Inclusion, Empowerment and Recovery - Why Do We Need to Change?

National Consensus Statement on Mental Health Recovery
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
Center for Mental Health Services

"Recovery is cited as the single most important goal for the mental health services system."
National Consensus Conference on Mental Health Recovery and Mental Health Systems Transformation
December 16-17, 2004"

"Mental health recovery is a journey of healing and transformation enabling a person with a mental problem to live a meaningful life in a community of his or her choice while striving to achieve his or her full life potential."
10 Fundamental Components of Recovery

- Self–direction: Consumers lead, control, exercise choice over, and determine their own path of recovery by optimizing autonomy, independence and control over resources to achieve a self-determined life. By definition, the recovery process must be self-directed by the individual, who defines his or her own life goals and designs a unique path towards these goals.

- Individualized and person-centered: There are multiple pathways to recovery based on an individual's unique strengths and resiliencies as well as his or her needs, preferences, experiences (including past trauma) , and cultural background in all of it's diverse representations. Individuals also identify recovery as being an ongoing journey and an end result as well as an overall paradigm for achieving wellness and optimal mental health.

- Empowerment: Consumers have the authority to choose from a range of options and to participate in all decisions – including the allocation of resources – that will affect their lives, and are educated and supported in doing so. They have the ability to join with other consumers to collectively and effectively speak for themselves about their needs, wants, desires and aspirations. Through empowerment, an individual gains control of his or her own destiny and influences the organizational and societal structures in his or her life.

- Holistic: Recovery encompasses an individual's whole life, including mind, body, spirit and community. Recovery embraces all aspects of life, including housing, employment, education, mental health and healthcare treatment and services, complementary and naturalistic services, addictions treatment, spirituality, creativity, social networks, community participation, and family supports as determined by the person. Families, providers, organizations, systems, communities, and society play crucial roles in creating and maintaining meaningful opportunities for consumer access to these supports.

- Non-linear: Recovery is not a step-by-step process, but one based on continual growth, occasional setbacks and learning from experience. Recovery begins with an initial stage of awareness in which a person recognizes that positive change is possible. This

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awareness enables the consumer to move on to fully engage in the work of recovery.

- Strength-based: Recovery focuses on valuing and building on the multiple capacities, resiliencies, talents, coping abilities, and inherent worth of individuals. By building on these strengths, consumers leave stymied life roles behind and engage in new life roles (e.g., partner, caregiver, friend, student, employee). The process of recovery moves forward through interaction with others in supportive, trust-based relationships.

- Peer Support: Mutual support – including the sharing of experiential knowledge and skills and social learning – plays an invaluable role in recovery. Consumers encourage and engage other consumers in recovery and provide each other with a sense of belonging, supportive relationships, valued roles and community.

- Respect: Community, systems and societal acceptance and appreciation of consumers – including protecting their rights and eliminating discrimination and stigma – are crucial in achieving recovery. Self-acceptance and regaining belief in one's self are particularly vital. Respect ensures the inclusion and full participation of consumers in all aspects of their lives.

- Responsibility: Consumers have a personal responsibility for their own self-care and journeys of recovery. Taking steps toward their goals may require great courage. Consumers must strive to understand and give meaning to their experiences and identify coping strategies and healing processes to promote their own wellness.

- Hope: Recovery provides the essential and motivating message of a better future – that people can and do overcome the barriers and obstacles that confront them. Hope is internalized; but can be fostered by peers, family, friends, providers and others. Hope is the catalyst of the recovery process. Mental health recovery not only benefits individuals with mental health disabilities by focusing on their abilities to live, work, learn, and fully participate in our society, but also enriches the texture of American community life. America reaps the benefits of the contributions individuals with mental disabilities can make, ultimately becoming a stronger and healthier nation.

Daniel Fisher, MD, PhD
National Empowerment Center
Lawrence, Massachusetts

"In contrast to the Rehabilitation View of Recovery, people who have recovered from mental illness have an empowering view that full recovery is possible for everybody. According to this Empowerment Vision, people are labeled with mental illness through a combination of sever emotional distress and insufficient social supports/resources/coping skills to maintain the major social role expected of them during that phase of their life. The psychosocial nature of mental illness is highlighted by the common experience most consumer/survivors have gone through of having had a variety of diagnoses. In fact, the degree of interruption in a person's social role is more important in affixing the label mental illness to someone than their diagnosis. Recovery is possible through a combination of supports needed to (re) establish a major social role and the self-management skills needed to take control of the major decisions affecting one. This combination of social supports and self-management help the person regain membership in society and regain the sense of being a whole person. Self-help and peer support are

fundamental elements in this journey of recovery because often the only people who can truly understand the feeling of exclusion are those who have also been labeled."

