

Northern Lakes Newsletter

Published Quarterly

For consumers and staff interested in Recovery

Northern Lakes CMH Recovery Definition

Recovery is a personal journey of hope, purpose and growth. It is the process of setting our own directions in life. We accept the responsibilities of meeting challenges, using our own abilities, strengths and determination.



Welcome to the first edition of the Consumer/Staff Newsletter!!!

We're excited to present this first edition of our Recovery Newsletter. This is a place where we can share tips, inspirational stories, information about different learning opportunities, conferences and classes, personal expressions, and other information on recovery. We'll report on progress at Northern Lakes CMH as we make more changes to our system to make it even more focused on recovery – including successes and best practices. We'll share information on what is going on in the recovery movement in our local area, as well as throughout the state of Michigan, the United States, and the world.

We hope you will get involved in this publication by sharing your views, submitting articles and article ideas, and giving feedback on what you like and don't like. Contact Mary Beth Evans, Recovery Coordinator, with your ideas at marybeth.evans@nlcmh.org or 989-366-2950.

Happy Reading!



The photos on this page are by Dori Jewell, who recently completed her photobiography. A new book of photobiographies is coming later this year. It's not too late to be included.

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“One person can make a difference, and everyone should try to help.” ~John F. Kennedy

Colleen's Recovery Corner:

Spring is coming soon. . .tips to feel good as spring arrives

(Colleen is the Director of the Office of Consumer Relations at the Michigan Department of Community Health in Lansing)

As a mental health consumer, I was never advised on the effects of weather on my well-being. It was not an oversight as it was a sign of the times. Today the cutting edge, paradoxically, is mental health and physical health and how the two are intertwined.

I learned to look to the outdoors, to the weather, to understand some of my moods and what caused them. My last diagnosis was determined by my doctor because my episodes were all in the spring or fall – on that basis he determined that I have bipolar, not schizophrenia as the previous doctors had said.

All in all, I now look to the weather (temperature, cloudy/sunny, barometric pressure and time of year) for overt mood variances and to resolve the questions I often ask myself: Why do I feel this way? Moody? Energetic? Sleepy? Depressed? Anxious? Sometimes, I can tell if the barometric pressure has dropped even before I open my eyes in the morning.

One thing to remember is that individuals without a disorder struggle with the changes in the weather also. However, for us with a disorder, we just have a more drastic effect on our well-being.

Why is understanding of the effects of weather on us, consumers, important? It is good to know because it will give us an understanding and acceptance of medication, lifestyle, or other external factors that are not the actual cause of the variances in our mental wellness. More importantly, it avoids a downward spiral into self-blame and self-criticism.

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Kathy and Carol

Learning Community Members – Gave the gift of their image for the statewide faces of mental health display

Kindness Idea: Seven Greatest Gifts

www.helpothers.org

- 1 - **Gift of service:** donate to a cause, as a holiday gift for your best friend.
- 2 - **Gift of affection:** be generous with hugs, kisses and pats on the back.
- 3 - **Gift of laughter:** clip cartoons, share funny stories.
- 4 - **Gift of a written note:** send a 'thank you' note, write a letter to an old friend.
- 5 - **Gift of a compliment:** a simple 'you look great today', a sincere 'thank you for a wonderful meal'.
- 6 - **Gift of listening:** no interrupting, no daydreaming, no responding, just listening.
- 7 - **Gift of solitude:** spend some time in silence, help others spend some time in silence.



This painting is by Robert W. Pollard of Houghton Lake. He regularly attends the painting group in Houghton Lake and is helping to facilitate the group in Grayling as well.

Expressing creativity to heal the soul.

Thomas McClellan is an experienced process painting instructor with a master of arts degree in Counseling Psychology and a certificate in Holistic Health. He currently facilitates the art groups in all four of our office locations. Tom stated, "Art therapy has no effects. It always meets you right where you are." The group is described as a dynamic process for expressing your feelings and ideas through the arts. It's also a great way to get your thoughts out of the way and your emotions out and expressed rather than stuffed or suppressed inside. The art groups are free with all supplies provided. Check the website for the schedule in each office.

Spring Cleaning for your Life

By Life Coach Kathy Gates
www.reallifecoach.com



Here are some ideas to get you started on a Spring Cleaning for your Life:

Clean out the anger, hatred, jealousy, and self-doubt. If you need to apologize, bite the bullet and do it. If you're still angry and waiting on an apology from someone who won't or can't give you one, decide to let it go. It's not contributing to your life; in fact, it's contaminating it, so it needs to go to the junk heap at the curb. Only then can you put something positive in its place. Make some room for happiness.

Wash away delay and procrastination. Delay and procrastination set you up for frustration after frustration. You'll find yourself constantly in the past, trying to catch up, scrambling around trying not to get caught. Is that really how you want to live? Get into the present! You're missing your life by living yesterday over and over.

Dust off your attitude, and put on a fresh coat of positive. A positive attitude begins with gratitude. For just one day, practice giving instead of taking, practice sharing as much love, help, care, concern, and gratitude as possible. It'll change your perspective.

