How can I change Stigma?
Faces of Recovery October 2017
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Leadership Council

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The art work throughout this newsletter was contributed by members of the
Keystone Rose Garden Psychiatric Rehabilitation Center

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Join us as we move forward with our Faces of Recovery newsletter into 2018!!!
Life, Unrestrained (Excerpt)

January 10, 2013 by Lori Ashcraft, PhD The story of Elyn Saks, JD, PhD Reprint

Elyn, who today is a professor of law, psychology, and psychiatry and the behavioral sciences at the University of Southern California's Gould Law School, opened with a brief recollection of her early experience with schizophrenia.

"Yet here I am," she said. "I have not only a great job but also wonderful friends and a most beloved husband, Will Vinet." But her journey to recovery, marriage, and career wasn't easy. In fact, the two biggest obstacles she would face in her personal quest for recovery and a meaningful life were posed by the treatment process itself.

"Gravely Disabled"

The first—the stigma associated with mental illness—"The stigma of mental illness is the belief that there is a fundamental difference between mental and physical illness, between a mental disability and a physical disability. This belief is that mental illness makes one less than a whole person," she explained.

Elyn was involuntarily hospitalized. The reason given for holding her against her will was that she was "gravely disabled." The principal supporting evidence for the claim, as she sees it, "was that I couldn't finish my Yale Law School homework," a remark that drew laughs and caused her to wonder aloud.
Three essentials for recovery

"Everything about this illness says that I shouldn't be here in front of you today. But I am. And I am, I think, for three reasons. First, I've had excellent treatment, and that being combined with psychopharmacology. Second, I have many close friends and family members who know me and who know my illness. They have given my life a richness and meaning. Third, I have a wonderful work environment. My law school is an enormously supportive setting and it not only accommodates but embraces my needs."

Moving beyond stigma

"Telling stories is hard and it's risky. We all waited until we were very far along in our professional careers to tell our stories."

"Coming out as a person with a severe mental illness carried substantial professional and personal risks. And it will remain that way until people with these illnesses feel that coming forward and telling their stories is safe."
"A JOURNEY OF A THOUSAND MILES BEGINS WITH A SINGLE STEP."

LAO - TZU

My Journey for Life

I am addicted to life
strung out on the opportunities
each day brings, has a certain effect on me.

As I struggle daily to control
my habits and addictive behavior
to earn a decent dollar through hard work,
it is becoming a habit.

Climbing the 12 steps to stay on top of recovery
even though it's not easy.

My outreach program is my higher power,
my biggest supporter of my dollar.

Only Allah knows what is best for you,
when it's best to give it to you.

Basil Boobee Talib

Know Me

- Know me
- I have a name
Road Map for Mental Health Literacy

There are four scientifically recognized areas of understanding and knowledge that are proven to reduce stigma. These methods can provide a good roadmap for mental health literacy for yourself & others.

Knowing how to develop and maintain good mental health: Just like physical hygiene it is important to cultivate healthy mental hygiene. One way to greatly improve mental hygiene is by individuals learning to understand their own emotions and developing positive strategies to deal with them.

Recognizing and understanding mental disorders and treatments: A straightforward way for folks to improve mental health literacy is to research common mental health disorders to gain a basic understanding of both symptoms and treatments.

Dispelling feelings of stigma or misconceptions about mental illness: Self-educating about mental illnesses in order to know the facts from the myths is an extremely effective way to eliminate stigmatizing beliefs. Once you know the facts, don’t be afraid to speak up to inform others about misconceptions—knowledge is always power.

Improving help-seeking efficacy: First, know that seeking help for mental health is completely acceptable. Just like knowing when to see a doctor for a high fever, learn to identify mental health symptoms that require professional attention, and research mental health resources that are accessible to you. [http://ourselvesblack.com/](http://ourselvesblack.com/)
NOSTIGMAS

The definition of stigma is ‘a mark of disgrace associated with a particular circumstance, quality, or person.’ What do we do about stigma? We should get educated, be supportive, work to avoid stigmatizing language, promote awareness, and be an advocate.