Judi Chamberlain
National Empowerment Center, Lawrence, Massachusetts
Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation, Boston University
Author: "On Our Own: Patient-Controlled Alternatives to the Mental Health System"

"Empowerment: The Elements

- Having decision-making power.
- Having access to information and resources.
- Having a range of options from which to make choices.
- Assertiveness.
- A feeling that the individual can make a difference.
- Learning to think critically; unlearning the conditioning; seeing things differently.
- Learning about and expressing anger.
- Not feeling alone; feeling part of a group.
- Understanding that people have rights.
- Effecting change in one's life and one's community.
- Learning skills that individual defines as important.
- Changing others' perceptions of one's competency and capacity to act.
- Coming out of the closet.
- Growth and change that is never ending and self-initiated.

President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health
Achieving the Promise: Transforming Mental Health Care in America

" … emerging research has validated that hope and self-determination are important factors contributing to recovery. However, understandably, consumers often feel overwhelmed and bewildered when they must access and integrate mental health care, support services, and disability benefits across multiple, disconnected programs that span Federal, State and local agencies, as well as the private sector."

"Consumers of mental health services must stand at the center of the system of care. Consumers' needs must drive the care and services that are provided. Unfortunately, the services currently available to consumers are fragmented, driven by financing rules and regulations, and restricted by bureaucratic boundaries. They defy easy description."

Recommendations:

- Develop an individualized plan of care for every adult with a serious mental illness and child with a serious emotional disturbance.
- Involve consumers and families fully in orienting the mental health system toward recovery.
- Align relevant Federal programs to improve access and accountability for mental health services.
- Create a comprehensive State Mental Health Plan
- Protect and enhance the rights of people with mental illnesses.

The President's Commission recognizes the following benefits associated with consumer involvement:

- Consumers who work as providers help expand the range and availability of services and supports that professionals offer.
- Consumer-run services and consumer-providers can broaden access to peer support, engage more individuals in traditional mental health services, and serve as a resource in the recovery of people with behavioral health conditions.
- Consumers, because of their experiences, bring different attitudes, motivations, insights and behavioral qualities to behavioral health treatment.
- Consumers, because of their experiences, have an important perspective that requires their direct participation in treatment planning, evaluation, and research activities.
- Consumers have a key role in expanding the behavioral health workforce and in creating a system that focuses on recovery.
- Emerging research has demonstrated that having hope and opportunity for self-determination are important factors that contribute to recovery. Consumer knowledge has been translated to a growing understanding that people can recover and that peer support has an important role in the recovery process.

State of Nebraska
Nebraska Revised Statutes

Section 71-803 *Public behavioral health system; purposes*
(3) High quality behavioral health services, including but not limited to, (a) services that are research-based and consumer-focused, (b) services that emphasize beneficial treatment outcomes and recovery, with appropriate treatment planning, case management, community support, and consumer peer support, (c) appropriate regulation of behavioral health professionals, programs, and facilities, and (d) consumer involvement as a priority in all aspects of service planning and delivery ....

Senator Jim Jensen
Report to the Oversight Commission
November 09, 2006

Reporting on meetings across the state with behavioral health stakeholders:
"Each region presented to us what their progress has been since the passage of LB 1083 and how each one is working through those. Yes, there are still needs out there... We need to improve support groups – well-trained support groups, peer specialists, to decrease hospitalization."
"then we spent a couple of hours at each Region with consumers. Their issues, again, varied with each Region, but there was some general topics that consumers are looking for. And I personally saw where there are some good support groups, where there's a good NAMI, a Mental Health Association. Other organizations where they have been working well and training peer support, they seem to fare better than those where there is not a collaboration working together with the consumers. Communication is really key with the consumers and the need to be informed and then also access to needed services. There is a need that was expressed to get information on Medicaid, Social Security. Those are the things that each person needs and they want to know what programs are available and how they can qualify, and I think we need to do a better job at that. There needs to be day programs that have real meaning and they should be encouraged. Transportation is an issue in all Regions – rural areas as well as metropolitan areas, particularly on weekends. All would like to work; they would like to work more hours without being cut off – cut off of their health care, Medicaid."

"…all in all, I saw great movement in consumer movement. There is talent, there is power when educated, when trained, and then activated … if we all work together we can accomplish goals that we never imagined, and I think we can do that, and so I would certainly encourage that we would move forward with what has begun."