

# Working Well Together

Training and Technical Assistance Center



## 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

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<http://workingwelltogether.org/>

Volume 2, Issue 4

Spring, 2013

Working Well Together (WWT) is a collaborative project comprised of the California Association of Mental Health Peer Run Organizations (CAMHRO)-PEERS, NAMI California, United Advocates for Children and Families, and the California Institute for Mental Health. Funded by the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), the WWT Training and Technical Assistance Center supports the vision of the MHSA 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. The What's Working Well Quarterly News brief is produced and edited by [Karin Lettau, MS](#), WWT Technical Assistance Coordinator for the Southern Region. Translations and acculturations by [Gabriela Melano, Ed.D.](#)

### Other Points of Interest

- **Monthly WWT Networking Calls**
- **WWT Activities**
- **WWT State Peer Certification Summit**
- **Give Input on Next WET 5 Year Plan**
- **WET Regional Forum Schedule**
- **WWT Talking Points for Forums**

## What's Working Well in Sonoma County?

By Amy Breckenridge

Sonoma County has nearly a half million residents and serves about 9,000 adults and children with behavioral health challenges. Our community is collaboratively very committed to wellness initiatives.

[The Sonoma County Wellness and Advocacy Center](#) in Santa Rosa opened its doors in April 2007, under the Community Supports and Services of the Mental Health Services Act. We are a peer-run and managed Wellness Center with 10 staff members-all employees with lived mental health experience.

The Center is open to anyone who identifies as having mental or emotional challenges which have significantly impacted their lives. People refer themselves, or are referred by community health providers, mental health professionals, outreach workers, or family members. Our foremost focus is to create a safe and welcoming environment, where people can work on their own recovery journey in the ways that they choose. Over 2,000 individuals have joined the Wellness and Advocacy Center during the last six years.

The Center offers peer counseling and support groups, employment assistance and computer classes along with an Open Art Stu-

dio, organic gardens and a variety of community meetings as well as a place to gather and socialize.

Sonoma County also recently implemented a new [Consumer Relations Program](#). This program consists of a Consumer Affairs Coordinator, whose mission is to reach out to and engage people who are currently un-served, underserved or inappropriately served as well as bring the client's voice to the Dept. of Behavioral Health. The Consumer Education Coordinator is charged with creating more opportunities for peers to be employed in the mental health workforce. Beginning in September 2012 the Education Coordinator has met with contract mental health agencies along with County Behavioral Health and has begun analyzing their environments for recovery orientation and their readiness to integrate more people with lived mental health experience into their employment. The Consumer Affairs Coordinator has catalyzed an energized group of peers to facilitate Spanish speakers' support groups as well as promoting more classes for learning Spanish at the Self Help programs in Santa Rosa.

Sonoma County has

four peer-run, self-help centers and currently peers are also employed in several other contract mental health programs. The County is planning to hire people with lived experience as part of a new, mobile crisis team and support to people utilizing Psychiatric Emergency Services. There is a Peer-Action Network within one of the supported housing programs and an active client advocacy network as well. Also the [Sonoma County Peer Outreach Coalition](#) is a group of dedicated teens and young adults who are committed to promoting awareness about mental health issues and risks for mental illness.

This seems to be a highly energized time, for changes within the Mental Health System and communities at large. While we have come a long way, there is still a lot of work to be done.



## Give Input to Next 5 Year WET Plan at Forums

The Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development (OSHPD) wants feedback on the next MH Workforce Education and Training (WET) Five-Year Plan, to guide the development of public mental health workforce strategies – at state, regional and local levels – toward an integrated mental health service delivery system via 14 community forums in May and June. See center of this page for schedule and WWT Talking Points for these forums. [Click here to view the entire flyer including the addresses and times.](#)

**There is \$138 million at stake.** Napa, San Diego and Ventura Community Forums have already taken place. Please lend your voice to these crucial forums leading to important policy planning. **Please Note to attend you must RSVP to:** [OSHPD.MHSAWET@oshpd.ca.gov](mailto:OSHPD.MHSAWET@oshpd.ca.gov).