The website NoStigmas.org is founded by Jacob Moore and Elizabeth Riegert. It is a mental health support for peers by peers. It is for anyone, no matter where they are in their recovery journey. They follow some core values to keep it a safe environment for all; personal responsibility, community, and positive action. They also stress it is NOT crisis intervention. But there is information for you to contact someone if that issue would arise. The national suicide prevention lifeline is 1-800-273-TALK or you can text “NoStigmas” to 741-741. They also have a resource directory to find additional information, even psychiatric help.

Resources to share your voice and creativity on Stigma
http://nostigmas.org

NoStigmas is a place for you to be yourself and connect with like-minded people about what mental health is really like. No matter where you’re at, there’s a spot for you here!

By connecting to NoStigmas, you can learn how to be a NoStigmas Ally and become empowered to find support, share your voice, plan local activities and participate in global activism.

Our hope is to build a network of compassionate, educated and inspired individuals that share a common goal of eliminating stigmas about mental health. We believe that anyone can find a way to include these values in their everyday life and create a ripple effect that brings awareness to mental illness and help prevent suicide.
It has Ally Training lesson videos and lesson reviews for you to explore your wellness. You must complete a 20 minute overview video by the founders to join the site free of charge. Next you complete Pillars of the Community videos which are an hour long, but each are broken down into three sections.

1. Self Care - Take responsibility of your own wellness.

2. Peer Support - First be an ally of yourself. You cannot support someone if your tank is empty.

3. Advocacy - Speak out to help yourself and others without stigma.

They believe these pillars are a life long journey in your wellness. As you complete each module you will “unlock” member benefits, which are also free. You may pause whenever you have to and come back to it. You do not have to complete it right away. You may volunteer, intern, fundraising, join a peer group, help with events that raise awareness, and there is also a resource directory.

The setup reminds me a lot of the same values used in WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan). I would highly recommend checking it out and becoming a member. Maybe we could get behind them and do a fundraiser or event. Even possibly getting the training's they provide. The possibilities are endless.

Dana Carl, Harrisburg
Stigmatized

Stigma follows me like a stalker always harassing and interfering in my affairs. It gets me feeling that life is just not fair at times.

Today, I just try and deal the hand that I am dealt, living like an underdog where the odds are stacked up against me of winning. There are disbelievers, doubters, congregating and campaigning hate and disapproval. Not giving me a chance, marking and labeling me like a postage stamp. Always accused of something and looked down on, like I am not human.

In my life, it feels like I am constantly on trial, judged by my others. Whether it is the clothes I wear, who I am with, or how I speak.

Stigma just makes life hard as the cabs drive past me assuming I can not pay or people hiring for jobs who can only look at my history and not see me as a person.

Tomorrow when I wake up, I may find more hope. For today, all I can do is try and make it through.

Quote: “Never judge a book by its cover until you read what is inside”

*Basil 'Boobee' Talib, Harrisburg*
Challenging Stereotypes: We must Speak Out

Seven Ways to Writing a successful Letter of Complaint about the Media’s portrayal of Stigma

1. OPEN WITH YOUR PURPOSE AND EXPRESS YOUR FEELINGS: • The purpose of this letter is...
   • To let you know... • To suggest... • To express my disappointment with... • To protest...
   • To condemn...
2. DOCUMENT THE SOURCE OF YOUR COMPLAINT: • Your editorial... • Your article... • Your television program... • Your film... • That appeared on (date) under the title of (name of the editorial, article, program, or film)
3. SAY WHO YOU ARE: • As a reader, viewer/fan who has a psychiatric disability... • As the family member of a wonderful young woman who has a... • As the administrator of a program for persons who works in the field
4. SAY WHAT UPSET YOU AND THE HARM IT DOES: • I can tell you that... • Your joke made me cry from pain and anger... • Your headline made my blood boil... • You are misleading the public about...
5. ADD SOME INFORMATION ABOUT PSYCHIATRIC DISABILITIES: • I can also tell you that...
   • Negative stereotypes profoundly affect attitudes towards persons with mental illness. A 1990 study found that two out of three people surveyed get their information about mental illness from the media – not doctors or other professionals.
6. SAY WHAT YOU WANT DONE: • I implore you to stop... • The slurs and jokes... • The sensational headlines... • The exploitation... • You can address any harm done by accurately reporting
7. EDUCATE!: • I enclose... • Educational material about... • Information about our program... • An article about... SAMHSA
HACC Harrisburg Area Community College
Sharing our Recovery Stories at Human Service Development Classes

