

Community Support Journal



CSP Logo designed by Chris Ford

Montgomery County Community Support Program Committee *Newsletter*

October 2023

Volume 10

'Share the wealth, fund mental health!'

Hundreds march on Harrisburg—meet With legislators



Michelle, Justin & Maria at the Capitol

By: Kathie Mitchell,
CSJ Editor

HARRISBURG - Over 300 advocates from across Pennsylvania marched on the Capitol urging legislators to fund the mental health system to stave off a major crisis in communities around the state.

“It was a very powerful and moving day,” said Julie Whitmore, an advocate and member of the Montgomery County CSP Committee.

“It started with a welcoming and then opened with three speakers, Representative Schlossberg, Christine Michaels, and Joan Erney.”

Whitmore, who is also a tri-chair on the Southeast Regional CSP Committee, said Michaels focused on the waiting lists and the negative impact on people who cannot get mental health services.

“What she shared is so true and impacted me deeply,” Whitmore said. “We then divided into groups and advocated to legislators. We discussed with them what we needed and shared our stories. It was a successful, moving day. We made an impact and had our voices heard.”

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Keys to Recovery Conference - from ***'Impossible to I'm possible!'***

By: Julie Whitmore, SE Regional CSP Co-chair and Technical Assistant

DUBOIS - The 2023 PMHCA Keys to Recovery conference was an amazing time!

The keynote speakers who really impacted me were Matthew Federici, Michael Nelson, Gina Calhoun, Paolo del Vecchio, and Joan Erney.

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MARCH on HARRISBURG from page one

Mental Health Matters!



Justin Chamrin, a tri-chair for persons in recovery on the Montgomery County CSP Committee, wore a sign that said, “My diagnosis does not define me.” He said the march was exciting and fun. Although most legislators were not available, advocates did get to meet with legislators’ staff who listened to their concerns. Chamrin said he appreciated that his peer specialist, Michelle Gonzalez from Merikey, accompanied him on the trip from Norristown to Harrisburg.

The March on Harrisburg was held on September 27, 2023. It was organized by the Pennsylvania Mental Health Consumers Association. Joan Erney, former PA



Deputy Secretary of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS), spoke at the march. She encouraged the advocates to make their voices heard and demand funding for

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Joan Erney speaks at March



Marvin, Sheila, Akilah and Karleen

the mental health system, which has reached a crisis point due to lack of funding and the impact of the pandemic.

Advocates rallied at the march with a clear message:

- Increasing mental health based \$ saves \$ and lives
- Equal access for all
- Living wages for life savers

A Behavioral Health Commission had been established to decide how to spend \$100 million in pandemic relief money designated for community behavioral health services. Most of the millions were redirected elsewhere.

Erney has denounced this move as “disgraceful” saying once the monies were designated for mental health community services, they should not have been taken away.



ADVOCATES RALLY AT MARCH ON THE CAPITOL



From PMHCA’s Facebook Post 9.28.2023: PMHCA’s Board President Jason Riligio, Executive Director, [Kathy Quick](#), and Program Director, [Tristan Schnoke](#) as well as a few other PMHCA & YMPA employees who are hidden in the crowd were spotted on the news at the March on Harrisburg yesterday! Hopefully that march sent a message to legislators saying we’re serious about needing better, more accessible services.



Continued from page one

I was especially impacted by the one by Gina Calhoun. She talked about her story which was very moving and powerful.

“She talked about the impossible to I’m possible! It was so inspirational. The other speakers were awesome too!”

All of the workshops were great. I really liked the one about What Holistic Services Look Like for a Drop-in Center. They had some great ideas that they incorporated. Jewelry making, crystals, aroma therapy, yoga, and lots of other things.



Gina Calhoun

“I liked Collage Your Wellness also. People really got into the craft. It was good to create a visual of your wellness tools and you could hang it up somewhere for when you were having a tough time.”

In Harnessing your Hope, they had some great discussions and it was a good training about hope, in the good and the bad. It was awesome.

