and has plans to utilize as much as possible over the next two months offering DSHS and SAMHSA constructive feedback. CVAB continues to do its part in helping recovery-oriented services that benefit our community. V

The Borderline-Personality Perspective by Nick



KESSLER'S KOLUMN

Of all the mental health disorders, Borderline Personality Disorder (or BPD for short) is definitely the most maligned and misunderstood—in this author's humble opinion. Maybe that's why DBT groups managed to spring up in the early 90's, and have snowballed since the quintessential breakthrough. Although we "borderlines" do have DBT on our side, I find it peculiar how a lot of mental health providers have deemed those with BPD as being the "losers" of the bunch; the whining and sniveling wannabes that just want attention. Yeah right. Hey doctor, by the way,

did you take your meds this week?

"Borderlines" have it no easier than any of the rest of everybody else with mental illness, and that can be factually proven. However, my Kolumns never go really deep into research, and I can't offer you a pie graph, I can tell you that BPD and DBT therapy you go through with it are an experience that, if followed through to completion, can be very rewarding and offer great amounts of wisdom.

So perhaps it's the other way around. Perhaps it's the other diagnoses that are more bound for suffering. I'm not sure. V

Visions of Recovery Poster Contest

I am so excited to share information about an upcoming event that will allow people to fight stigma, show off artistic talents, and have fun all at the same time! The Clark County Regional Support Network, as part of an ongoing effort to promote mental health recovery and reduce the stigma associated with mental illness, is hosting the Visions of Recovery Poster Contest.

We are inviting everyone who has received public mental health services in Clark County, and/or family members of recipients, to submit art that reflects their vision of what recovery means to them. We are looking for paintings or drawings, collages (using works that do not include copyrighted materials), original photography, and/or wall hangings that meet the size requirements (18" x 24" and no more than 2" thick) and can be reproduced as a poster. We will be displaying the works and are asking for permission to have the art for up to 1 year to share

with the community as a whole.

Artwork must be submitted to the RSN offices between March 15th and 31st. There will be a public viewing of all entries at the Center for Community Health on April 8th from noon to 3 pm.



Six prizes will be awarded ranging in size from \$100 to \$225! The winning entries will be unveiled at the April Mental Health Advisory Board meeting, April 30th, as an introduction to Mental Health Recovery Awareness month in May. In addition, the winning poster will be reproduced for distribution throughout our community and our state in an effort to educate others about recovery.

Contest rules and entry forms are available in the CVAB office and may also be found on the Clark County web site at <http://www.clark.wa.gov/mental-health/recovery/index.html>. If you have questions about the contest, please call Pat

Roe or Melanie Green at the Department of Community Services at 360-397-2130. V

Recovery Theme

CVAB is committed to the reality of Recovery. We encourage you to look for a Recovery Concept posted each month and enter into the dialog we en-

joy around the new theme at each CVAB Community Gathering. February's theme is *Non-linear*. V

Living Recovery by Angela

Loss, death, and adversity are a part of life. As a matter of fact my grandfather used to tell me “There’s only one guarantee in life. Death and Taxes” My father use to argue with him that “No Dad, just death. Taxes can be cheated.” The irony in all this is that my father got the last joke on me having died with 4 years of unpaid taxes.

My point in all this is that life is life and it includes losing the ones we love. As much as I hate it, I have been challenged twice in the last year losing two of the most important individuals in my life, my Father and my Grandma. It hurts, hurts a lot and was cause for a relapse in some of my mental health symptoms. The good news is recovery. Due to my hard work and life of recovery, when things started breaking down for me, I had a plan. I had individuals in my life prepared to step up and hold my life up,

even while I was falling hard.

Something that our community may not know is how large an impact it has on my life. I feel a connection to the individuals here. Knowing and seeing others go thru similar loss helped me know that I could come thru it with grace, even if I lost myself for a moment. I am ok to be heart broken. I am ok to be crushed. I am ok to love deeply and hurt. Life goes on and I will recover. Recover as I have done for umpteen some years. Luckily now, I recover quicker, I take back control quicker. Even when life doles out its doses of adversity, I swallow my pill and come back to wellness.

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I want to tell our community thank you. Your impact is greater than you can know and I am a far better person than I could have been. I have much wellness thanks to you. V



Maybe the system hasn’t failed us by Carolyn

Sometimes I haven’t liked mental health. I have been through a lot of loop holes in getting help with issues that I needed help with. Sometimes people think you should just move forward with life, and that’s all you need to do. That’s easier said than done. Somehow we forget to breathe and have lots of anxiety.

At CVAB there are a lot of topics on how the mental health system works. The topics vary from social security benefits and getting involved in your

own treatment plan. There is an ombudsman who helps with complaints when the mental health system fails a person. The ombudsman fights for consumer rights. There is a newsletter once a month. Letters are sent to publish our views. At CVAB there are peer support counselors. They are also known as peer support specialists. They help with different classes and support groups. Remember WRAP support group. Taking care of ourselves. V



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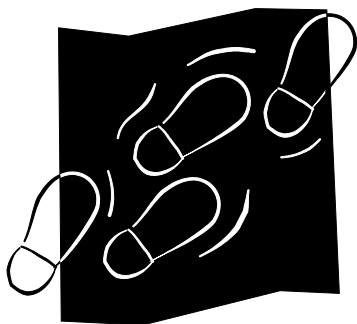
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Executive Direction from Brad Berry



As I write this, we are celebrating Martin Luther King Jr. and his commitment to justice and equality. Perhaps there will come a day when we are not measured by the degree of our infirmity, but the value of our humanity and contribution to the wellbeing of everyone.

We strive for that day to be today at CVAB.