

Community

NEWS



A MEMBER'S RECOVERY

As Told To Sarah Goldstein

"I like when I do a little something for a person and to them it is really a big deal. It makes me feel good. I am a consumer so I know how a consumer feels."

These are just a few words of wisdom from Claudia. She's been working for the Peer Support and Advocacy Network (PSAN) for eight years. Her job with PSAN has changed over the years. She started out cleaning the New Horizons Drop-In Center two nights a week, then became a part-time Information Specialist, moved along to become the Center Coordinator and is now the Recreation Network Coordinator for PSAN scheduling consumer activities throughout Allegheny County.

Claudia sometimes discloses to people at the Center that she is a consumer. *"That's our mission,"* she says. *"The staff at PSAN is very functional and most people don't know we are consumers. However, my spelling is poor and sometimes people think it's weak because I am a consumer and not just because I am a poor speller."*

Life wasn't so great for Claudia before she started working. She was lonely, had little self-esteem, and was depressed. Even though her Health Professional told her she could not work, she thought she'd try anyway. *"What would I do with my time!"*, she says.

Claudia likes work and helping others. She realizes that we all have good days and bad days. Sometimes in the winter it is a struggle to get out of bed. But she does it by putting on her happy face and once she gets there she finds she'd rather be at work than sitting at home. Helping others in her job helps her.

In her recovery Claudia feels her supports are her sister and her best friend since fifth grade, her medication, and her cat, Tuffy. When asked if she had anything to share with consumers about recovery, Claudia said, *"YOU CAN DO IT! Be a Self Advocate! Say the Serenity Prayer. I say it everyday, sometimes two or three times a day!"*

Summer 2007

Call Community Care TOLL FREE

Customer Service Representatives
are available to assist you
24 hours a day/7 days a week

Adams County	1-866-738-9849
Allegheny County	1-800-553-7499
Berks County	1-866-292-7886
Carbon County	1-866-473-5862
Chester County	1-866-622-4228
Monroe County	1-866-473-5862
North Central Counties	1-866-878-6046
Pike County	1-866-473-5862
York County	1-866-542-0299
TTY	1-877-877-3580
En Español	1-866-229-3187

Si Ud necesita la versión en Español,
por favor solicite uno a este telefono
1-866-229-3187

A GUIDE TO PERSON- CENTERED CARE

You know yourself and your needs better than anyone. To best care for yourself, you must speak up for all of your health care needs, including your behavioral health care needs.

The Consumer Health Coalition has put together a booklet called, *Being A Proactive Patient: A Guide to Person-Centered Care* that may help you to do just that. In the "Preparing for the Doctor" section, tips are listed for linking your physical health and mental health, including:

- Make sure your physical health doctor is aware of your mental health concerns and medications.
- Make sure your mental health doctor is aware of your physical health concerns and medications.
- Recognize that there is a connection between your physical and mental health symptoms. Be prepared to describe your symptoms as accurately as possible.
- Be honest with yourself and your doctor about lifestyle behaviors for physical and mental health such as diet, physical activity, smoking, drug and alcohol use, and sexual history.
- It is OK to discuss sensitive topics with your doctor, whether related to physical or mental health concerns.

To request a copy of this resource, please call the Consumer Health Coalition at 412-456-1877, extension 203 or e-mail ssnyder@consumerhealthcoalition.org.

For additional information about the Consumer Health Coalition and the services they provide, please call 412-456-1877 or visit www.consumerhealthcoalition.org.

SUMMER MEDICATION TIPS

Sometimes medicines used for treating mental illness can make it harder for our bodies to regulate our own temperature. Because of this, people taking these medications may be at risk of developing high body temperature (this is also called hyperthermia). People with some medical conditions (such as heart disease, diabetes, alcoholism) are also at a higher risk.

People taking medicines used to treat mental illness may be at risk of developing high body temperature.

The following tips may lessen the chances of a heat illness:

- Try to stay cool.
- Stay in air conditioned areas if possible. If you do not have air conditioning at home, go to a shopping mall or public library.
- Keep windows shut and draperies or blinds closed during the heat of the day.
- Move to cooler rooms during the heat of the day.
- Avoid outdoor activity during warmer times of the day
- Drink plenty of fluids (avoid coffee, tea and alcohol)
- Dress in loose fitting, light-colored clothing. Wear a hat and sunglasses.
- Take a cool shower or bath.
- Eat regular meals to make sure that you have enough salt and fluids.

We hope you find this information useful and encourage you to talk with your health care provider if you have any questions.

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS

We recently reorganized and updated our web site to make it easier for you to find the information you need. The web site includes a lot of important information for members. Please be sure to visit us often.

www.ccbh.com



DID YOU KNOW THAT YOUR RELATIONSHIP CAN AFFECT YOUR HEALTH?