Dion Despaigne, treasurer for the Montgomery County CSP Committee and HopeWorx staff member, said he thought the conference was pretty good.



Dion Despaigne and Mike Nelson

“It was great to be back in person with so many people and getting to know some of them,” Despaigne said. “I thought the speakers did pretty well and the venue was amazing.”

Dion said he enjoyed being part of the presentation on hope.

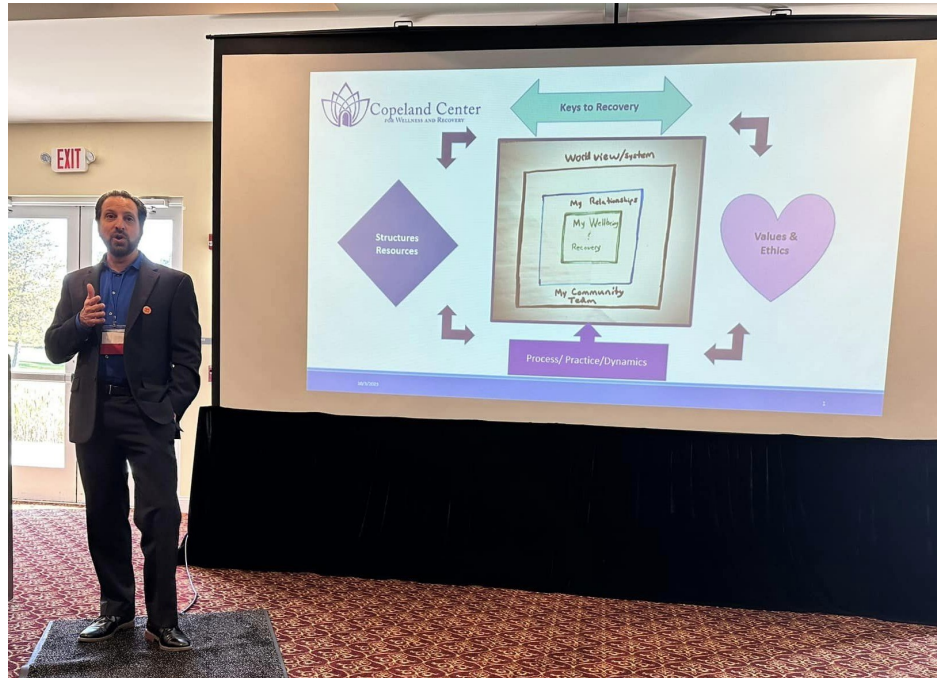
Justin Chamrin, tri-chair for person in recovery for the Montgomery County CSP Committee, said the Keys to Recovery Conference was his first time at the statewide event. Chamrin, who also volunteers at Creating Increased Connections (CIC), said he enjoyed the workshops, the resources, the dance and the many other activities that were available at the conference. He enjoyed speakers Mike Nelson from CIC, Matthew Federici from the Copeland Center and Gina Calhoun.

“Everyone was nice and friendly,” Chamrin said. “I got to meet my CPS training instructor, Kyaeta Lee-Wright.”

And the free meals were good, too, he said.



L to R - Karleen Caparro, Justin Chamrin, Danny Kuchler, and Julie Whitmore



Clockwise above:
 Photobooth fun,
 Dance DJ, Matt
 Federici from the
 Copeland Center on
 Wellness and
 Recovery, and Joan
 Erney, consultant and
 former Deputy
 Secretary of Mental
 Health at OMHSAS



Keys to Recovery



Keys to Recovery

By: Akilah Williams

AdvocacyWorx Program Supervisor

AdvocacyWorx had a blast at the first PMHCA conference post COVID-19 presenting two trainings on the power of hope and self-advocacy. Special thanks and gratitude goes out to Julie Whitmore, Dion Despaigne, Caitlin Kelley, Sheila Hall-Pringle, Mike Nelson, Karleen Caparro, Danny Kuchler, Marissa MacKeverican, Megan Mamatuck and our Fearless leader, Sue Shannon.