Join WWT Monthly Networking Calls for people with lived experience working in public mental health:

**Parent Call:** 2nd Tuesday of each month, 10-11am, [1-800-914-3396](tel:1-800-914-3396) Code 3970681, Email [dvandunk@uacf4hope.org](mailto:dvandunk@uacf4hope.org)

**Peer Call:** 2nd Wednesday of month, 4-5pm [1-909-259-0034](tel:1-909-259-0034), Code: 419-253-837. Email [klettau7@gmail.com](mailto:klettau7@gmail.com) if you require toll-free # &/or webinar link.

## Superior Regional Training May 16

Seats are still available for the Superior Regional Training on May 16, 2013 from 10am - 3pm on "Compassion Fatigue and Satisfaction" by Patricia Smith, founder of Compassion Fatigue Awareness Project and Healthy Caregiving, LLC. The training is being held in Sacramento to support attendees in also participating in the WWT Statewide Peer Certification Summit being held the next day. To register or for more information, please contact Donna Matthews, at [dmatthews@cimh.org](mailto:dmatthews@cimh.org) or (916) 379-5353.

## WET Five-Year Plan Community Forums Schedule

May 10, 2013	Humboldt
May 13, 2013	Alameda
May 15, 2013	Los Angeles
May 20, 2013	Stanislaus
May 29, 2013	Shasta
June 3, 2013	Sacramento
June 4, 2013	Butte
June 6, 2013	Orange
June 7, 2013	San Bernardino
June 13, 2013	Monterey
June 17, 2013	Tulare

### WWT Talking Points for Forums:

- The Mental Health Services Act calls for the integration of consumers and family members at all levels of the mental health system, including as providers of services.
- This inclusion is a recognition that strictly clinical and medical model services are not sufficient to build resiliency in families and children or assist individuals to recover from mental health challenges.
- Individuals managing a mental health challenge and families supporting children and adult family members benefit from support by someone who has had a similar life experience.
- In California, there is no established statewide standard for hiring, training, supporting or defining the scope of practice for Peer Support Specialists.

### WET dollars should be spent:

- To continue and increase funding for WWT as the only state-wide collaborative working toward the inclusion of consumers, parents and families into the mental health work-force.
- To support a statewide effort to further develop a State Certification Program for Peer Support Specialists—consumer, youth, parent, and family Peer Support Specialists, including specializations in forensics and whole health.
- To develop a certifying body, certification requirements, further develop curricula, codes of ethics, values and principles, scope of practice, training requirements, necessary supports on the job and preparing the existing workforce.

## WWT Summit for State Peer Certification

The WWT Statewide Peer Certification Summit will be held on May 17, 2013 in Sacramento to provide stakeholders an opportunity to review and give input on recommendations for statewide certification of peer providers in public mental health and integrated care settings and who have consumer, family member, transition-age youth and parent/caregiver expertise. While the registration is now closed due to meeting capacity limits, WWT is working on having the summit webcast. In our next issue we will report on the Summit and final stakeholder recommendations to the State.

## Greater Bay Area Regional Training May 15

Seats are still available for the Greater Bay Area Regional Training on May 15, in San Mateo for "*The Emerging Peer Role in Mental Health—Wraparound Systems Change and Family Partnerships*" facilitated by Connie Burgess Consulting and Associates. Click here for the [Registration form](#) on the [WWT Website](#). [Deborah Van Dunk](mailto:Deborah.VanDunk@cahhs.org), 916-643-1530 ext 105, is the Technical Assistance Coordinator for the Greater Bay Area.

## Central Region Request

As I travel the 20 counties of the Central Region, I am most proud of the successes of the peer-run wellness centers—the activities, the resources, and the marvelous interaction between peers. Yet, I must confess – my bewilderment of the interwoven elements, which serve as the very foundation for success of each wellness center I visit.

Please help me to identify two key elements that contribute to the successful nature of your peer-run wellness center. Send your brief paragraph to me, Ron Shaw at: [ron.shaw@namicalifornia.org](mailto:ron.shaw@namicalifornia.org), describing two key elements that ensure making a difference in the lives of individuals on their road of recovery. Best wishes to all peers working, volunteering or dropping by wellness centers.