

NLCMH Action Group Minutes

December 13, 2011

Cindy P., Susan B., Marji S., Neil E., Deb F., Richard V., Joanie B., Dee J., Alicia D., Rosemary R., Kim G., Bob P., Martha L., Mary Beth E., Lily O., Lynda C..

Video-conferencing reminders: Mary Beth began the meeting at 10:10 am and noted that there are 4 handouts. She reminded everyone about the videoconference tips: let everyone finish speaking before speaking up; mute button available if individual group needs to speak between themselves; cell phones off, no texting please.

Sign-in: A sign up sheet is being passed around for everyone to provide as much or as little information as they want. Please print, make legible especially email addresses. Indicate with asterisk or another way which is your preferred method of contact and receiving information. We will add a column on the sign-in sheet for those who want minutes mailed via USPS. Email will allow information to be sent out quickly, before the month goes by. This is the group's first official list.

Review November Meeting Notes: Group reviewed notes from October and November. Rosemary is taking notes today that may be available on the NLCMH website by Friday (Virtual Recovery Center).

Subcommittee meeting reports:

Cadillac - Dee read list of suggestions for Action group in Cadillac. [See Attached list.] Alicia added writing group was discussed. Dee also noted that Cadillac spoke about having Tom H. come to mini-conferences to talk about bullying. Tom is a pharmacist in Cadillac, whose family has personally experienced the tragic side of having a son bullied. Marji mentioned that there is a speaker bureau going on that was mentioned at the Recovery Conference. Deb noted that at the January, February and March Mini-conferences we will be a session about the photobiographies, kicking it up a notch and using coaches. Nicole E. arranges speakers and other activities for suicide prevention. Mary and her staff make plans for May mental health week, for children and adults. Cindy spoke more about speaker's bureau and preparation/practice for future activities. Bob noted that he is especially concerned about gay/lesbian teens coming out and would be willing to talk about this issue. Deanna will speak to Tom about inviting him to speak at one of our mini-conferences. Joanie suggested having him come to an Action group meeting (in January) to introduce himself to the group and possibly speak at the Recovery Conference.

Mary Beth wondered how we would tie the various activities together happening with different groups? Coordinating mini-conference speakers as well as coordinating with the other staff who are active with community groups (such as Nicole mentioned above). Joanie said it would be Mary Beth's responsibility to coordinate speakers/activities between our group and other CMH groups/activities/speakers. Joanie said she, Mary Beth, Deb, and Cindy meet together to come up with one flowing agenda for each of the offices. Neil expressed interest in being a speaker at a mini-conference about dealing with anger (people's anger and esteem issues often lead them to bullying others).

Mary Beth noted that Martha did a lot of the coordinating of the Houghton Lake mini-conference in November and did a great job in filling in when Mary Beth wasn't available.

Regular Agenda Items

Mary Beth noted that the Action groups currently have three focuses/regular agenda items:

- 1) A chance for members to share ideas from their local ideas. Cadillac is doing a great job "kicking butt" in getting together regularly and discussing ideas/issues.
- 2) A place for consumers and staff to provide input including discussion on mini-conference topics, lobby monitor content, recovery activity.
- 3) Volunteer opportunities (including for upcoming events and projects). The Action group could be a clearinghouse for volunteers.

What else?

Deb suggested we use these as a jumping off point to develop a "charge" for the group. The charge would provide a response to the question, "What is the action group"? Joanie agreed that we need to establish our intent, verbalize it and come to an understanding among ourselves. If we can explain to others what we are doing, this will make it easier for us to recruit new members. Susan suggested having a peer on a lobby monitor video explaining what we do. Consumers might be more likely to come if we have a peer explaining what we do. Susan has volunteered to be the guinea pig about a video presentation of the PATH group and the Journey Recovery Group. Deb is working on getting a video camera to make videos for the Lobby Monitor. Cindy voiced she liked the idea on having a consumer explain on video what the action group does - sharing information, resources, volunteering - make it real simple. Deb suggested two additional standing agenda items: 1) anti-stigma, talking about this every time we met. She suggested we can all share something that we encountered in the community, TV, etc. 2) Leadership – how can we build our own leadership and advocacy abilities. Joanie noted that Marybeth has something on order for Leadership.

Cindy mentioned as an example, a while back a church billboard on Division St. in TC that said "Watch out for the crazies" or something like this. Staff from NLCMH went and met with pastor to discuss and the church did make a change. Mary Beth explained that we all would come and be prepared to talk about something that we may have encountered in the last month. One of the recovery planners (Joanie, Mary Beth, Deb, Cindy) would have something in their back pocket to bring up as at least one example, in case no one else brought up anything. Bob brought up the "kid on the news" as a current example. Mary Beth, Deb, and Joanie confirmed that we will have Leadership material to review at the meetings and Mary Beth has ordered and it is on back order. Lynda expressed that 5 standing items on the agenda should be enough; any more and it would be difficult to get through the meeting. There was general agreement.

Volunteer Clearinghouse

Deb and Mary Beth pointed out volunteer opportunities that were in the November notes. Some opportunities are one time deals (i.e. conferences), others may require preparation or training (i.e. speaking in front of groups). Cindy also provided the example of movie nights. In Cadillac, the library can show movies for free. The action group can watch for potential movies and preview it first to see if they are appropriate to sponsor as a movie night. In TC some NLCMH staff are volunteering at the State Theater, and NLCMH is acknowledged as a volunteer group. The goal is to match up passions; linking with appropriate groups; finding buddies to help in taking the next/extra step. There are lots of different opportunities to do activities. In order to build a volunteer program, what can NLCMH do to help build volunteers 1) outside NLCMH and 2) inside NLCMH (which includes an application process). We would need to group activities into like activities and figure out what support is needed for each chunk. Cindy mentioned Susan McQuaid with United Way as a possibility in presenting a training program for being a volunteer in the community (i.e. local humane society).