Dion and I presented a 45-minute presentation about how we can harness the power of hope in our individual lives on our recovery journey and as certified peer specialists while supporting others. The picture above is from our presentation that Caitlin Kelley was kind enough to take for us. I wanted to note that our workshop took place at the end of the day after attendees had been attending workshops all day, and every single person was fully engaged in the discussion and felt comfortable to share freely. We began with discussing what hope means to each of us and what qualities we associate with hope, including an acronym that Dion Despaigne produced to explain hope: **Healing, Optimism, Persistence, and Enduring**. We next talked about the origins of hope including:

- Hope can be shared with us by others
- It can come from a belief in something larger than ourselves
- Derives from overcoming obstacles in the past
- Is bolstered by being able to see the benefits of adversity

<p>Increased life satisfaction</p>		<p>Report less loneliness and hold positive view of relationships</p>		<p>Lastly, we talked about things that can extinguish our hope and lead to feelings of helplessness. Then we talked about how we can cultivate a sense of hope and some of the scientifically recognized benefits of hope.</p>
	<p>Benefits of Hope</p>		<p>Perceive and receive social support</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More effective recovery from illness and injury ▪ Perseverance when barriers arise ▪ Able to adapt and find the “benefit” within adversity ▪ Experience increased positive mental health ▪ Make healthier lifestyle choices in areas such as exercise, eating, and drinking 				



KEYS TO RECOVERY
 PMHCA COMEBACK CONFERENCE

PMHCA KEYS TO RECOVERY CONFERENCE
 PRESENTS THE FOLLOWING
 WORKSHOP SPOTLIGHTS:

- "Law of Attraction" and Personal Responsibility
- Pat Deegan's Academy + Library
- Personal Responsibility in Recovery: Fear Busters
- Building A Resilient Future After Adversity
- The Power of One - Strategic Self-Disclosure
- Challenge, Choice, Change: Tobacco Recovery is Recovery
- The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline in PA: There is Hope in Recovery
- Collage Your Wellness
- What do Holistic Services look like for a Drop-In Center?
- Using YOUR Voice for Change: Advocacy
- Self-advocacy in Action
- Building Bridges: The Intersectionality between Cultural Humility & Suicide Prevention
- Building Bridges for Mental Health
- Empowerment! Self Care Strategies
- Becoming Grounded in Recovery through Art
- Harnessing the Power of Hope
- Letters to Legislators



Montgomery County Voter Services

Everything you need to know about voting in Montgomery County, PA

-From website

Montgomery County Voter Services manages voter registration and election administration for residents of Montgomery County, PA.

The 2023 Municipal Election will take place on Tuesday, November 7, 2023.

The deadline to apply for an absentee or mail-in ballot is October 31, 2023.

Voters will need to apply again in 2023 to receive a mail ballot for the Primary or General Elections even if they have previously voted by mail ballot.

No matter which option you choose, you must be registered to vote by Monday, October 23, 2023.



Southeast Region Meeting: Friday, October 27, 2023 Jefferson Abington Hospital (Lenfest Pavilion) Abington, PA

Regional Behavioral Health Stakeholder Meetings

Coming to a region near you!
Fall 2023



Join Us! For a full day event with fellow hospital leaders and behavioral health stakeholders in your region to identify strategies to connect individuals seeking behavioral health care in an emergency department (ED) to timely behavioral health services and supports. The day will focus on alleviating the wait time primarily for individuals presenting in the ED. However, we believe that the discussion will impact planning for individuals with complex needs and as well as individuals transitioning from inpatient care to step-down and community-based care settings.

Together we will identify what opportunities currently exist to effectively collaborate and maximize existing resources to meet the needs of our communities.

