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DIVISION OF COMMUNITY & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES
OFFICE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Participants of the 2014 Public Forum for Consumers and Families

FROM: Laurie Becker, Mental Health Administrator

DATE: August 6, 2014

RE: Public Forum Summary Report

I thank each of you for participating in this year's Forum. The abbreviated summary is attached for your review. You may access the full 7-page report is posted on the County website at:

<http://morrishumanservices.org/boards/MentalHealth/Publications/2014SummaryReport.pdf>

If you prefer, I am happy to send you the full report at your request.

Every year, the Forum Summary Report is incorporated into Morris County's planning and advocacy activities. The Report is also sent to the State's Division of Mental Health Services and public officials for consideration.

If you would like to participant on next year's Forum planning committee and/or if I can be of further assistance to you, please contact me at 973-285-6852.

C: Frank Pinto, Director
MHTSAB Members
Eileen Alexander, DMHAS

Morris County Mental Health Substance Abuse Advisory Board (MHSAAAB)
Public Forum for Consumers and Families
Many Faces of Recovery: Wellness In Action
June 17, 2014
SUMMARY

Attendance

The 20th Forum drew approximately 150 participants, one of the highest turnouts for this annual event. The majority of participants were consumers, followed by a good mix of family members, providers and officials. Attendees included representation from NJ Division of Mental Health and Addictions Services, family and consumer advocacy groups, Greystone Hospital leadership, the County Freeholder Board and the majority of MHSAAAB members. There was low turnout from agency CEO's.

Agenda

Department Director Frank Pinto gave welcome remarks and introduced the Deputy Freeholder to Human Services Freeholder, Kathy DeFillippo. Freeholder DeFillippo recognized the importance of offering an annual community forum and gave special thanks to the individuals who would be sharing their journeys in recovery. She then introduced Ms. Barbara Ward, the Chair of the MHSAAAB. Ms. Ward introduced her MHSAAAB colleagues and gave a brief overview of the advisory board's role and responsibilities. She reported that the MHSAAAB makes recommendations on approximately \$23 million in State and County funding to community providers for mental health and addictions services.

Ms. Ward recognized Ms. Valerie Fox for her fine work leading the Morris County Mental Health Coalition over the past 22 years. The Coalition provided the community with education and advocacy on mental health through monthly newsletters and articles. Ms. Fox has decided that the time has come to close the doors of the Coalition and is donating remaining funds to the Mental Health Association of Morris County. Ms. Ward then welcomed back Mr. Peter Basto, forum facilitator.

Ms. Basto gave a brief overview on the "Eight Dimensions of Wellness", developed by Peggy Swarbrick. Go to www.promoteacceptance.SAMHSA.gov for more information. The Morris Self-Help Center is also a good resource: www.cspnj.org/morris-self-help-center.

Mr. Basto introduced the three speakers who shared personal stories about their recovery journey from mental illness and/or addiction.

Accommodations

The Haggerty Center is an ideal venue. The planning committee continues to address a few challenges with the audio system.

Highest Service Priorities --- Consistent with previous years:

- More shelters and group homes are needed as well as more housing vouchers. More housing is needed for individuals in the community, not only for those discharged from Greystone Hospital.
- Transportation to medical appointments, school, to buy food; access to low-cost cars; innovative transportation system.
- Employment with supports

Newer priorities:

- Mental health outreach to the home, outreach when hospitalized.
- Low cost dental services with staff who specialize in treating individuals with mental illness/anxiety.
- Respite care

Suggestions for 2015:

- Create internships for consumers to get jobs.
- Good topics continue on the same path.
- Have a listing of all recovery services on a card for further information.
- Provide actual answers and resources to people's questions.
- Outreach services for families.

Written evaluations: 8 completed

- 100% said Forum met expectations
- 72% had attended previous forums, 28% first time participants
- 39% said the personal recovery stories were the program highlight.