Throw out misunderstanding and lack of patience. Sweep out the dirt of gossip or lies. Open the shades and let in the warmth of friendship. True friendships take work, time, energy, and thoughtfulness. True friendships require forgiveness, and require understanding. You don't want to be a doormat to anyone, but you do want to find relationships that are equal and reciprocal. The results are certainly worth it.



*"By coming together you know you're not the only person who has problems."
 ~Ruth B.*

Lighten up your thoughts with humor and fun. Yes, life is difficult and the world can be a scary, tiresome place. But in your own world, you are in charge of every day. You decide what to think about. You decide when to laugh, what to read, what to listen to, what to think about. Choose to insert laughter into each day; choose to have a little fun every day.

Open the windows of your mind to new ideas and a fresh perspective on living a happier, better, easier life. Change takes action. There's no silver bullet, no magic pill. But if you'll open your mind to some different ways of doing things, if you'll try some new habits, if you'll work your mind muscles and your organizational skills in a different way, you'll find that you'll create the life that you truly want, not just the one that you end up with.

Enjoy the person you are. If you don't like yourself, find out why, and start working on becoming a person you do enjoy and that others will enjoy also. The returns will be worth it.



Colleen’s Recovery Corner *(Continued from page 2)*

Realizing that recovery is nonlinear and that we will have “ups and downs,” even with medications, it will allow us not to go down a pathway that cannot be changed or altered and that is OK. We do not need to feel defeated in our journey of recovery, realizing that the cause of a mood change maybe outside ourselves and beyond our control.

Unfortunately, sometimes the only way out of negative emotions is perseverance and courage when weather is the factor. Steps that we can take to lessen the effects of the weather:

1. Exercise routinely, especially when we don’t want to because of a down mood. Ironically, exercise is one of the best “anti-depressives” there is. And it is natural also.
2. Keep a record of your moods on a chart. Make a chart that includes the day, date, time of day, range of down, normal, and high moods. What is important is to keep the details about the weather: sunny, temperature, barometric changes, cloudiness, etc. With this chart you will be able to find out for yourself how weather coincides with your moods.
3. Keep in touch with good support people. Family, therapists, co-workers and friends. They are a rich source of information of how you are doing and also of encouragement in your road to recovery.
4. Meditation and Mindfulness are good to help us internalize and identify the aspects of our feelings and thoughts that are from within and those that are from without (i.e., weather).
5. Good Eating habits can be an effective way to help our moods even when the weather is a contributing factor. Nutritious foods can counteract the effects of weather directly by counteracting our biochemistry.

The human is a very complex being, and we need to realize that our journey into mental wellness is made up of many individualized and complex parts. One positive key is learning, awareness, and educating ourselves in our own unique solutions that work for us (or don’t) as we move further into wellness, recovery and beyond. Weather is one factor that needs to be addressed.

Have a Great Spring, Everyone!

Colleen Jasper,
Consumer



Spring has Sprung

By Nick Walker
Small Gate Media

You don’t have to look far to see signs of spring. From the budding of the trees and the warming of the temperatures to the animals coming out of their winter hideouts, there seems to be a promise of new birth and color in the springtime air.

The first day of spring in the U.S. is considered to be around March 20th or 21st, depending on what day the vernal equinox occurs. This is when the sun sits directly above the equator on its apparent trip northward. Of course the sun isn’t moving; the earth is. As earth revolves around the sun, the top half, called the Northern Hemisphere, becomes tilted more toward the sun as winter turns to spring. Meanwhile the bottom half, the Southern Hemisphere, becomes tilted more away from the sun. So it is autumn for people in Australia and the southern parts of Africa and South America.

In the US, spring is a time of transition not only for plant and animal life, but for the weather too. It can mean weather extremes from very cold and snowy days to humid and stormy days. Some of the country’s biggest snowfalls have occurred in March, and the period from March to May is the time of year when much of the south is most likely to get severe thunderstorms with hail and even tornadoes.

Take a Break with some Sudoku Fun!!!

6	8			2	7		1	
3	4			1	5		6	
				3		8		7
4				8	6			
9	7						5	6
			5	9				8
2		1		5				
	5		9	6			8	2
	9		1	7			3	5

Myths About Stress and Time Management

Myth #1: All stress is bad. No, there's good and bad stress. Good stress is excitement, thrills, etc. The goal is to recognize personal signs of bad stress and deal with them.

Myth #2: Planning my time just takes more time. Actually, research shows the opposite.

Myth #3: I get more done in less time when I wisely use caffeine, sugar, alcohol or nicotine. Wrong! Research shows that the body always has to "come down" and when it does, you can't always be very effective after the boost.

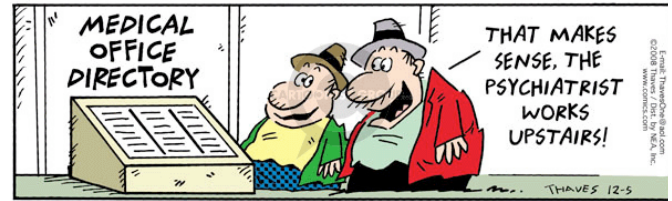
Myth #4: A time management problem means that there's not enough time to get done what needs to get done. No, a time management problem is not using your time to your fullest advantage, to get done what you want done.