The agenda for the day will include:

- Updates on statewide Crisis Intervention Services planning and 988 implementation; information on Medical Assistance funding for mental health services delivered in the ED
- Community stakeholders (county human services representatives, peer support specialists, family members, older adult advocates, BH-MCOs and community-based providers) discussing their unique capacity to support individuals experiencing behavioral health crisis
- Best practice sharing highlighting regional initiatives that are effectively connecting individuals to services and supports
- Tabletop small group case studies to identify barriers to accessing necessary care
- Small group working session to develop regional adult, older adult, and child/adolescent escalation protocols aimed at ensuring that individuals get timely access to needed services and supports

The goal of the day is to build connection between regional stakeholders and establish protocols to improve care in our communities.



HOPEWORX
COMMUNITYWORX
1210 STANBRIDGE #600
NORRISTOWN, PA. 19401

HALLOWEEN PARTY

27 OCTOBER

TIME: 3:00 - 6:00 P.M.
HW CONFERENCE ROOM


• PRIZES •

D.J. MUSIC
FOOD & DRINKS
COSTUME PARTY

RSVP: GENE / SARAH
610-270-3685 @EXT.3502

SAVE THE DATE



presented by
 **NAMI**
National Alliance on Mental Illness
Montgomery
County PA

**Cedarbrook
Country Club**

11/14/2023

5:30 - 7:30 pm

Awards Ceremony, Cocktail Reception, and more!

Scan or visit
[https://namimontcopa.org/
get-involved/benefit-for-
the-brain/](https://namimontcopa.org/get-involved/benefit-for-the-brain/)
**for sponsorships,
ads, and tickets**





EDIE MANNION

EDIE MANNION, M.F.T, L.M.F.T. IS A LICENSED MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPIST IN PRIVATE PRACTICE WITH HER TEAM AT THE DBT CENTER OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA.

DESSERT & DIALOGUE

WITH TIKVAH

“Family Recovery: Tips & Resources for Healing Family Relationships Affected by Mental Health Disorders”

with Edie Mannion.

FREE and open to the public, Advance reservation required.

RSVP to the office by the phone or email below.

November 19 at 2PM

**Temple University
Bright Hall
580 Meetinghouse Road
Ambler, PA 19002**

Sponsored in part by the following:



Jewish Federation
of Greater Philadelphia



www.TIKVAHAJMI.org | Office@tikvahajmi.org | (215) 832-0671

Your Assistance is Needed!

From: **Synethia Hill, Deputy Director, Office of Housing and Community Development**
Montgomery County Department of Health & Human Services

This season our unsheltered community will be able to have access to some new Code Blue Shelters opening up around the County. As a result, supplies are needed such as thermal blankets, new pillows, pillow cases and bed bug protectors.

We are currently seeking assistance in obtaining **50-75 of the above items each**. Blankets can be in used condition, but very gently used. Please, no thick comforters as they maybe too bulky for the agency’s washing machines. All other supplies should be in new condition. If any of you or your organizations have these items on hand with the ability to donate, please drop them off at our office, even if it is a few items. Supplies are needed by October 30th.

If there are other organizations, religious facilities or businesses that you are aware of that will donate these items, please work with them to obtain what you can and/or let us know so that the OHCD staff can reach out.

Email: Synethia.hill@montgomerycountypa.gov



CREATING INCREASED CONNECTIONS

VIRTUAL MUTUAL AID GROUPS

Circle of Hope Virtual

Circle of Hope is peer-to-peer led discussion group. Join us for lively conversation about how we are feeling, our successes challenges, our recovery, and how we maintain our wellness. Everyone is welcome.

Wednesday's
10:00AM -11:30PM

Zoom Link:
<https://rhd.zoom.us/j/85192424587>

Circle of Hope

Circle of Hope is peer-to-peer led discussion group. Join us for lively conversation about how we are feeling, our successes challenges, our recovery, and how we maintain our wellness. Everyone is welcome.

Thursday's
10:30AM-12:00PM

Hopeworx
1210 Stanbridge St #600,
Norristown, PA 19401

Live Another Day

Live another day groups are non-judgmental confidential spaces where people can share some of their darkest thoughts without being assumed to have an illness or being assessed for involuntary interventions. Support to openly explore these thoughts and the feelings and experiences underneath them is often the key to moving toward something different.