There is a day that I look forward to twice a year; Leadership Council's talk with Jeff Glass's psychology class at HACC in regards to helping change the way the Community observes, assumes and reacts to Mental Health individuals living in society as a whole with Kathyann, Kim, Bill and myself. Kathyann started with her life and recovery story from being a mother on welfare, her education, to what happened when she was told that she would never work to having worked for Keystone Human Services for 19 years and counting.

Kim shared her recovery story beginning with giving up her children, to alcohol and drug abuse, to being homeless, entering a Keystone Residential program, to going to conferences and becoming empowered to participate on a Keystone Management Team and having a say as changes are taking place as someone who no longer receives services. She now volunteers her time speaking not only at HACC, but also conducts interviews for staff and co-chairs Leadership Council program. Jeff who is the HACC professor, mentioned to the class that he was wondering what happened to the homeless woman he used to see sleeping on the bridge? She is now speaking and has had her own apartment for 11 years. She also handles her own money and has all her children back in her life. This is all due to her recovery.

Hand holding Heart & Flower: Don't Give In to the Depression, From the depths of the Darkness, There will always be Light. Raychel Musser

I then shared how I went from wanting death because of my diagnoses of alcohol and drug abuse, the past shock treatments and being at a point that I felt that there was no hope, to my belief in God with my own wall of hope in my apartment in which I am now on my 10th year, to handling my own money, to working with all my team members and having a say as to what my goals are. I also co-chair both Keystone Leadership and Mental Health Community Support programs in my county. Without the help of the Keystone staff believing that the staff and consumers can work together, these things might not have happened.
Now together we work to erase the stigma that some of us are still dealing with and want to illuminate from the minds of those in the community.

When asked were there any questions, Jeff asked us to explain in more detail how we could help his students understand actions and the avenues we all used to hasten our recovery? For Kathyann it was “It’s a Wrap”, for Kim it was “Double Trouble” and an AA Home Group program. For me, it was God, my team and my writing.

We were asked if we could give the students what is most important in working with us; we learned that two of the students already work for Keystone. I told them because of my trust issues I need to make eye contact at some point to verify that they are listening. I also told them to acknowledge the successes made by an individual no matter how small the accomplishment to encourage them to want to do more. The class began at 6:00 and we talked until 7:30. We discussed first book “Recovery In Our own Words” and the second book we are working on. We also talked about our upcoming presentation of “Spreading the Wings of Recovery” with Mark Seltzer on Community Inclusion. Participation in speaking was fun, invigorating and also draining, but I Love It!!! 😊

Linda Thomas
People with Mental Health Issues

People with mental health issues must educate the politician, general public and individual we come in contact with about the myths surrounding mental health issues.

We need to display to the public what we are able to accomplish. Each individual will have to determine for themselves when the time is appropriate for them. One area that needs addressed is educating politicians about the importance of funding and that the programs that are funded work for each person who is helped in a program. They are able to help many of their peers.

Also peers should teach each other about the proper way to contact their political representatives. When contacting our representatives we need to advocate the need for equal opportunity for individuals with mental health issues. The topics would be housing, discrimination lack, and of parity in work opportunities.

Get the public to recognize us as productive citizens. I have found that talking with family, friends and associates about my own mental health issues has brought a better understanding to them about people with issues. This is one small step in reducing the stigma. Another important way is to work with the media. They need to cover the many success stories rather than the criminal stories. If they are covering a story and the person has mental health issues, that becomes the lead story. While if the same crime was committed by someone with diabetes that would never appear in the story. The media is a major offender in promoting the stigma against people with mental health issues.

I believe the more support that the mental health community from celebrities, the more we will be able to move our status in a positive direction. I believe it will take a collaborative effort from all areas I discussed, to reach the objective of reducing the negative stigma. However, we can do this on an individual, family and societal level.