Myth #5: The busier I am, the better I'm using my time. Look out! You may only be doing what's urgent, and not what's important.

Myth #6: I feel very harried, busy, so I must have a time management problem. Not necessarily. You should verify that you have a time management problem. This requires knowing what you really want to get done and if it is getting done or not.

Myth #7: I feel OK, so I must not be stressed. In reality, many adults don't even know when they're really stressed out until their bodies tell them so. They miss the early warning signs from their body; for example, headaches, stiff backs, twitches, etc.

http://managementhelp.org/prsn_prd/basics.htm



Coming Up

Recovery Calendar → This calendar is being created to inspire and promote recovery. It will be provided to key community stakeholders who can help change the system as well as staff and consumers throughout NLCMH

Recovery Cookbook → Will be focusing on healthy foods and cooking/eating on a budget. It will be used as a curricular tool in our recovery classes which focus on wellness. It will also provide recognition of those submitting recipes and contribute to a stronger consumer-staff partnership

Recovery Postcards → being created and used for celebrations of those who use verbal and visual expression as a means to heal the soul; used in a variety of ways to provide tangible evidence that recovery is possible – to be used as mailers, in community events, as inspiration in CMH Offices

Recovery Videos → Two videos are being created. One will be used for consumers entering into the system for the first time and one will be used for community presentations

New Photobiography Book → Our first photobiography book was published in the fall of 2007 and they were so popular we had to do a second printing! A new photobiography book is in the works. You still have time to submit your story if you haven't done so already

Performance Art → Interviews were held to hire someone to run the performance art chorus here as a new Anti-Stigma campaign project. It's expected that performances will be connected to fall/winter seasons for the holidays

REE Survey Results → REE (Recovery Enhancing Environment) surveys were administered in all six of our counties in March. We are anxiously awaiting our results and will publish them when they become available



Five Stages In The Recovery Process

© Appalachian Consulting Group

THERE ARE TIMES WHEN A PERSON. . . .

- **Is overwhelmed by the disabling power of the diagnosis** to the point that they cannot function. Usually at this stage, the person is overwhelmed by the symptoms of the diagnosis.
- **Has given in to the disabling power of the diagnosis.** At this stage the person believes that they are the diagnosis. The diagnosis has taken over their life and has become the way they define themselves. The diagnosis has become their identity.
- **Is questioning the disabling power of the diagnosis.** In this stage, the person is beginning to believe that change is possible. They may not know what they can do, but their old belief system that they can't do anything is beginning to change.
- **Is challenging the disabling power of the diagnosis.** Questions must be followed by action. Action always involves risk. In this stage a person does not necessarily have a plan of action that is moving them towards a long range or even a short ranged goal. They just feel they have to do something.
- **Is moving beyond the disabling power of the diagnosis.** The effects of mental illness are no longer the primary focus of one's life. The person moves on to other interests and activities.



Shown here, Larry Fricks and Ike Powell from the Appalachian Consulting Group are meeting with Northern Lakes staff to test out the new video and training materials we created. Since then, the video has been piloted with Traverse City case managers and peer support specialists. The video will soon be rolled out for use in our six counties for people starting services and for staff!

In conclusion...

We hope you have enjoyed this first issue of our recovery newsletter. Please help us decide on a name for this newsletter for future editions! We'd like something a little catchier than Northern Lakes Newsletter. If you have an **idea for a newsletter name**, please contact Mary Beth Evans, Recovery Coordinator, at 989-366-2950 or marybeth.evans@nlcmh.org.

And, if you would like to start in on "Spring Cleaning For Your Life," please consider attending a **Recovery Learning Community** meeting. It's never too late to join in and you will be able to learn more about recovery with others who share this interest.

Other ways you can get involved in creating a substantial recovery for yourself include signing up for Pathways to Recovery and/or MI-Path Chronic Disease Self-Management Program. **Pathways to Recovery** is an in-depth, peer-led course on using your personal strengths in your recovery journey. The **MI-Path Chronic Disease Self-Management Program** is a six-week course to help you learn how to self-manage your chronic illness. Both mental and physical illnesses are included.

Learn to love yourself unconditionally. If you sometimes doubt your worth, take a moment to reflect on your accomplishments – big and small – and give yourself the respect you deserve. Instead of dwelling on mistakes or failures, learn from them and realize they've made you wiser and stronger. Giving yourself support and positive "self-talk" helps you nurture the strengths and talents that make you unique. – Unknown

6 8 9 4 2 7 5 1 3
 3 4 7 8 1 5 2 6 9
 5 1 2 6 3 9 8 4 7
 4 3 5 7 8 6 9 2 1
 9 7 8 2 4 1 3 5 6
 1 2 6 5 9 3 4 7 8
 2 6 1 3 5 8 7 9 4
 7 5 3 9 6 4 1 8 2
 8 9 4 1 7 2 6 3 5