Tuesdays
12:00PM-1:30PM

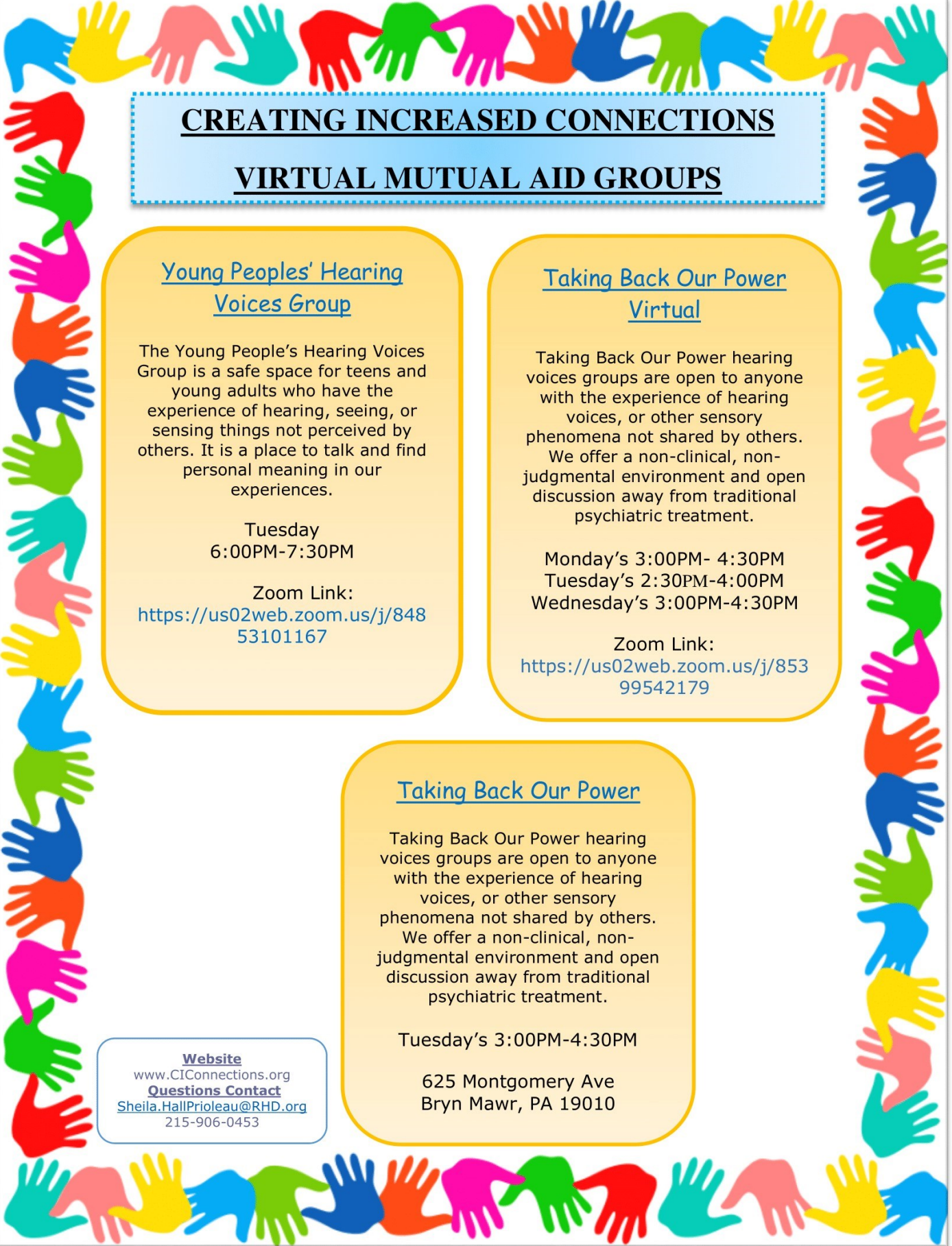
Zoom Link:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/861>

Women's Identity & Experiences Circle of Hope Group

This group was created for women as a safe environment to voice & openly share our life stories as women & to empower ourselves to find greater meaning & purpose in life.

