

INTRODUCTION

In 2003 the "Presidents New Freedom Commission on Mental Health" released their report with this vision statement.

"We envision a future when everyone with a mental illness will recover, a future when mental illness can be prevented or cured, a future when mental illnesses are detected early, and a future when everyone with a mental illness at any stage of life has access to effective treatment and supports: essentials for living, working, learning, and participating fully in the community."

With the establishment of our own Pacific Islands Veterans Mental Health Consumer Council we will be able to link veterans and family members to services available from the changing VA Mental Health system as it seeks to be responsive to the needs of Veterans and their families.

Meaningful input from Veteran consumers ensures that they have a voice in determining the care they receive while on their recovery journey. Councils also promote the understanding and use of VA mental health services by all Veterans and their families

COMMITMENT

We ask our Members to commit to a minimum of 240 hours of volunteer service over one year. This includes our regular meetings and training as there will be times when other training will be available from the VA

THE MASTERY EXPERIENCE

Recovery is about learning how to cope with living life as life comes to us in our daily activities. And since the real goal of treatment is to reintegrate the veteran into the community with the coping skills necessary to overcome the obstacles related to mental illness we have shaped what we believe to be a mastery experience which will help the veteran fine tune as well as develop the coping skills needed to reenter the community with confidence in their own abilities

RECOVERY CAPITAL

Recovery Capital is all the components that a person needs to become successful in their reintegration into the community. From our research we have found that these can be divided into three basic parts. Social, Personal, and Community Capital and it is from this basic definition that we designed our mastery experience.

IN CONCLUSION

Our research has discovered that it is best to have veterans that are learning to function with their new coping skills close to their mental health and medical professionals in case there is a crisis and an intervention becomes necessary. Our mastery experience is designed to equip our veterans with coping skills that they can utilize in their recovery now and in the future.

PACIFIC ISLANDS CONSUMER COUNCIL

Our Mission Statement

The mission of the Pacific Islands Consumer Council is to establish a true partnership between the VA Mental Health Professionals, Veterans and their families, as well as community partners and Veteran Service Organizations so that we improve the quality of the VA Mental Health Services, as well as the Veterans' understanding of those services, so that we can promote the best use of those services

Our Vision

We are to train Council Members in various competencies so we can build upon as well as create new relationships with the VA service sectors so that we increase the Veterans level of commitment to the overall work or purpose of the Consumer Council

Our Purpose

We are to work and partner with VA Mental Health Leadership so that we enhance the dignity and well being of our members and develop competency based training modules that can be implemented in the Pacific Islands Healthcare System

For info. call (808) 433-0357

www.hawaiiivet2vet.com/consumer_council

OVERVIEW

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has embraced the principles of recovery transformation.

Consumers of mental health services are to have real and meaningful choices plus full participation in decisions about their health care as part of the recovery process. With the emphasis being on person-centered care and, whenever appropriate, family involvement.

One of the keys to the success of this transformation is the Veterans Mental Health Council.

What is a VMHC?

A Veterans Mental Health Council (VMHC) is a group of veteran mental health consumers and their family members. The purposes of a council are to provide input regarding local mental health structures and operations and to share information with Veterans, family members, and community representatives about local VA Mental Health programs and initiatives.

Veterans Mental Health Consumer Councils provide a dynamic opportunity for VA staff and Veteran consumers of VA mental health services to learn from each other and promote greater understanding of and collaboration with each other to the benefit of both.

Sample

AGENDA OUTLINE CONSUMER COUNCIL ESTABLISHMENT MEETINGS

1. Call to Order (AP)
2. Opening Comments (P)
3. Roll Call (AP)
4. Approval of Agenda (DR)
5. Introduction of New Members and Participants (AP)
6. Unfinished Business (P, DF, DR)
7. New Business (P, DF, DR)
8. Announcements (P)
9. Adjournments (DR)

Key for Agenda

(AP) = Acknowledge Presence

(P) = Presentation

(DF) = Discussion / Feedback

(DR) = Decision Required

**Our Goal is to Create and Establish
Structure and Procedure**

MEMBERS & PARTICIPANTS

Diversity of members strengthens a council. Councils are responsible for selecting their membership.

Every council will have a VAMC staff liaison to facilitate communication with mental health and medical center leadership. The liaison assists the council in understanding the VA system. This may include providing support, arranging meeting space, identifying speakers and assisting with training.

Keys to Success

While there are many keys to creating a successful Council the most important of these will be how well it collaborates with mental health and medical center leadership. Also the qualifications of council members are similar to those required for any council or committee.

These include: a strong commitment to the mission and goals of the council, an ability to focus on issues important to the organization as opposed to personal concerns, a commitment to full participation, a willingness to work with others and consider others views, and an ability to solve problems in a creative manner.

Some members will also need special skills such as familiarity with computer software, word processing, spreadsheets, policies and procedures, and bookkeeping.