DMHAS FOCUS GROUPS: COMMUNITY WELLNESS CENTERS: GROWTH AND CHANGE

The Central Region focus group took place on 1/13/15 at the Monmouth County Agricultural Building. The goal of the day was to answer the questions:
1.   What is essential to a Self-help Center?
2.   How can the Division and the Centers work together toward growth?

A brainstorming challenge was given to the large group:
What is your version of the ideal Self-help Center? What would it offer? How would it be run? What would it look like?

As a large group, we discussed the attributes of the ideal Center, and participants were asked to prioritize the items that they saw as vital. Following the brainstorming session, participants were asked to prioritize the most important elements of an ideal Center. Each participant was given 5 stickers to place on their top 5 priority areas.

To allow for processing in small groups, tables were pre-arranged "dining room" style, with 8 at each table.

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION: RAW DATA

Many identified characteristics of an ideal Center were duplicative, or closely related. When duplication occurred, these items were combined, and listed under common headings. A summary of the priorities are below. Any area that had 4 stickers or more was considered to be a top priority for the group, but any like listings that were identified with fewer stickers were combined to provide the most comprehensive picture. It was clear that the most important element of an ideal Self-help Center was:
the ability to have the space, the training and enough funds to offer members access to a wide variety of choices, both entertaining and educational, to help members to grow, feel empowered and belong to both the Center and the surrounding community.

The raw data that this summary is based on may be located as the last section of this report.

ENVIRONMENT
1. Room for everything members want and need:
   a. comfort rooms, computer room, tv room, clothing exchange, recreation and exercise,
2. Has friendly, trained staff who at minimum have training in:
   a. MHFA, CIT, First Aid, customer service, conflict resolution, motivation
3. Computer software and internet, how to help with job hunting, conflict resolution, motivation, giving a wide variety of informational and educational groups, how to reach out to the agencies in the systems and the Division for assistance
4. Is accepting and non-judgmental, empowering, respectful toward belonging and self–worth, creates fun within the space, social, friendly and encourages people to come.
5. Can meet basic survival needs of members:
   a. Hot meals, showers, laundry, service access, medical screenings

 SERVICES
1. There is the ability to assess what the local members need, and enough funding to run all operations needed by members:

a. provide food, vehicle, in-house games, self- soothing items, field trips, bowling, movie tickets, group projects, laughter, exercise, education and skill building in many areas to members: budgeting, mens/womens issues, WRAP, Double Trouble and other self-help, smoking cessation, peer to peer.
2. Can develop wellness plans to meet all of the needs of members

PROFESSIONAL
1. Salary ranges and pursuing billable services and additional supplemental funds are viewed as important
2. Has DMHAS assistance in developing processes to reach out to the community agencies, resources, funding,
3. Access to resources and technical assistance is vital:
    a. developing toolkits, resource directories
4. Self-evaluation/needs assessment
5. Center Retreats to collaborate and share on many areas of Center activity: training, resources, funding, peer supervision, service development and innovative approaches.

PRIORITY AREAS FOR AN IDEAL CENTER
The identified priority areas are indicated below by asterisk (*) and the number of stickers placed on that specific item.

AN IDEAL CENTER…
- Has operations that address local needs through community meetings and through reaching out to local business owners and community resources (*3)
- No money restrictions (there is enough funding to run all operations needed by members, provide activities, food, vehicle, space, etc) (*9)
- An environment that is clean and safe with soothing ambiance – "this is your space, you have a say" (*2)
- Creates fun within the space: in-house – games, activities, rec equipment, comfort/soothing areas, self-soothing items, etc. (*6)
- Has room for everything members want and need: comfort rooms, computer room, tv room, clothing exchange, etc (*8)
- Has more than one bathroom
- Offers a wide variety of education to members; managers and facilitators are trained to give the variety of informational groups: budgeting, mens/womens issues, WRAP, Double Trouble and other self-help, smoking cessation, peer to peer, etc (*4)
- Offers skill building in many areas
- Is motivating
- Has computers that work, and training on software and internet usage. This would assist with job hunting (*5)
- Has friendly, trained staff who at minimum have training in MHFA, CIT, First Aid, customer service, how to help with job hunting, conflict resolution, motivation, etc (*5)
- Has increased salary range and takes advantage of billable services. (*2)
- Has a 'homey' atmosphere (*3)
- Promotes engagement with the Center, with community, through relationships with other agencies
- Has modeling of attitudes and interactions through open, consistent and respectful collaborations and communications between managers, facilitators. Managers model protocol, relationships and conflict resolution. (*2)
- Offers choices and engagement – there are processes in place to reach out to the community (*6)
- Has a process to self-evaluate to know what the Center needs, and how to meet those needs. DMHAS and sponsoring agencies are tied into the Center evaluation and growth process. (*2)