Meetings of the Morris County Mental Health Substance Abuse Advisory Board (MHSAAB) are open to the public and are held most second Thursdays of the month, 5:15 p.m., Morris County Department of Human Services, 30 Schuyler Place, 3rd Floor, Morristown NJ. Parking is available under the building and parking passes are available at the meeting.

The primary purpose of the MHSAAB is to advocate to the County and State for a strong continuum of human services to benefit individuals living with mental illness and/or addictions disorders. All are welcome to attend and provide public comment to the MHSAAB for consideration. Call the mental health administrator at 973-285-6852 to confirm the meeting time and to address any questions or concerns.

Morris County Mental Health Substance Abuse Advisory Board (MHSAB)
Public Forum for Consumers and Families
Many Faces of Recovery: Wellness In Action
June 17, 2014

Speaker Highlights and Sampling of Public Comments

RECOVERY STORIES

A – July 14, 1992 was her date of sobriety. She was drinking and drugging. She had no license, and no registration. She was a waitress and almost got fired. She lost all hope and took pills and alcohol and thought she was going to die. She called her parents and they got her to an inpatient rehab facility. After her stay ended she went to a halfway house for 8 months and got a job and her life back. She learned how to navigate the bus system and felt blessed. She was ready to accept help. She had a lot of support and was lucky to have her parents to help her. She got her license back and went to school and got her degree. Even through tough times she has been able to stay sober. She works at Prevention is Key and is would like to open a peer to peer recovery center. She would like to see easier access to services. She wants everyone to know that there is hope if you reach out and look for it.

J – Has been married for seven years and has a daughter and son and owns his own home. He works for local government and has gained stability in his life. In 1995, he had a drug induced manic episode. He was going out to clubs and using a lot of drugs. He went into psychosis. His boss took him to get help. He was diagnosed as bi-polar and had addictions. For 19 years he has been clean and sober. The first seven years were a struggle with a mental health diagnosis and he felt stigmatized. He wasn't compliant with medications. In 2002 he accepted treatment and that year met his future wife. He was searching for acceptance as a person and finally felt accepted and free. He went back to school and in 2005 was able to get a job. He has been in this position for nine years. He has a CDL License and it wasn't a problem that he had a mental illness. He did not have a problem obtaining a job when he disclosed that he had a mental illness. He finally accepted himself and so did others. He no longer feels stigmatized.

S – Recovery means living a happy life that is not controlled by mental illness and addictions. Often as a small child she was overwhelmed and had anxiety. She was OCD and felt the world was a scary and dangerous place. Things got worse after her parents got divorced and there was a lot of stress that caused emotional distress. She felt abandoned and started self injurious behavior from the age of 11 to 20. She did drugs and got addicted. She was frequently hospitalized and went to a long term residential care facility when she was 15-16 year old. She was on an emotional roller coaster, went back to drugs, ran away from home, and ended up sexually abused. She eventually went back home and got therapy. Then after she lost her therapist she got back on the path to self destruction. At 19 she had her first psychotic episode. There was a lot of irrational thinking. She was often afraid to talk to others and was worried about what they would think. She is now married and has a good relationship with her mom and daughters. Her first relationship is with God and she lets herself feel emotions and stopped acting impulsively. She has a good psychologist and got the help she needs. Everyone needs a support system and people to talk to. There is always hope. She asks those in the mental health field to please get to know their clients.

Mr. Basto thanked the speakers for sharing their stories, and then opened up the Forum for public comment.

Questions for Attendees:

What services and supports are most helpful to your recovery?