— From the PA Department of Public Welfare —

Are you in a healthy relationship? Ask yourself – Is my partner willing to talk openly when there are problems? Does my partner give me space to spend time with other people? Is my partner kind and supportive? If the answer is yes to these questions, it is likely you are in a healthy relationship. Studies show that healthy relationships lead to better physical and mental health, longer life and good things for children.

Are you in an unhealthy relationship? Ask yourself - Does my partner criticize me and make me feel like everything is my fault? Does my partner control where I go, who I talk to and how I spend my money? Has my partner hurt or threatened me or pressured me to have sex? If you answered yes to any of these questions, your health and safety may be in danger. You may be feeling depressed or anxious. However, there are some steps you can take to help you cope and improve your health.

Talk with someone you trust about what is going on and the pain you have experienced. Talk to your doctor about coping habits that can harm your health like smoking, drinking, using drugs or overeating and get help in taking steps to make changes. Reduce your stress by reaching out for help.

If you are being hurt by your partner, it is not your fault. You deserve to be safe and healthy. If you are worried and you need to talk, call us.

National Domestic Violence Hotline
1-800-799-7233 (SAFE)

1-800-787-3224 (TTY for the Deaf)
www.ndvh.org

National Teen Dating Abuse Hotline
1-866-331-9474

1-866-331-8453 (TTY for the Deaf)
www.loveisrespect.org

Help is available in English and Spanish and many other languages. All contact with the hotlines is free and confidential.

NEED AN APPOINTMENT?

Although it is sometimes hard to get a mental health or substance abuse appointment, Community Care can help make it easier. We work hard to make sure that you can get an appointment that meets your needs. As a Community Care HealthChoices member you should get an appointment:

- Right away for a life threatening emergency.
- Within 1 hour for an emergency that is not life threatening.
- Within 24 hours for urgent needs.
- Within 7 calendar days for routine behavioral health needs.

Community Care is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We are able to assist members who call us for help with getting an appointment every time. If you have a problem getting an appointment soon enough to meet your needs, call the toll-free Community Care number for your county, as listed on Page 1.

We make sure that we answer your phone calls fast because we do not want you to wait, or hang up before we answer. Let us know if you have a problem getting your phone calls answered.

If You Have a Complaint...

about services you are receiving in the HealthChoices program, you have the right to file a complaint or have a family member file a complaint for you. For more information about complaints or grievances, please refer to your HealthChoices Member Handbook or call Community Care for help.

YOU'RE INVITED

HELP BREAK THE SILENCE

From the PA Department of Public Welfare

Community Care's Member (MAC) and Family (FAC) Advisory Committee meetings are where members and their families can talk about the behavioral health services that are available in their communities. Please join us!

MAC and FAC Meetings			
Adams County			
MAC	08/01/07	1:00 pm	Adams Hanover Counseling Services 33 Frederick Street Hanover, PA
FAC	08/01/07	5:00 pm	Adams County Library, 3rd Floor 140 Baltimore Street Gettysburg, PA
Allegheny County			
MAC	07/31/07	2:00 pm	Life'sWork 1323 Forbes Avenue Pittsburgh, PA
FAC	07/30/07	6:30 pm	Community Care One Chatham Center, Suite 700 112 Washington Place Pittsburgh, PA
Berks County			
MAC	08/16/07	3:00 pm	Service Access & Management, Inc 19 North 6th Street-4th Floor Reading, PA
FAC	08/16/07	6:00 pm	West Lawn/Wyomissing Hills Library 101 Woodside Avenue West Lawn, PA
Chester County			
MAC	08/23/07	7:00 pm	Fellowship Health Resources 1039-1041 West Bridge Street Phoenixville, PA
FAC	08/23/07	6:00 pm	Fellowship Health Resources 1039-1041 West Bridge Street Phoenixville, PA
York County			
MAC	08/02/07	3:30 pm	United Way Building of York County 800 East King Street York, PA
FAC	08/02/07	5:00 pm	United Way Building of York County 800 East King Street York, PA

Millions of women in America are physically and emotionally abused by their husbands or partners each year. In fact, one in three women are physically or sexually abused by a partner at some point in their lives. That means, for most of us, someone we know – our mother, sister, friend or neighbor – is a victim of domestic violence. What can you do?

Your support and encouragement can be of great value to a friend involved in an abusive relationship. Lending a sympathetic ear and letting your friend or loved one know that you care and are willing to listen may be the best help you can offer. Try talking to her about the problem of domestic violence in a general way. Tell her this problem concerns you. Don't force the issue but allow her to confide in you at her own pace. Keep your mind open and really listen to what she tells you. Never blame her for what is happening or underestimate her fear or possible danger. Help her explore her options and provide what you can: transportation, child-care or a place to stay. You can ease her isolation by letting her know that she is not alone.

