

## CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE NOTES

### PEER RESPITE

Chris provided the leadership to develop an outline of general characteristics and guidelines for the Peer Respite; to be used to develop a charter.

Rights/freedoms assigned to persons seeking support or assistance

- Freedom to come and go if one chooses to be at a peer respite
- Need to decide if “peer” is the name the person will choose
- Freedom to determine own pathway and meaning
- Option to Stay Connected
- Self determination
- Self responsibility for medical record with right to follow medical recommendations as desired
- Transparency in all communications; “nothing about us without us”

Environmental factors

- Trauma sensitive environment
- Fosters trust and compassion
- Word “safe” is redefined
- Comfortable expressing oneself freely
- Consensus re: who can visit or be in space
- Outlet or voice for expression

Qualities of the Group

- Consensus
- Culture of mutual responsibility/Respect for other people’s peace and space
- Responsible to work collectively together
- Culture where people are viewed as capable and can determine and communicate their needs
- Focus is on relating and relationships
- There is no assumption of illness or problems

Qualities of people who work there

- Empathic and compassionate
- Tolerance for unusual behavior
- Willing to openly share and identify with challenges
- Allies identified as being in full support of approach and charter
- Commitment to cultural competence
- Commitment to working alongside the community

## Connecticut Conference Notes (con't)

### HEARING VOICES NETWORK

Initially, there was a comment about the word “expert” used in the Mindfreedom invitation. The participants were very clear that the term “expert” not be used. They suggested no professional or technical titles suggesting terms “live” and “breathers”.

- The group later accomplished much but discussion was theoretical at first.
- Group more productive when the USA Hearing Voices Charter was read out loud as a guide. The charter guidelines included core principles:
  - Keep Hearing Voices Ethos Alive
  - Avoid wanting to use HVN as a billable agency
  - Maintain integrity and intent of Hearing Voices Network
    - person view him/herself as valid and
    - free to express self- choosing their own terms.
  - Remain nonjudgmental and allow person to express self
    - even if the person using medical or traditional terminology
  - Fears of liability if Hearing Voice Network is held in a traditional setting
  - Fears of traditional approaches and loss of freedom if in a crisis in a traditional setting
  - Discussed how to manage this situation using appropriate HVN conversation
  - Stressed open discussion and dialogue to reduce the fear
  - Pointed out that Hearing Voices practices can be used effectively in less than optimal settings by
    - encouraging more open conversation about fears and
    - creating space to have person speak about the nature of their pain
  - Fear of loss of freedom-group can help
  - Value of Hearing Voices Network Groups
    - To stay connected
    - To create more cohesive groups
    - To train more facilitators
    - To learn you're not alone

Karen from Taiwan attended conference-she is studying psychology and nursing:

Express concerns about mental health conditions in her country

Affected by population density, crowding

Some community treatment but mostly medical model; concerned about subjectivity

People required to take medication

Change community conditions, get people more involved

If someone needs to help other people can help to solve problems

Help people to not feel scared to go into the community

Hearing voices-not a bad thing –can be a cool thing