- Are respectful toward belonging and self –worth (*3)
- Are intelligent in dealing with troubled people (*1)
- Are accepting and non-judgmental (*5)
- Shares and collaborates with other Centers through participation in retreats about resources, ideas, technology, etc. (*4)
- Has fund raising knowledge (*1)
- Has the ability to provide hot, nutritious meals (*4)
- Can provide a work environment, craft sales, perhaps tied together regionally (*1)
- Can develop wellness plans for all areas, especially physical health (*4)
- Has listings of people to call for resources, especially for people who are homeless (*2)
- Can provide showers, a washer/dryer – comparable to the Portland Maine Center (*2)
- Knows how to incorporate addictions
- Utilizes programs such as NAMI 'Hearts and Minds,' TOPS, "Y" memberships that are open for personal use
- Brings in health testing and encourages medical assistance for identified issues (*1)
- Has wellness coaches (*6)
- Uses positive language and a 'changing lifestyles' approach and orientation with simple easy techniques (*2)
- Members share in running groups to spread the experience around (*2)
- Uses existing programs and tool kits, and has someone dedicated to bringing in these resources and providing training (DMHAS) (*4)
- Advocates for members and growth in services (*2)
- Is empowering (*6)
- Is a social atmosphere (*4)
- Is friendly (*1)
- Provides encouragement to people who want to come (* 7)
- Is safe (*3)
- Is fun: offering activities in variety- field trips, bowling, movie tickets, group projects, laughter, exercise, etc (*13)
- Is a Center without walls – each day group socialization occurs, and can occur inside or outside of the Center
- Has a "tour book" of a variety of places to go, and collaborates with other centers on development of educational and fun trips (*3)
- Is empowered enough to be able to navigate the systems to meet member needs (DMHAS analysts and County MH Administrators assisting)

CENTRAL REGION FOCUS GROUP: COMMUNITY WELLNESS CENTERS
RAW DATA FROM SMALL GROUP WORK

Four challenge areas were presented for small group discussion, and subsequent input from the large group.

Every effort was made to preserve the language of the original statements.

Group #1
What do you do now to help people to develop health and wellness plans for daily living? Discuss things that get in your way of doing this - and make suggestions!
- Set a good example for the members
- Healthy Eating (Diet) (Nutrition)

- Exercise (Invite friends to walk or go to YMCA)
- Wellness Coaching for personal goals
- Safety both in the Center and Transportation
- Medication Education and speaking to treatment team
- Support and Encouragement for both members and staff
- Engage and take interest with offered activities that the center provides
- WRAP Group to develop daily maintenance skills
- Monthly Calendar to inform members and staff of planned activities and outings
- Workshops (Arts and Crafts, Games and Reading)
- Holiday Parties (Group Involvement)
- Internet Research
- Obtaining Goals
- Shopping on a Budget
- Learning from Others
- Teach Good Hygiene
- Routine Doctor Visits
- Obtaining Housing
- New Vehicle
- Not Enough Support from Members
- Manager needs to Encourage and have Members come up with Topics from Members
- Have More WRAP Groups
- Have More Snacks to Motivate the Members
- Facilitator Participation

Group #2
What do you do now that is really successful? What really makes an impact?
And what can we do to spread that throughout all the Centers?
- Maintaining a Variety of Weekly, Monthly Activities (Recreation, Financial, Shopping, Outreach/Support, Educational, Wellness Groups)
- Incorporating as many of the Dimensions as Possible
- Welcoming of Interns Sharing in a Win-Win Situation
- Reaching Out to the Community seeking Donations and Fundraising Assistance
- Utilizing a Motivational Thought Daily as well as The Impact of a Spiritual Message
- A Fun Environment (Activities of Choice Offered)
- More Involvement of the Members in Community & Business Meetings. Taking Pride in Their Environment and Themselves
- A Peer-run Environment Where Shared Experiences have Importance
- Keeping a Visible Monthly Calendar on the Wall Giving All Members a Hard Copy
- Keeping a Daily Board with the Day's Information
- How Do/Can We Spread These Things Among Other Centers?
- Open Communication Among all the Centers
- Disclosure of Ideas of Improvements (Personal or Otherwise
- Women's Group (runs itself) Peer run Women's Group Works Well Because (runs itself) Socially Safe Environment
- NAMI Support Group's Membership asks for Group and Outsiders Input
- Hearing Voices Network Group – Facilitators run HVN Group Members Share in HVN Group that don't Share in Any Other Group
- Educational Outings (ex. NPC)
- Recreational Outings

- Networking with Other Centers: Pool Tournaments, Barbecues, Holiday Partying, Softball Games, HVN Group at Other SHCs

Group #3

What elements of a Self-help Center are vital to preserve?