Encourage her to "break the silence" and seek the assistance of the advocates at the National Domestic Violence Hotline. You can also become more informed by visiting the hotline website at www.ndvh.org or their public awareness site at www.marketthecall.org. Let her know that caring people are available to help.

If you are worried about a friend and you need to talk, please call:

National Domestic Violence Hotline

1-800-799-7233 (SAFE)

1-800-787-3224 (TTY for the Deaf)

www.ndvh.org

Help is available in English and Spanish and many other languages.

All contact with the hotline is free and confidential.

CHILDHOOD OBESITY AND ANXIETY

Children with obesity are at higher risk to be more anxious than other children. Children who are obese miss more school and are less likely to be involved with activities. They are often less happy with the quality of their life. Some signs that your child may be anxious are:

- Being uncomfortable when in the spotlight
- Avoiding eye contact and speaking very softly
- Trying to avoid going to school
- Poor school performance
- Too much worrying about other kids making fun of them

Anxiety can be treated. Making healthy lifestyle choices can help. Eating better and exercising can lower the risk of being obese. It can also help lower the risk of being too anxious. If your child is overweight and you think they might be anxious you might want to talk to their doctor.

TRYING TO QUIT SMOKING?

There are many places you can go to help you quit smoking. Smoking cigarettes hurts you and those around you. If you are pregnant, smoking hurts your baby.

Quitting can take more than one try. Talk to your doctor who can help you to quit smoking. You can also call the Community Care office in your county (see Page 1) for programs in your area. Or you can go to our website at www.ccbh.com and click on the Local Programs link under Smoking Cessation.

You can also call:

National Free Quit Line
1-800-784-8669 (1-800-QUITNOW!)
or
Great Start Pregnant Smokers Quit Line
1-866-667-8278

IMPROVING SERVICES

Every county served by Community Care has a consumer and family satisfaction team (CFST). The satisfaction team in Allegheny County is called CART (Consumer Action Response Team). CFST teams work hard to find ways to improve services for consumers. The team members are people in recovery or family members of someone in recovery. They ask other consumers confidentially, in person or on the phone, how they feel about their mental health and/or drug and alcohol treatment services. The very general feedback about what consumers said about them or their services given to providers is used to improve services. Community Care checks to be sure that providers improve services based on this feedback. CART's phone number is **1-800-300-6026**. If you would like more information about the CFST in your county, please call the number listed below.

SATISFACTION TEAM REPRESENTATIVES					
Adams	1-717-843-6973	Elk	1-814-772-8016	Pike	1-610-377-3794
Berks	1-610-775-3000	Forest	1-814-726-8406	Potter	1-800-800-2560
Bradford	1-570-888-5083	Huntingdon	1-888-361-6500	Schuylkill	1-570-628-0155
Cameron	1-814-772-8016	Jefferson	1-814-765-0302	Snyder	1-570-387-1137
Carbon	1-610-377-3794	Juniata	1-888-361-6500	Sullivan	1-570-888-5083
Centre	1-814-353-2415	McKean	1-814-362-6260	Tioga	1-800-525-6842
Chester	1-610-594-9740	Mifflin	1-888-361-6500	Union	1-570-387-1137
Clarion	1-814-226-6252	Monroe	1-610-377-3794	Warren	1-814-726-2100
Clearfield	1-814-765-0302	Montour	1-570-387-1137	Wayne	1-570-253-9200
Columbia	1-570-387-1137	Northumberland	1-570-473-1007	York	1-717-843-6973

MY NAME IS SARAH

Hi.

My name is Sarah.

I am a person.

I am a female.

I have brown eyes.

I have brownish reddish hair.

And I have bipolar.

I do not say bipolar DISORDER because I do not believe that it is a disorder. It may be an illness, but it's also a gift. It is the part of me that helps me to be creative and energetic; write journal entries, lyrics, and music; sing, play guitar, and multi-task. Admittedly, some things come along with bipolar: racing thoughts, delusions, paranoia, and pacing. But don't we all do this to some extent? Aren't we all creative? Don't we all pace? Isn't this the yin/yang of life? I just happen to be very extreme!

I remember being extreme years ago, long before I recognized that I needed some help. I broke bonds with my family and friends and couldn't keep a relationship. I also cycled in and out of the hospital. Then I went to partial hospitalization for awhile, lived in community housing, and was on Welfare. I don't remember how long I went to partial, but it was long enough that I haven't been back to the hospital since 1992. Partial hospitalization helped me to understand my triggers and learn how to deal with my symptoms so I can cope with my illness and use my supports to stay stable.

