
NEW DIRECTIONS

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“By, for, and about consumers of behavioral health services.”

April/May 2004

“A Day in the Life of A Case Manager Assistant”

(Crawford, Missaukee, Roscommon, & Wexford

counties.)

When it comes to being a Case Manager, Therapist, Brief Treatment Therapist, ACT, or even an ES worker, everyone always needs help. That is why the term “Assistant” comes in handy. A couple of years ago, **Valarie Bishop** (Chief Operating Officer) applied for a grant so that Case Managers could have assistants to improve services for consumers. Consumers who are currently receiving treatment from CMH, or have previously received treatment, who are in “recovery”, were hired to help consumers with meeting their goals and expectations of the Person Centered Planning Process. What do these assistants actually do? In this article, we will explore “A Day in the life of a Case Manager Assistant.”

Case Management Assistants (CSMAs) work in all office locations. Each CSMA is assigned a “mentor”. A mentor is a case manager who works with adults with mental illness. Mentors help the CSMAs make their work schedules, sort out conflicts, and assign goals when working with consumers.

Cadillac CSMAs/Mentors: Pamela Narlock – Sandy Payne

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Kandu Island

This fall the board of Volunteer and Mentors received a grant for the start up funds of a drop-in center. The name chosen for this drop-in is Kandu Island, which will be located on S. Garfield Rd. in Traverse City.

Progress has been made as stipulated in their grant. They plan to open April 1st, 2004, or sooner if items of need are in place. They have recently announced the hiring of Leslie Sladek-Sobczak as Operations Manager. John Roberts is working as an Operations Assistant and Duane Fox is being hired on a temporary basis as Operations Assistant as well. They will be seeking a permanent operations assistant as soon as time allows.

Kandu Island is looking forward to an open house as warmer weather arrives to our Northern Michigan location. They look forward to opening their doors to you in the near future. Hours of operation will be posted soon as well as directions to the site.*

CHAT ROOM

The Chat Room drop-in located in Houghton Lake is on the move! They are in the middle of relocating to a church that offers 4500 sq. feet. They anticipate a higher attendance in the future due to the ability to offer more activities with the added space. They hope to be fully moved by April 5th.

As in all moves they take time and bring on challenges, both expected and unexpected. This in no way hampers the enthusiasm of those who attend. Recently their board members and director Ernie Reynolds attended a directors meeting at the Standish Friendship Center. Eight other drop-ins attended as well and were able to network with each other for support and information. It is quite certain that Ernie and Leslie (from Kandu Island) will be networking as well as visiting each other’s drop-ins.*

If you would like to contribute to New Directions please contact The Editor, Leslie Sladek-Sobczak, at 231 933-4907, or email Leslie.Sladek-Sobczak@nlcmh.org.

Contributors to this news letter. Ernie Reynolds and Mary Beth Evans
Staff contributions: Dave Byington, Mary Kay Neimisto and Tamra Tambeau

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Nannette Marvin – Liz Gabel

Erica Olofson-Judy Hook-Losey

Grayling CSMA's/Mentors: Shannon Secord – Lois Adams

Houghton Lake CSMA's/Mentors:

Mary Beth Evans-Brenda Preteroti

Eden Frank – Julie Weiss

Everyday, CSMA's come in the office and maintain the thought of the whole idea of "I have been there and I have done that!" To the consumers, that means more than just coming in to the office and talking with someone who doesn't necessarily know how they feel.

I asked all the CSMA's about how they felt about their jobs. ALL of them responded with positive attitudes and gratefulness toward Northern Lakes CMH. The mentors for each CSMA are a huge self-esteem booster to them, in helping them overcome their fears of being in the workforce again. "I really love my job! It came at a time when I was worried that I could not be employed at all. This job has boosted my confidence in myself, reduced the anxiety of not having a job, but best of all, it REALLY, REALLY feels good to help someone else for a change instead of always being the one in need." (**Pam Narlock**) In **Nanette Marvin's** case, she stated the following: "The one thing I would not change about my position is the one on one contact with the clients. I like helping people and have been told by clients, that they truly are thankful for the services we perform for them." **Shannon Secord** stated that "I can provide the resources, materials and support, but they have to have an interest in helping themselves. I acknowledge that initially it is hard work, but eventually it gets easier and they will soon see results." Although this is just a brief overview of a CSMA's job, we like to see it as part of our future and the future of our clients. "Being a CSMA to me means helping my clients overcome their problems in a positive way. It means getting them out of bad situations and into great environments where they can thrive and learn who they are and overcome a label," stated **Eden Frank**.