Discuss things that can we can take advantage of toward growth!

- Social Atmosphere Example: Coffee (free), Bagel Fridays, People bring Snacks, Free Food
- Members Hanging Out, Talking, Laughing, Playing Games
- Transportation: Very Important and Successful! "Care Centers" has been Successful at utilizing Medical Transport for Members out of catchment area
- Birthday Cake "for the month"
- Check-in Group – keeps us connected and informed about each other
- Double Trouble/Wellness – PACT Team Comes to Center to Run Group and Brings People From Community
- VNA Nurse – Attends Twice a Month for Health
- Check-ups: Blood Pressure and Sugar (diabetes)
- Attend Annual Training to Keep Far Updated and Refreshed
- Choice: Finance Membership Engaged in all processes Individual Determination
- Safe: Physical = Furniture, Facilities Support Upgrading Funding
- Environment: Ambience, Clean
- People With Lived Experience Share a Desire for Acceptance, Non-judgmental, Stigma-Free
- Emotional Environment: Free to be Self
- Welcoming: Engagement – Interaction and Greeting Introduction creates Relationship
- Support to Strengthen more Opportunities, Funding Socialization Groups/Activities, Self-Esteem Groups/Educational (8) Dimensions/Advocacy Field Trips
- Development Skills Enrich Life, Job, Education, Community – All Roads Lead Here to Empowerment, Leadership, Structure (reasonable data collection), Team-Building, Collaboration and Continued Funding (Computers)
- Fund More Monies to reach our Goals
- Field Trips: Movies and Bowling
- Need a Van to Bring News and Transportation
- To Recruit New Members and take Trips
- Additional Computers
- Training for Aide (more trips)
- Educate Nutrition – Better Lifestyle – Eat Healthy Snacks (energy bar)
- Need Bigger Place – (space) so person doesn't feel so enclosed
- Education For Peers: First Aide, CIT Training, Mental Illness
- More Groups: Healthy Food and Wellness
- More Craft Items: Beading, Clay and Woodcrafts
- More Exercise Groups: Walking, YMCA, Martial Arts and Hiking
- Cooking: Healthy style and a Better Lifestyle
- Advocate for Peers
- Empowerment
- Fund-Raising Efforts
- Recreational Games: Board Games, Computer Games, X-Box and WIFI
- Making More Space – bigger place
- Advocate in Community – education
- Reduce Stigma
- More Training for Staff
- Interact With Other Centers – Learn from Their Ideas

- Computer Training
- Safe Environment – To Secure Peers Social Ability
- More Peer Community Meetings
- More Peer Involvement
- More Supplies for the Center Both Cooking and Cleaning Items
- Need Someone to be taught how to Obtain More Money
- Different Location – Home style (more space)
- Getting Involved With the Outside Community such as Outreach or Open House
- Outreach to NAMI, Mental Health Board, Courts, Police and Other agencies such as Easter Seals and Bridgeway

Group #4
What gets in your way of being the ideal Center? What changes/supports need to occur for your Self-help Center to be an ideal model? What changes can occur using existing resources?
What action steps can we do together to get to the ideal?

- Furniture – Make a Connection and Donate
- More People in Centers Can Help Spread the Word by Advertising, Newsletters, Calendars or Bring to Other Agencies to Help Spread the Word
- Guest Speaker – Could Contribute with Service, Abilities, Monies and Wellness Action Steps
- Challenges:
- Funding – More Staff Hours, More Open Hours, More Quality Food/Healthy Options
- Transportation – Need More Drivers and to Replace Aged Fleets of Autos
- Staffing Model: Fund Waged Positions Rather than Stipend Volunteers
- Safety: Vans and to also Replace Older Cars
- Emotional Safety
- Stairs – Consider Mobility Issues
- Carpeting
- Resources – Space For More Activities and Local Needs, Knowledge of Linkages that can be made
- Conveying Non-judgmental ideas also including Diversity and Collaboration
- Getting Community to Act as a Community
- Encouraging Engagement
- Decision Making
- Conflict Resolution
- Funding Model:
- Help Centers Find Private Funding
- Clarify Rules for Fundraising
- What We Can Do Now:
- Network With Other Centers and Non-Profit Agencies to share skill sets and knowledge
- Improve Emotional Safety: Training in Collaboration, Conflict Resolution, Non-Judgmental Attitudes and Self-Help Skills/ADL
- Network with Business Community So That When Opportunities Arise We Can Make the Most of Them
- More Outreach to increase the Numbers
- More Fundraising Steps
- Find more ways to increase funding Both Private and Public
- Help Establish a list of People who can train Teams at local level (Post on Internet)
- Think Creatively