Wednesday's
3:00PM-4:30PM

Zoom Link:
<https://rhd.zoom.us/j/83638683076>



CREATING INCREASED CONNECTIONS
VIRTUAL MUTUAL AID GROUPS

Young Peoples' Hearing Voices Group

The Young People's Hearing Voices Group is a safe space for teens and young adults who have the experience of hearing, seeing, or sensing things not perceived by others. It is a place to talk and find personal meaning in our experiences.

Tuesday
6:00PM-7:30PM

Zoom Link:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84853101167>

Taking Back Our Power Virtual

Taking Back Our Power hearing voices groups are open to anyone with the experience of hearing voices, or other sensory phenomena not shared by others. We offer a non-clinical, non-judgmental environment and open discussion away from traditional psychiatric treatment.

Monday's 3:00PM- 4:30PM
Tuesday's 2:30PM-4:00PM
Wednesday's 3:00PM-4:30PM

Zoom Link:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85399542179>

Taking Back Our Power

Taking Back Our Power hearing voices groups are open to anyone with the experience of hearing voices, or other sensory phenomena not shared by others. We offer a non-clinical, non-judgmental environment and open discussion away from traditional psychiatric treatment.

Tuesday's 3:00PM-4:30PM

625 Montgomery Ave
Bryn Mawr, PA 19010

Website
www.CIConnections.org
Questions Contact
Sheila.HallPrioleau@RHD.org
215-906-0453



Montgomery County Department of Behavioral Health and SE Regional Mental Health Services Coordination Office offering:

NEW FALL CLASSES for 2023!!! **MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING**



**Mental Health
FIRST AID**

from NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR
MENTAL WELLBEING

***Mental Health First Aid** is a course that teaches you how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders. The training gives you the skills you need to reach out and provide initial help and support to someone who may be developing a mental health or substance use problem or experiencing a crisis. Individuals receive a 3 year certification upon completion of the coursework.*

Be prepared, when a mental health crisis happens, know what to do!

Adult Blended in Person

10/12/2023, 8:30am - 3:30pm, at the Pottstown Wellness Center at Montgomery County Community College, 101 College Drive North Hall 114, Pottstown PA 19464

Adult Blended In Person

11/04/2023, 10am - 5pm, at Elder Net of Lower Merion, 9 S. Bryn Mawr Ave, Bryn Mawr, PA 19010

Youth In-Person

11/09/2023, 8:30am - 3:30pm, at the Ambler YMCA 1325 McKean Road, Ambler, PA 19002

Adult Blended In Person

11/14/2023, 8:30am - 3:30pm, at the Spring Valley YMCA, 19 W Linfield Trappe Road, Limerick, PA 19468



REGISTER AT:

[HTTPS://PMHCC.FORMSTACK.COM/FORMS/](https://pmhcc.formstack.com/forms/)

Sign up on our website to get started. Once you are signed up, you will receive an email confirmation and instructions to register on the MHFA Connect Learning site. You will be required to do 2 hours of online pre-work prior to the class.

Class size is up to 30 participants with two nationally certified instructors!

Have Questions?? Go to www.fivecountymh.org or by email @ regionalmentalhealthfirstaid@pmhcc.org

**PLEASE JOIN HOPEWORX
FOR**



WRAP

WORKSHOP

WELLNESS RECOVERY ACTION PLAN

When: October 26 & November 2, 2023



TIME: 10AM - 12PM

**WHERE HOPEWORX 1210 STANBRIDGE ST
NORRISTOWN PA. 19401**

**CONTACT ANISE OR SARAH@
HOPEWORX (610) 270-3685**

Subcommittee Reports from September 2023

Advocacy Subcommittee: The committee talked about Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT). We heard about the status from one of the counties. We had a peer respite discussion update – putting a bid on a farm in Gilbertsville. Have \$500,000 from Pandemic funds. Peer-run respite director Olivia is doing a lot of outreach. Also, we talked about how to get more clubhouses and drop in centers, the March on Harrisburg next week and the bus is full. Over 300 attending the March.

