

# What's Working Well



...In the Employment of People with Lived Experience of Mental Health Challenges, Parents and Family Members to Transform California's Public Behavioral Health Workforce

What's Working Well

<http://workingwelltogether.org/dnn/>

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## Working Well Together

Training and Technical Assistance Center



### What's Working Well Quarterly News brief

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Working Well Together (WWT) is a collaborative project comprised of the California Network of Mental Health Clients, NAMI California, United Advocates for Children and Families, and the California Institute for Mental Health. Funded by the MHSA and the Department of Mental Health, the WWT Training and Technical Assistance Center supports the vision of the MHSA Act to transform systems to be client and family-driven. As such, WWT supports the sustained development of client, family member and parent/caregiver employment within every level of the public mental health workforce.



### Other Points of Interest in This Issue

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## Trinity—Small County, Big Milestones

By Marlinda Butler and Boe Anna Gorsuch

With a total county population of less than 14,000, Trinity County serves 250 people with mental health challenges with three Peer Specialists (PS) employee. Milestones Wellness Center offers quality peer support to mental health consumers since it opened in 2007, and has enjoyed continued growth in both the number of participants and programmatic richness.

Recently the wellness center moved under the same roof as Trinity County Behavioral Health, which has proven to be an assertive and positive move toward full integration. Participants state that the new environment is more homey, inviting, and comfortable. The move in June already has increased collaboration between the agency and the wellness center. Clinical staff from the agency are working with PS in order to establish wrap-around services for consumers with the highest needs.

A place for positive interactions, consumer advocacy, and solace for those struggling with symptoms, Milestones offers activities, planning groups and a noon meal as part of the daily routine. As knowledge of the wellness center grew so did the number of people who were showing up simply

for a free meal. Having a resource in the community that can offer food and services to the homeless is extremely valuable but it is not the function of Milestones Wellness Center. After settling into the new environment Milestones re-focused on the purpose of the wellness center.

The first task was to define a mission statement: "Wellness is something that is highly individualized, but we agree that it contains these elements: 1) a feeling of personal empowerment 2) establishing and achieving goals 3) achieving a feeling of accomplishment 4) feeling included." The staff wished to explore the idea of a membership model and how it would work for Milestones. It was important to come up with criteria that would support both membership and the idea of wellness. We settled on the following: an individual must have a County address, and self-identify as having a mental health concern, be a family member or be an interested community member. Individuals must be willing to sign up for one activity or chore a week, and meet with a PS monthly to work on his or her individualized idea of wellness. Membership is not without rewards; members receive the benefit of a strong social support system, a sense of

community, a feeling of inclusion and after 10 weeks of membership, can take part in an activity like bowling night, an outing, or another special activity in the community.

Now all report an increased sense of community. Comments from members: "The membership model is the creation of an environment where people can develop a sense of belonging." "Membership means healing, security, and a sense of purpose." And summed up in another member's comment, "[Milestones] means positive interactions, getting involved, gaining self-esteem and confidence."

Trinity County is proud to be a part of something that is truly making a difference in many lives. Milestones is looking to the future to provide a path to wellness and employment for many more. By growing the wellness culture, we broaden consumer and family mutual support and enable more consumers/family members to become employed in public mental health.



## New Peer-Run Respite

With over 800,000 residents and serving around 4,000 people with behavioral health services, Kern County has recently opened an exciting new respite program through Recovery Innovations, called Friese Hope House, in Bakersfield. Exciting because it is mostly peer-run with about 20 staff, and because it aims to give people wellness tools reducing hospital stays... To read and see more, visit: [Friese Hope House YouTube News Video](#), [Friese Article in Recovery Road](#)



## Working Together to Support Shifted Inmates

Many California counties are scrambling to accommodate the shift and release of felons from the State to county jurisdictions. Los Angeles County is contributing a concerted effort by hiring up to 500 staff for various departments including Mental Health, Public Health and of course Probation and the Sheriff's Department. Peer Support Specialists can expect to play an important role in supporting the successful transition of many of these folks into the communities. See [LA Article](#) and [Fact Sheet on AB 109 Law](#)

## WWT Resource Spotlight

Training Now Available on WWT Website for viewing and download:

1. ["Consumers In The Mental Health Workforce" E-Learning](#)
2. ["Training Individuals Who Identify as Consumers and Family Members for Employment in Public Mental Health"](#)
3. ["Retention and Support of Consumer and Family Member Staff Training"](#)

Coming Soon:

"Overcoming Stigma & Discrimination in the Behavioral Health Workplace" E-Learning...and much more <http://workingwelltogether.org/>

## WWT Regional Activities and Events

### Superior Region

WWT-TAC, [Donna Matthews](#), MSW, is doing a bang up job and double duty as our valued WWT Project Manager too, working with the Superior Regional Workforce Partnership and the CMHDA's (CA Mental Health Director's Association) Small Counties Committee to coordinate efforts. (916) 379-5353

### Greater Bay Area Region

WWT-TAC, [Deborah Van Dunk](#) provided training in Monterey County, titled, *"A Guide on Being an Effective Advocate"* and *"Teamwork, Bringing out the Best in Everyone"*. The majority of the participants were consumers currently employed in the public mental health system and a few clinical social workers were in attendance as well. The participants were enthusiastic, asked a lot of appropriate questions, participated and enjoyed the group exercises. Some of the participants were comfortable in sharing personal experiences in the workplace with the audience. Overall, the training was a success! (916) 643-1530 ext. 105



The **Central Region** just completed Regional Training: *"Successfully Negotiating Life Skills for Consumers and Family Members to Enhance Workforce Retention"* under the guidance of Central Region WWT-TAC, John Aguirre.

### Upcoming Regional Training

for Imperial, Kern, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Tri-City, Ventura Counties

### Southern Region

December 20, 2011:  
*"Overcoming Trauma...for Bliss at Work"* Regional Training in Riverside, with Gabriella Grant, Director of the CA Center for Excellence in Trauma-Informed Care, and Happy Larsen, WET Coordinator of San Luis Obispo. Limited seating for county/county contracted employees of the southern region. Free registration at: <http://wwtsouthovercomingtrauma4blissatwork.eventbrite.com>  
Or contact Southern Region, WWT-TAC, [Karin Lettau](#), MS, CRC, (619) 246-7797

**Los Angeles Region:** WWT plans to hit all 8 Service Provider Areas (SPAs) in the next 3 years, starting with SPA 2 & 3 this year with the guidance of County stakeholders.