SELF-HELP CENTERS GROWTH AND CHANGE WORK GROUP EVALUATION:
CENTRAL REGION 1/13/15

Please rate your level of agreement on whether the outcomes for this day of working groups were attained.	5 – strongly agree 4 – agree 3 – neither agree nor disagree 2 – disagree 1 – disagree strongly				
	5	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
1. The purpose of the day was clearly presented	16	7	2		
2. I understood what the goals of the day were.	16	4	2		
3. Those goals were accomplished.	13	8	2		
4. Directions for activities were clear.	14	5	4		
5. I was comfortable contributing.	16	5	4		
6. I thought I was part of a process that would bring about change.	13	6	3		
7. Flow of the day was smooth.	12	6	5		
8. Format was effective for the task (small group, lecture, large group, etc.)	16	6	2	1	
9. Facilitation was effective.	16	6	3		
10. The room and amenities were conducive to learning (if applicable.)	15	8	1	1	
11. The delivery method was appropriate.	14	10		1	

12. What was the most valuable thing about today, and why?
Getting our needs for Self-Help Centers out in the open.
Intentions were talked about.
The "TO-DO" list was very good, with great feedback from the group.
The bringing together of everyone to share the ideas and things needed to be implemented to make the mental health movement grow and become more successful.
Bringing people together and sharing ideas.
The open communication with everybody.
Small group collaboration further verbalizing in large group.
The group brainstorming and keeping it in writing for all.
Group lists of the most important things so they can continue.
Large amount of input.
The sharing of ideas.
Group summaries.
Advertisement
How the centers will change.
Centers come together for ideas for each other's centers. Hope that more help will be given to centers.
Focus on preserving elements of SHC
Preservation
Discussing the different subjects – the discussions were informative.
I feel the Division was here today to "hear" what we had to say and that was important to me.
The fact that maybe some positive changes will be made. Lots depending on funding.
Making the centers better with different groups and programs.
We need to get more funding.
To get into group. Force to get an new ideal center.

13. What was of least value to you and why?

Not sure if there will be changes with the budget.

Things were scattered.

I HATE when others cross talk and don't show respect.

I found the entire training valuable.

More time.

It was all good I can't think of anything.

Power point presentation.

Lynn Kovich' s comments.

Small group work

Funds, because they will always be limited.

Off topic discussions

The cross talking was very irritating.

The whole group was valuable.

Everything was good I enjoyed the meeting it was good discussion on how to make the centers better.

I know we need a new van.

The room was very uncomfortable. Starting late.

14. Please add suggestions for improvement:

Listen to what our Centers really need for their Centers in order to provide better service on our part.

A time limit for individuals speaking.

More organization.

Follow up with a second meeting and build on our ideas

I did no0tice that everyone spoke of $ needed to increase budget. However I also noticed that it was not important from the charts that stickers were limited.

Keep this open communication going.

I cant think of anything.

Allow more people to attend – more seating available.

Book a bigger room so there is greater diversity of point of view. More timely e-mails.

Start on time.

More money

I think Kati did a fabulous job and she really does not need to improve her presentation at all.

More answers to the issues that were discussed.

15. Please add additional comments:

Can we talk more about additional funds for centers that serve dinner every night & lunch on Saturday $300 per month is not enough.

Fundraising is an important source of income for any non-profit. There are millions of dollars available for issues including mental health. A clear outline for fundraising is needed however it needs to be done by someone who is experienced and has the ability to train.

I suggest bringing us together to share our ideas once or twice a year.

Thank you very good meeting.

The group was run very well!

Very pleased with the outcomes to be addressed.

Kathi is a wonderful facilitator. Put follow-up discussion on the SCAC agenda.

Please follow through with suggestions from the groups.

Could there be a [word.doc] put together so all the centers can benefit from each other's notes?

Bringing about change is questionable.

I hope that I get a RAISE

Great job ☺

We need more money so we can do the things we need for the centers.

We need to find ways for funding.