Of course, I make sure I take my prescribed medicine to balance out my physiology. Medicine reduces my symptoms. With this help I am able to regulate my cycling so I can be part of my community. I also reach out to friends and family when I need comfort or reassurance. ***"Your head is a scary place to be by yourself."*** I try to take care of myself and I have formed trusting relationships with several health professionals who watch over me and help me stay well. Now, instead of thinking of myself as someone with an illness, I think of myself as a person on a RECOVERY journey!

I enjoy my work. I have been employed and supporting myself for over 12 years. First, at New Horizons Drop In Center, where I worked as an Information Specialist,

As a member of Community Care you have the right to ask for information, including:

- The names, addresses and phone numbers of Community Care providers who speak a language in addition to English
- The names, addresses and phone numbers of Community Care providers who are not accepting new consumers
- Any reasons you cannot freely choose a provider of service
- Your Member Rights and Responsibilities
- Information about grievances and fair hearing procedures
- Your behavioral health benefits in specific detail
- The steps you need to take to receive services
- The steps you can take to receive services from a provider of service who is not in the Community Care network
- Emergency benefits, including the steps for getting emergency services and the names, addresses and phone numbers of emergency providers of service
- How to learn about additional benefits from the State of Pennsylvania
- How transportation is provided

For more information please call the Community Care office in your county as listed on Page 1.

putting together the CSP newsletter and as an advocate for many people.

In 1999 I came to Community Care. I was a Customer Service Representative for 7 years, answering the phone and working for the wraparound services team. Now I am in the Training Department (scheduling recovery-focused meetings and conferences) and work with the newsletter team as the "reporter on the beat." I earned a degree in Journalism before I got sick and this is my chance to put it to use. I'd like to hear your recovery story. Feel free to call me at 412-402-7511 or e-mail me at goldsteinse@ccbh.com.

I am also the Co-Chair of the Allegheny County Coalition for Recovery (www.coalitionforrecovery.org). Come to a meeting or two and get involved!

Remember: Recovery is a personal journey!

PRIVACY PRACTICES

Community Care is required by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (also known as HIPAA) of 1996 to:

- Make sure the information that identifies you is kept private
- Follow the terms of the Notice of Privacy Practices currently in place
- Give you a Notice of Privacy Practices that describes our legal duties and privacy practices regarding your medical information

Everyone receives this notice when they first begin to receive Community Care insurance coverage. We also send the notice to our members every three years. If you would like a written copy of the Notice of Privacy Practices from us, please call us and we will mail you a paper copy of the notice. You can also view this notice on our website, www.ccbh.com.

Community Care is committed to keeping your personal medical information private and secure. We will use or share only the minimum necessary medical information needed to do our job. For example, as your behavioral health managed care organization, Community Care may share your medical information to help coordinate your treatment and pay for services. Or to help resolve a complaint you have about your care or to be sure you receive good quality health care. We are sometimes required to share information by law or by our health care oversight agencies. Some uses and disclosures of information require your written permission.

You have rights regarding your medical information, including the right to:

- Ask for restrictions on the use or sharing of medical information
- Choose the way we contact you
- Look at and copy your medical information
- Ask for changes to your medical information if you believe there is a mistake in your records
- Ask for a list of when, to whom and what information was shared
- A paper copy of our Notice of Privacy Practices

For more information, please call the Community Care office in your county as listed on Page 1.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH GUIDELINES

Community Care uses the American Psychiatric Association (APA) Guideline for Major Depressive Disorder (Second Edition) and the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) Principles of Drug Addiction: A Research Based Guide to help you and your provider make decisions about your treatment for these issues.

Behavioral health practice guidelines can help providers and members make decisions about treatment and ensure the best care. For example, in the beginning of treatment for depression, it can be helpful to see your provider each week. It can also be helpful to continue to receive drug abuse treatment even after you stop taking drugs. Community Care recommends staying in treatment for both depression and drug abuse because we believe that continued treatment can help you in your recovery.

To get a copy of these guidelines, please call the Community Care office in your county. You can also get them at:

<http://www.healthyminds.org/multimedia/depression.pdf> for the APA guideline on Major Depressive Disorder

<http://www.nida.nih.gov/Infobox/understand.html> for the NIDA guideline on treatment for drug abuse.

Community Care welcomes your input on these guidelines. If you would like to talk to us about the guidelines, please call the Community Care office in your county, as listed on Page 1.

Your Member Handbook
has important information
that you need to know. If you need a
Member Handbook, please call the
Community Care office in your county
and we will mail you a copy.



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