Consumer & Liaison Services

Peggy Henderson, Psy.D.
Areas of Focus

- Increase participation of consumers in planning for & implementation of MH care for SMI veterans
- Liaison with MH & veteran organizations (such as NAMI, DBSA, VSO's)
- Liaison between OMHS and the SMI Committee Consumer Council
Consumer Councils

What are Consumer Councils?
What are the goals of a Consumer Council?
How do Councils promote Recovery?
How many Councils are there?
What role do psychologists play in Councils?
How can psychologists support this initiative?
What is a Consumer Council?

- Group of mental health consumers, consumer family members and other relevant mental health stakeholders (such as reps from VSO's, NAMI, DBSA etc)
- VA staff act as a liaison between the Council and VA MH leadership
- Facilities are strongly encouraged to promote a local MH Consumer/Advocate Liaison Council
Goal of a Consumer Council

Goal is to provide individual MH consumer and stakeholder input into VA MH services, exchange facts and information, give VA the unique perspective of consumers of VA services.

Councils help fulfill the President's New Freedom Commission Goal #2—"Mental health care is consumer and family driven"
How Do Councils Promote Recovery?

- Recovery requires one have a voice at the table
- Participation of consumers at all levels of policy planning, program development, implementation & evaluation of MH services is needed
- Promotes self-determination, empowerment, and meaningful roles in society
- Eliminates stigma & discrimination
How Many Councils?

- Currently there are 48 facility level Councils
- 5 VISN level Councils
- 6 facility level Councils are new start-ups since October 2007
What Role Do Psychologists Play in Councils?

- Psychologists have been instrumental in promoting and encouraging Councils in their facilities & VISNs
- Many psychologists are the POC for their Council
- Many LRC's are psychologists & as such are charged with Council startup
How Can Psychologists Support Councils?

- Be involved in your Council—come to meetings—talk with the members
- Encourage veteran consumers to become part of your local Council
- Ask your local Council for their input (i.e., on handbook language, on MH groups offered, their assistance on MIAW…)
- Be open to feedback that the Council gives and share your thoughts with them
Additional Information

- National call on Consumer Councils—2nd Wednesday of each month at 1:00pm ET
- Email groups re Councils
- Contact Peggy.Henderson@va.gov for access code to the call, to be added to email group or to discuss Consumer Council issues individually.
Cultural Competency

- All mental health care must be provided with cultural competency (Uniform Services Package)
- Staff must have training & expertise re military & veteran's culture & must be able to understand the experiences & contributions of veterans
- Staff will receive cultural competency training to reduce health care disparities
Cultural Competency (cont.)

- Cultural competency must be addressed at the individual, professional and systems level

- Cultural Competency Task Force is charged with developing an educational curriculum to promote the delivery of culturally competent care within VHA.
Cultural Competency Task Force

- Established in 2006
- All facilities sent copies of *Culture and Clinical Care*, edited by Lipson & Dibble (American Journal of Nursing Book of the Year winner)
- Purchased *Developing Cultural Competency* video/DVD for all employees
- Will develop 2nd video for clinical staff
- Will develop 3rd video for senior leadership
Contact Information

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