*Karl Schwartz*
Discovering Our Lives through Storytelling

During the past year, I was privileged to attend a 2-day seminar, Titled: “The Art of Storytelling.” The 1st day, someone demonstrated what a Personal Recovery story might look like. Our homework overnight was to write down our Personal Recovery story. The 2nd day, we were asked to share our stories. Although I was hesitant and scared (knowing only few people in the room) I went through with it.

I was inspired, felt a stab of self-confidence, and burst of self-esteem and relief after shared. What I discovered was, although our stories were different, they seemed to share similar theme - how people were getting better with their mental health problems. It was a very helpful and rewarding way to share and support one another in our Recovery Journey.

Denise H

Upcoming Seminar “The Art of Storytelling”

Place: Keystone Human Services
211 Granite Run Drive
Lancaster, PA 17601

Dates: October 30th and 31st 2017

Times: 10:00 am-3:00 pm

Instructors: Ellwyn Andres and Karl Schwartz

Registrations: Chris Whitmer
(717) 482-8500 ext. 120
Life Quotes I have learned from my Journey

Before you judge, Understand
Before you hate, Love
Before you act, Think

Let go of the thoughts that weaken you, hold on to the thoughts that strengthen you.

Respect is earned    Honesty is appreciated    Trust is gained    Loyalty is returned

The three C's in life: Choice, Chance, Change

You must make a choice, to take a chance, or life will never change.

The three R's in life: Risk, Resilience, Recovery

Life is about trusting your feelings and taking chances, losing and finding happiness, appreciating the memories and realizing people change.

Before you act, Listen    Before you react, Think    Before you spend, Earn
Before you criticize, Wait    Before you pray, Forgive    Before you quit, Try Again

Suzanne Zajac
Upcoming Leadership Council Conversations and Events

October 17, 2017

One of the reoccurring topics as we have been going through the process of creating “Recovery In Our Own Words II” has been the topic of Stigma.

SAMHSA (our Federal partner) provides some guidance on having these hard conversations. They provide some thought provoking questions that we can use as we explore how we can reduce stigma by building resources within the community. This will be an ongoing conversation as we explore options and opportunities to build partnership. In the October 2017 issue you may have noticed that there have been stories shared as we begin this conversation.

October 18, 2017

Presentation on “Mental Health and Recovery”. See write up on this event from last spring.

October 30-31, 2017

“The Art of Story Telling” Ellwyn Andres and Karl Schwartz are trained presenters in telling a Recovery Story. Class will be offered at KHS 211 Granite Run Dr., Lancaster from 10:00 am-3:00 pm. See a member review of this training in this issue.

November 10, 2017

Wellness Festival: “Finding Connections: Expanding Who You Are” This interactive learning opportunity will be offered at CMU, 1100 S. Cameron St., Harrisburg in collaboration with Leadership Council and Dauphin CSP. Register by November 7, 2017.

November 20, 2017

Continuing Conversation on Stigma and Opportunities for building resources in the Community. Planning for January 2018 newsletter and “A Time to Remember.”

December 8, 2017

Articles due for January 2018 “Faces of Recovery”.

December 19, 2017

“A Time to Remember Candle Lighting” Holidays are hard and this is a time to share healing stories, poems and memories that we can share as a group to remember the past, celebrate the present, and look forward to the future.
“Finding Connections: Expanding Who You Are”

Wellness Festival

November 10, 2017

10:00 am to 2:00 pm

CMU, 1100 S. Cameron St., Harrisburg PA

Who should attend? Anyone receiving or providing services

Key Concept Activities will be focused around developing relationships with paid supporters and expanding the person’s circle of natural supports.

Agenda

10:00 – 11:30 Key Concept Tables: Hope, Support, Education, Personal Responsibility and Self-Advocacy. Each table will be facilitated by 1 -2 peer leaders.

11:30 – 12:30 Lunch and Recovery Stories

12:30 – 2:00 Recovery Bingo

To Register: Contact Chris Whitmer at 717-482-8500 or cwhitmer@keystonehumanservices.org no later than November 7, 2017.

Please provide your name and contact information.

This Wellness Festival includes both individuals and employees of Keystone and the Dauphin County Community Support Program. Please indicate which group you are with when you register.

Registrations are being taken on a first come basis.