- Supported employment and education.
- The Self Help Support group – with their help I stopped cutting myself. Thanks to Saint Clare's for their help. Wish there were more programs and more funding.
- Taking care of mother through her sickness turned to God and Jesus. Meals on Wheels and the Visiting Nurse Association has some wonderful programs to help with seniors.
- Morris Self Help Center was a huge help – thanks. Got a lot of help from the people at the Center and from attending their meetings.
- Her sister supported her and helped her through difficult times. NewBridge also was a big help as were computers classes.
- There are a lot of resources that people can't access. A lot of friends have tried to help. There are many good people you have to reach out to them for help.
- Peer support line – MHAMC and MHA recreation programs. Also Morris Self-Help Center.
- Morris Self-Help Center and Consumer Advocates Program.
- NewBridge Services.
- Homeless Solutions/OTA.
- Saint Clare's supportive housing – helped with all stages of recovery. They supported him and he is now 5 years sober.
- Volunteers at the group home.
- Did not like Saint Clare's – had bad experience with them.
- Morristown Memorial was helpful and their services at the hospital.
- Supportive housing.
- Homeless Solutions helped get me Section 8 housing.
- Went to detox and also the Intensive Outpatient program – they had great counselors and education programs. The programs were at Atlantic Health – RIM on Rt. 202. I was a veteran and in combat which was initially how I got hooked.
- Intensive Family Support from Saint Clare's.
- Saint Clare's has helped for 26 years – diagnosed as a paranoid schizophrenic with addictions –they were always there to help.

What services did you look for but were unable to find or unable to access?

- Had an episode where police came to my house instead of the outreach worker. The outreach nurse or psychiatrist may have helped but police did not. The police need to be better trained to understand mental health issues and get the right help to a person. Think there should be a mobile outreach team instead of the police being called.
- ICMS case worker – wish they could come to the house and do outreach.
- Police came to the house and weren't of help.
- Was in Summit Oaks hospital and wanted Mental Health Association to help with outreach services but they wouldn't help.
- Mobile outreach program would be especially helpful.

- More shelters and group homes are needed as well as more housing vouchers.
- More housing is needed not only for those getting out of Greystone. Also need more funding spread out.
- Respite center is needed – there are none in Morris County. It would be nice to have a place for those that don't need a full hospitalization.
 - Response from attendee: State is looking to have each respite center deal with two counties – they will consider adding Morris to go with Passaic County since they have a respite there.
- Need someone to help with depression and stroke – multiple services are needed.
- Looking for employment.
- Supportive employment at Saint Clare's.
- Low cost dental clinic that specializes in anxiety. Also a training program for clinics to teach staff how to work with the mentally ill.
- Everyone needs a car. It would be good if there could be help for folks to get a car. Also would be great if there was an innovative transportation system. Better transportation services would be helpful.

Any concerns about the Morris County Human Services System?

- Folks without identification can't get help. People that need help but don't get it are more depressed. Need better way to help people get IDs.
- Soup Kitchen is helpful – Mental Health Association has workers to help there.
- Health insurance – have to wait a year to get Medicare, could be life threatening. Need better access to medical care while waiting for Medicare coverage.
- Small family of two could not qualify for food stamps. Couldn't get to the food pantry since they had no transportation. Like to get some delivery from the food pantry and get more outreach from pantries and the soup kitchen.
- Mental Health Association of Morris County has consumer rides – have drivers to take folks around but not for doctor appointments. This transportation from MHA is free.

Wish question – if I could create a service what would it be?

- Taxi to take you around.
- More transportation.
- Health access care.
- Side walks on all streets.
- Help with budgeting. Also wish everyone could understand better about people with mental health diagnosis or those with addictions; then there would be less stigma.
- How can folks afford to do what they want to do everything is so expensive.
- More training.
- More forums and seminars.
- Truly integrated services.
- Transportation to colleges.
- More affordable medications.
- Help to take care of pets.
- A centralized directory would be helpful. Other participant mentioned there is a service like that called 211.

- Wish that celebrities who have mental illness would talk about it and give money to help.
- More supervised housing is needed for those coming out of the hospital.
- Wish 211 directory would be updated and more useful.

What would you say to someone struggling with a mental illness?