The recovery process, as most of us know, entails much dedication and time into one's own values and beliefs. "It helps us to help the clients. And, above all, it helps the client know that there is a light at the end of a dark rainy tunnel. When I personally applied for this job, I was a recovering drug addict and single mother of twin girls with absolutely no intention of the future. Now, I am attending undergraduate school for a BSW. To me, my mentor, Brenda Preteroti, has taught me that I can be someone. That is why I am doing what I am doing and loving every minute of it." (**Mary Beth Evans**) "It is an important job and also a privilege in assisting case managers with the needs and responsibilities of the people that they serve at CMH." (**Erica Olofson**)

We all work very closely with our mentors in achieving goals for our clients and ourselves. When a

client meets with their Case Manager and compiles a Person Centered Plan, they set goals for themselves which CSMA's help meet along with CSM's. "The new PCP process helps me learn about each consumer's lives and trials and also helps me focus on ways to overcome each obstacle." (**Eden Frank**). "The biggest part I play in helping clients with their PCP goals is in the form of transportation to and from appointments with their Case Manager or doctor. We work with people who need help with daily living skills such as getting to the bank to pay bills or helping them work on specific goals such as improving their reading and writing skills for one example." (**Nanette Marvin**). "[The best part of my job is] when the clients are seeing improvements in themselves and are moving forward in achieving their goals." (**Shannon Secord**). "The only thing that I would ever add to my job is more training. I would make it VERY clear that the job is less about transportation and more about helping clients meet their goals." (**Pam Narlock**) "I give advice to the clients when they need it and when it involves goal related issues and the issues that are in the person-centered plan." (**Erica Olofson**).

We all work hard to meet the goals of our clients, mentors, and ourselves, so next time you see a CSMA, tell them what a great job they are doing. They all have worked very hard to get to where they are today, and continue to work hard not only for themselves, but also the clients of Northern Lakes Community Mental Health. ✨

Mary Beth Evans, CSMA marybeth.evans@nccmh.org

Consumer Advisory Council

The newly formed Consumer Advisory Council (CAC) of NLCMH met on February 10, 2004. This meeting was one of many of the past few months. There has been a great quantity of work put into bringing the consumers together from their previous groups. At this meeting the bylaws were approved and now allow the CAC to move on. Their next meeting was March 16th in Grayling. They chose people to serve as Chair and Vice Chair for a two-year term. Terms for all others are yet to be determined. Meetings will be on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 1:00 p.m. These meetings are open to the public and will be videoconferences in the future.

The Vision and the Mission of the CAC are as follows:

VISION

KANDU ISLAND drop-in center announces a Sneak Peek to Take place Friday 3/26/04 from 2:00-7:00 p.m. and Saturday 3/27/04 from 10:00-5:00 p.m. Located at 3003 S. Garfield Rd. Traverse City. Phone: 231 932-1590 April 1st opening for regular hours 10-5:00pm, Monday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

NLCMH Senior Programs

Mary Kay Niemisto-Manager DD/CSM & Senior Teams

Have you ever wondered what is going on the first floor of the Traverse City offices, that is not a part of Traverse House? This is where you will find the Senior Programs.

We have been providing a Senior Program since 1984, when we started with 1 afternoon a week. This was at the Friendship Center on Boardman and State. Through the years there have been many changes, from location, i.e. BOGI building, Front St. office, Building 50, as well as program times, staffing, consumers, budget challenges, etc... Through it all we have continued to provide excellent services and opportunities for our senior population.

Currently, the Program operates Wednesday and Friday. BATA provides transportation for our consumers. Some of the folks who come to the Program live in a specialized unit at Birchwood Nursing Facility. The Department of Community Health, through the State of Michigan, supplies a specific budget to provide these services. Many of the other consumers live in the community in adult foster care homes.

The Senior Programs are designed to serve persons over 60 years of age or older with conditions that may cause isolation, confusion and depression. Both structured and informal recreation/leisure activities are offered. Examples of program activities are: intergenerational sharing, nutrition counseling, health monitoring, music therapy, advocacy assistance with personal care. Less structured activities include: crafts, reading, cooking, games (BINGO) and parties.

Some of the Program goals are: increasing socialization, communication skills, self esteem appropriate use of leisure time, and most importantly, quality of life issues.

The program has an excellent staff, with many years of experience. They are dedicated and have a true interest in working with the seniors. If you have any questions, feel free to stop by or call us. (231) 935-4172

Traverse House News

Tax Day

Tax day was March 24th this year. Over 35 people were assisted which resulted in savings of over \$13,000.00. Anyone needing to use the long form or that had deductions had to go elsewhere. If you still need to do your taxes you may need the following information:

Your Social Security Number, W-2 forms, 1099 Forms, Social Security Statements, 2003 rent paid, your address/addresses for months lived there, and landlord's name and address.

Foster Care Filers; name and address of AFC Home, months lived there, how many beds home is licensed for, and total amount of taxes paid on AFC Home for 2003.

If you didn't make it to the tax day you have until **April 15th to file. Don't forget!**

Ethnic Food Night Recipes

Traverse House, (the clubhouse located in Traverse City serving Grand Traverse and Leelanau Counties,) puts on their chefs hats and aprons, continuing with their tradition. If you're unfamiliar to their ethnic meals and the wonderful food they create on these nights, you are truly unfortunate. One Monday evening a month they get out the recipes from books, the Internet or from members and staff. They choose a cuisine of ethnicity. The variety of seasonings and flavors has varied greatly and offer all that partake in the meal a truly Epicurean delight.

