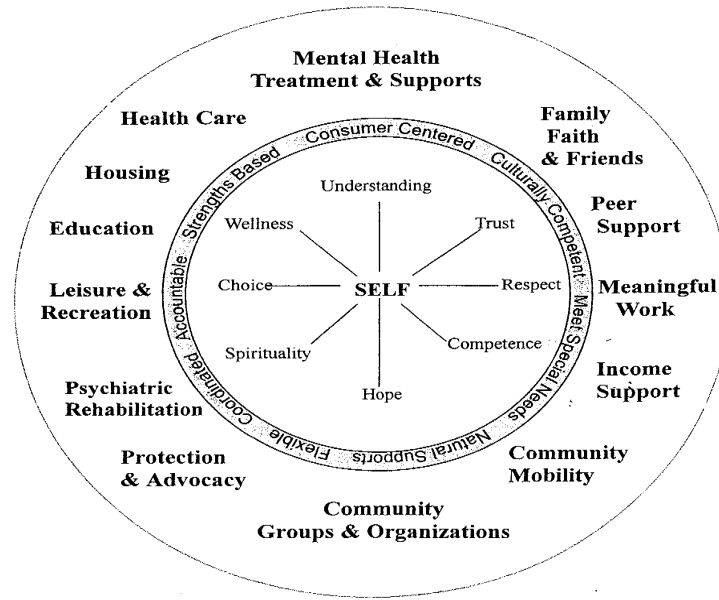


The Pennsylvania Community Support Program for Recovery



Community Support Program (CSP)

The Community Support Program is a grassroots coalition of individuals, families and professionals working to help people with serious mental illness to live successfully in the community. Across Pennsylvania local CSP groups promote the CSP philosophy. CSP members work on local issues such as employment, housing, education, legislation, human rights, and criminal justice. All Community Support Programs follow common values and principles.

Community Support Program Values and Principles

CSP groups follow a set of principles emphasizing client self-determination, individualized and flexible services, normalized services and service settings, and service coordination.

[Services should be consumer-centered.](#) Services should be based on and responsive to the needs of the client rather than the needs of the system or the needs of providers.

[Services should empower clients.](#) Services should use consumer self-help approaches and allow clients to retain the greatest possible control over their own lives. As much as possible, clients should set their own goals and decide what services to receive. Clients should be actively involved in all aspects of planning and delivering services.

Services should be culturally appropriate. Services should be available, accessible and acceptable to members of racial and ethnic minority groups and women.

Services should be flexible. Services should be built upon the assets and strengths of clients in order to help them maintain a sense of identity, dignity and self-esteem.

Services should be normalized and incorporate natural supports. Services should be offered in the least restrictive, most natural setting possible. Clients should be encouraged to use natural supports in the community and should be integrated into the normal living, working, learning and leisure time activities of the community.

Services should meet special needs. Services should be adapted to meet the needs of subgroups of severely mentally ill persons such as elderly individuals; youth in transition to adulthood; persons with mental illness and co-occurring substance abuse, mental retardation, or hearing impairments; homeless persons with mental illness; and mentally ill persons inappropriately placed in the correctional system.

Services systems should be accountable. Service providers should be accountable to clients, and should be monitored to assure quality of care and relevance to client needs. Consumers and families should be involved in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating services.

Services should be coordinated. Services should be coordinated through written agreements that require ongoing communication and linkages among participating agencies and the various levels of government. Effective coordination must occur at the individual, community, and state levels. Mechanisms should be in place to ensure continuity of care between inpatient settings and other community services.

(Taken from "Community Support Systems: Questions and Answers," by The National Institute of Mental Health Community Support Program, Maryland, 1988)

What Does a Local CSP Committee do ?

Training – Train local professionals, families, consumers, and community members on the CSP philosophy to support a unified vision of the array of services needed and how they should be delivered.

Planning, Quality Assurance and Education - The CSP committee should help the county mental health office develop, implement and evaluate the annual County MH Plan. This could include identifying unmet service needs and prioritizing new services for funding. In addition, CSP may help monitor the quality of services.

Fighting Stigma - CSP committees help to debunk myths about mental illness. Methods may include speaking engagements, development and distribution of literature, media blitzes, and public events.

Advocacy - CSP committees speak up on behalf of consumers and families regarding policy, procedures, and funding.

Relationship of the County CSP to the Area and Statewide CSP Committees - The statewide CSP committee and regional committees support the development of county CSP committees.

Relationship of the County CSP to the County MH/MR Office and the MH/MR Advisory Board - The County CSP committee advises the County MHMR Office on planning, quality assurance and evaluation of services and programs. The CSP is organized and operated independently in order to be free to challenge the system and advocate for change.

Evaluation - The CSP committee should conduct self-evaluation to ensure that it truly is a catalyst to transform the mental health system.