Marji asked about the Ambassadors training. Cindy and Mary Beth don't see the "Ambassadors" training fitting in with volunteer activities. They explained to Marji that the Ambassador training has not been used much recently, especially with consumers. Kim spoke about how much she has learned with the various programs she has been in; people are not always aware of everything that is available and that volunteerism and advocacy are a normal part of her life. Bob noted that we need to get this information about all the activities and opportunities out to consumers. Joanie noted we need to learn how to expand the volunteer opportunities outside the Action group. Cindy noted the great help that Alicia and Martha were for the Cadillac and HL mini-conferences and how practicing in these smaller venues can help with our goal of making the annual celebration more consumer-run.

We need to categorize inside and outside volunteer opportunities. Set up a training session for potential volunteers. Joanie suggested having a subgroup of the Action group to get together to work on the volunteer opportunities, with members from each office. After this has been done, we could have sign-up lists at the mini-conference available for the various opportunities. Kim suggested that consumers can match up with other consumers to help people write down their ideas/thoughts that they would like to share as well as helping with photobiographies. Kim is willing to volunteer for this. Cindy agreed that we should match up people with abilities and needs. Alicia agreed that if consumers put their name down on a sign up sheet that would give them a sense of commitment to volunteer and follow-up with their commitment. It was agreed that a sub-group has been formed and for the next meeting will separate volunteer opportunities into various categories (i.e. inside, outside), try to categorize them by type of opportunity (i.e., one-time deal vs. more involved like planning a large conference). The subgroup would also identify what type of support and/or training NLCMH should provide to help people be successful in each of these volunteer opportunities. MaryBeth will be lead facilitator, with Susan in TC (along with Cindy and Deb as support), Kim in Grayling-HL and Alicia in Cadillac.

Recovery Celebration

Joanie spoke about the Recovery Celebration. Joanie said in the past there was funding from 3 different grants to pay for the conference, now there is only one grant source available this year. We want to have the same kind of conference but with less funding. Martha suggested fund raising, and noted we

have 10 months until 9/2012 to raise funds. Joanie said we could look into that possibility. She also pointed out that it's hard to write and receive grants from community organizations because of how large the NLCMH budget is (even though it's going for services).

Dee noted that Timber Wolf Lodge in Missaukee was a place that the Cadillac group had discussed. She thinks that the cost is reasonable (\$500?). Mary Beth and Cindy are going to look into different venues, including Timber Wolf Lodge. Cindy said using Tom H. as a speaker sounds promising. She also suggested having consumers present their stories with storytelling (based on their photobiographies) at the conference. Bob suggested going to a campground/beach for the conference. Joanie suggested this might be necessary in the future with less money. Cindy agreed this may be necessary in the future.

Cindy asked that members start to collect items for door prizes for the Recovery Conference. If we get anything for Christmas we don't want to please consider donating for this use. She said she already has two boxes full. Lynda suggested the Bill Oliver/Best Western conference center in Cadillac as another possible venue. Susan suggested St. Francis' hall in TC which supported 300 people in a recent conference she attended. Deanne agreed to contact Tom H. to have him attend the next action group meeting. Mary Beth asked members to email her any information or suggestions we might have. Mary Beth and Cindy will report back at the February Action meeting about location(s) for the Recovery Conference.

Mini-Conferences

Deb noted there is a presidential election this year and asked if we should plan for voter registration drives, legislative breakfast, or other ways to get people informed? Susan concurred. Bob cautioned us to be very generic, such as voter registration, in how we approach the elections. Kim suggested having the names available of who's running, where. Susan suggested that we could help by helping to get people out to vote [i.e. provide transportation], so they can go vote their own mind. Cindy noted that in the past the Consumer Advocacy Council sponsored candidate forums which they might do again this year. Cindy concurred with Bob; we have to be real careful about how we do this. NLCMH role is to help people to advocate for themselves.

Cindy noted that the CAC has openings for all counties and they meet the 2nd Wednesday every month 1:30 – 3:00. [Per Deb L., the CAC will have video available only if someone makes a request in advance to attend at another office and if video is available.] Cindy pointed out the mini-conference schedule is in today's handouts. She noted that what works best with attendance is if people invite other people to come. Cindy said she's still working on the agenda for the next conferences, based on input received from past action group meetings. Possible topics include: Confrontation-Avoidance techniques; Smoking Cessation; Susan B. will talk about MI-PATH groups and other TC groups (5-15 minutes); Storytelling, Family communications; Exercise on mindfulness. Rosemary suggested adding a short segment (15 minutes) with physical exercise/yoga/tai chi/stretching, to help break up the day.

As a side note: Cindy noted that the Northern Disabilities Network (we've had their staff as speakers at our mini-conferences) has a spaghetti dinner fund raiser on December 19 from 5p-8p at Li'l Bo 1-2 blocks west of the NLCMH office.

Next meeting 1/11, in Grayling (for Gray/HL ofc). Feb 8 will also be in Grayling (HL video is not available)

Meeting Evaluation:

Bob liked that we nailed down certain topics. Susan would like to add that it's difficult for her to sit for two hours. It would help to have a break after 1 hour. Bob suggested members could take our own break. Susan said it may make some people feel funny about leaving on their own. Marji said one thing she liked was the focus and the decisions that were made today; that this was real action. Kim said that if we could make decisions, this is what action groups tend to be; hammer it down, appreciates it can be done.

Mary Beth noted that everyone was given the schedules for Mini-conference and action groups. She reminded everyone to please register for mini-conferences by the deadlines.

Good byes and goodwill were sent.

Marji read the recovery definition.