- It takes a lot of work on your self – you have to put in the effort.
- Participate.
- Never give up.
- Go to support groups/connect with folks.
- You are not alone – need to try to find help – there is help out there.
- One day at a time – everyone has good and bad days. With treatment your prognosis is good.
- Find the network and who you can talk to. Everyone needs someone to talk to.
- Tap into the spiritual realm.
- Keep trying and believe in yourself. There is always an open door –don't give up and don't close the door!

Ms. Becker thanks Mr. Basto and all the providers for coming tonight. Thanks also to Janet Monroe, CEO of Greystone, and Eileen Alexander, DMHAS for joining us.

Ms. Diane Beck spoke at the Forum last year and has accomplished much since then. She is now a counselor at Bridgeway Services and is working as a Licensed Professional Counselor. She passed her exam – congratulations to Diane.

Please be sure to fill out your evaluation it is in your folder. Ms. Becker will put together a summary and send all a copy. It will also be on the Morris Human Services website at www.morris.human.services.org.

Ms. Becker stated there was much discussion about housing, healthcare, outreach, respite. There were a couple of concerns about provider services tonight. Ms. Becker advised that one of her roles as mental health administrator is to take calls from anyone who has a problem with publically funded services to help resolve the situation. She can be reached at 973-285-8652. She will be happy to try to help you.

All comments brought to our attention tonight will be reported to the Mental Health Substance Abuse Advisory Board. The MHSAAB meets monthly and all are welcome. It is a public meeting the second Thursday of the month at 5:15 p.m. at 30 Schuyler Place, 3rd Floor in Morristown. The meeting dates are also on the Morris Human Services Website. The MHSAAB wants to hear from you on advocacy issues. Thanks you!

Written Evaluations
8 Evaluations were submitted (1 not legible)

THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FOR THE MHSAAB TO ADDRESS IS:

- Occupation – jobs and education.
- How people solve their sicknesses.
- Making sure issues are addressed.
- To make sure all people that need help know how to get it.
- Saint Clare's in Denville.
- Transportation and housing.
- Keep DCPD out of mental health issues and find a solution so children can stay with their parents.

IN MY OPINION, THE BIGGEST GAP IN MORRIS COUNTY'S SERVICE SYSTEM IS:

- A directory of medical doctors and dentists to help Medicare/Medicaid clients.
- There is a good system in this area.
- There are not enough services for the people.
- Transportation for patients to appointments and respite. – 2
- Need more outreach programs for parent psychiatric episodes.

WHAT I WISH I WOULD HAVE SAID AT THE FORUM:

- There is a need for more social activities and job training.
- Wish I had answered the question on what helps people get better.
- When a mental health provider gets a phone call from having a mental breakdown who needs to talk, they should take the time to listen, not end the call. They made matters worse.
- Need an outreach psychiatrist and outreach nurses.

THE FORUM MET MY EXPECTATIONS:

YES - 7
NO - 0
SOMEWHAT- 0

HAVE YOU ATTENDED PREVIOUS CONSUMER AND FAMILY FORUMS?

YES - 6
NO - 1

FORUM HIGHLIGHTS

- Consumer recovery stories. - 5
- Mental and physical health.

MY SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE NEXT YEAR'S FORUM:

- Create internships for consumers to get jobs.
- Good topics continue on the same path.
- Have a listing of all recovery services on a card for further information.
- Provide actual answers and resources to people's questions.
- Outreach services for families.

TOPICS FOR NEXT YEAR'S FORUM:

- Social and economic issues after recovery
- Schizophrenia.
- Medication assisted treatment
- Outreach services for families with children who have psychiatric episodes

**I CURRENTLY RECEIVE SERVICES FROM THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES
(OPTIONAL):**

- MHAMC CAP
- MHAMC Self Help Center
- MHAMC Educational
- MHAMC
- Saint Clare's cancer services

FAMILY MEMBER – 3

CONSUMER – 3

PROVIDER – 1