Community Outreach Subcommittee – Dion said 2 gas card applications approved.

Conference Subcommittee – Danny said we have to change the date to either May 14 or 28th due to scheduling conflicts. We’re trying to liven up the conference. We might get a keynote speaker. All ideas are welcome. We spend about \$6,000 in food so we are fundraising for money towards the food.

CSP MEETING
CALENDER
2023-24

Meetings are held every third Thursday, monthly @ Norristown Public Library from 12: 00-2:30pm

The next meetings will be:

October	19
November	16
December	21
January	18

Meetings are held in person and via Zoom.

Montgomery County CSP Executive Committee

2023/2024 Tri-Chairs
 Provider Member: Jim Markey
 Person in Recovery: Justin Chamrin
 Family Member: Kathy Laws

2023/2024 Sub-Committee Chairs
 Community Outreach: Dion Despaigne, Julie Whitmore
 Advocacy: Akilah Williams, Michelle Gonzalez
 Conference: Danny Kuchler, Stacey Volz

2023/2024 Treasurer
 Dion Despaigne



County Liaison -
Tracey Riper-Thomas

Fiduciary - HopeWorx, Inc.

1210 Stanbridge Street,
Suite 600
Norristown, PA 19401
610-270-3685

CSP Principles

- * Consumer Centered/
Consumer Empowered
- * Culturally competent
- * Able to Meet Special Needs
- * Community Based with Natural Supports
- * Flexible
- * Coordinated
- * Accountable
- * Strength Based

Organizations who regularly send representatives to CSP:

Central Behavioral Health, AdvocacyWorx, Community Satisfaction Team of Montgomery County, Magellan Health Services, Montgomery Co. Department of Behavioral Health, Montgomery County Emergency Services (MCES), NAMI Montgomery County, Norristown Vet Center, Resources for Human Development, Salisbury Behavioral Health

Meetings:

12:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

3rd Thursday of each month

Norristown
Public Library
Community Room

1001 Powell St.

Currently via Zoom

Kathie Mitchell, Newsletter Editor

Join our Mailing list!

We have an email list as well as a regular mailing, to join:

Send an e-mail to:

pjohnson@hopeworxinc.org

Or send your contact info to this mailing address:

1210 Stanbridge St., Suite 600, Norristown, PA 19401

CSP Mission Statement:

Montgomery County's Community Support Program (CSP) brings together individuals that receive mental health services, their family members, providers and the Department of Behavioral Health in an equal partnership to promote recovery and excellence in the delivery of community-based mental health services.

The committee strives to include a balance of people who use services, people who provide services, family members, and interested members of the community at large. The CSP initiatives continue to grow state, regionally and county wide. As the involvement increases CSP has become a place that feedback can truly be given to the county from individuals that receive services and information can be given that suits the needs and requests of those that attend.

CSP Subcommittees:

- * **Advocacy Subcommittee**—Works on legislative, policy, communication, budget, voter education and other issues related to mental health services in the county, statewide and at the federal level when relevant. At the direction of the CSP Committee, the Advocacy Subcommittee gathers information on issues, plans advocacy events and creates a monthly newsletter to provide information to the stakeholder network as well as the community at large about the work of CSP. The newsletter also provides updates on new and changing mental health services provided in Montgomery County. The newsletter editor can be contacted at: kathiemitchell8221@gmail.com.
- * **Community Outreach Subcommittee**—Works on facilitating opportunities for people in the CSP community to be more involved in the Montgomery County community. This includes implementing the Community Connections grants, which provide funding for people to participate in a variety of activities. The committee also implements transportation grants that provide gas cards and SEPTA day passes to CSP community members. The annual CSP Poster Art contest is also organized by this committee.
- * **Conference Subcommittee** – The conference subcommittee will plan and fundraise for the annual Montgomery County CSP Conference.

We invite all peers, family members and providers/professionals to attend.