For January they prepared Thai soup that all enjoyed with a recipe from Dave Byington. Traverse House graciously allows us to share these recipes with you. Now you can get out your pots and pans, spices and herb, and create your own ethnic night. Do not forget to decorate and add a little music for total sensory experience.

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Consumers in Michigan

I have recently had the opportunity to sit down and actually talk with Susan Shaver, *Consumer Council Representative of NAMI of Michigan*, instead of exchanging emails and phone calls.

We spoke about the upcoming State NAMI Conference to be held in Traverse City. There will be a pre conference meeting of Michigan consumers: April 24th. They will be holding an election for the position Susan presently holds. She hopes every NAMI affiliate will send at least one consumer. She hopes you can attend this event.

NAMI has an "OPEN DOOR" membership for persons of limited means at \$3.00. For more information on this event you can contact me at 933-4907. - The Editor.

“Tips” for a Better Future

This article is the first in a series to be included in the consumer Newsletter. When you enter into the realm of Community Mental Health there may often be terms used that are not familiar to you. I encourage you to always ask! Today we will talk about Natural Supports. I hope this helps you in your process of recovery.

Everyone has Natural Supports in their life, although you may not refer to them as a Natural Support. For many they are friends, family, neighbors... Yes, these are some of your Natural Supports. Different names but all the same in the end.

Natural Supports are people in the community at large, who support you but are not paid to do so. Your family; spouse, fiancé, parent, siblings, aunts, uncles... and friends! Others you may not think of right away are clergy, or members of your church, synagogue, or other faith based organization. Supports groups such as AA, NA, or Grief Groups. Mental Health based groups such as Schizophrenics Anonymous, NAMI-C.A.R.E, and Depressive Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA). Co-workers, classmates, roommates, club members, and the list continues.

If you sit down and compile a list of these people, this may help remind you that you are not alone out there. Remember that there are those who care about you. Then the world won't appear to be so lonely, nor will the problems that you have be as large when you keep in touch with these people and share.

They want to be a part of your life. If you cut them out of your daily life, they may interpret this as if you no longer want them to be a part of your life. They may be hurt in the process, and in the end, you yourself will be hurt. Keep in touch with your Natural Supports. We are all in this game of life together.

If you have lost contact with your Natural Supports and reconnecting with the people from your past is a difficult process for you, you might try some of the following ideas. Rebuilding your Natural Supports. You might begin by attending a support group, club house or drop-in center. See what is available in the community, the newspaper lists a variety of events that are free to the public. Volunteering at a place you feel comfortable, somewhere you've frequented yourself such as a pantry, a thrift shop, your local library... Join a church, take a class, attend a seminar... Friendships grow slowly, but when you find someone with like interest there will be many opportunities for you to connect. I'll share more on building and maintaining friendship soon. Until next time, I wish you well.✿

Leslie Sladek-Sobczak

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THAI Soup

The best way to make this work is to sample it as you go till it tastes good to your palate.

Ingredients:

Chicken Broth (enough for the amount of soup you want)
Coconut Milk (enough to add flavor but not dominate the broth)
Fresh Lime Juice (one lime for every 30 ounces of broth)
Thai chili pastes for heat and flavor (enough to attain the heat you want)

Combine above ingredients in pot and heat

Add to soup:
Shrimp or chopped chicken
Mushrooms

Something green for garnish at the end, such as scallions or parsley.

Ongoing Events

If you know of other ongoing events that could help other consumers, please contact the Editor of New Directions.

- **NAMI Support** second Monday of the month at 6:00pm Munson Medical Center-Doctors Dining room.
- **Schizophrenic's Anonymous** every Friday at 1:00pm Traverse House, 105 Hall St. Traverse City.
- **Support group** for parents of children with ADHD Third Thursday of the month 6:00-7:30pm. Child Guidance Inc, 947-2255
- **Survivors of Suicide Support Group** third Wednesday of the month, 7-8:30 p.m., at Mercy Hospital 2nd floor Wexford Room, Cadillac.
- **NAMI-C.A.R.E. Support group for people with a mental illness. 2nd Monday of the month, 6-7:30pm. Grace Episcopal Church Corner of Washington and Boardman, TC.**
- **DBSA** (Depressive Bipolar Support Alliance) meets every Tuesday 7-8:00pm Club Cadillac. Contact Betty Clark at 775-5638.
- **Our Kids** support group, for parents/caregivers of kids with bipolar disorder, 7:00pm fourth Tuesday, Traverse Area District Library. 941-9128.

Upcoming Events

Community Easter Day Dinner April 11th 2:30-4:30 pm
VFW Hall, 3400 Veterans Drive, TC. 263-7130
NAMI State Conference April 24-26th, “Stigma: Breaking the Barriers” contact NLCMH Customer Service for registration information at 231 933-4907 or 1-800 337-8598. Consumer Conference May 25th, Ludington-“Knowledge leads to Empowerment.”

“Everybody has a right to feel the way they feel – don't deny your emotions.”

“Life is to be enjoyed. Don't forget to smell the flowers as you go.”

“Sometimes you have to face difficulty with a smile to overcome it.”