

What's Working Well



...In the Employment of People with Lived Experience of Mental Health Challenges, Parents and Family Members to Transform California's Public Behavioral Health Workforce

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<http://workingwelltogether.org/>

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Working Well Together

Training and Technical Assistance Center

From Darkness to Light at Project Return in Los Angeles County Region

by Angelica Garcia, Senior Program Manager

Feds Support Part Time Work, Job Sharing

Working Well Together (WWT) is a collaborative project comprised of NAMI California, United Advocates for Children and Families, and the California Institute for Mental Health. Funded by the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), the WWT Training and Technical Assistance Center supports the vision of the MHSA to transform systems to be client and family-driven. As such, WWT supports the sustained development of client, family member and parent/caregiver employment within every level of the public mental health workforce. The What's Working Well Quarterly News brief is produced and edited by Karin Lettau, MS, WWT Technical Assistance Coordinator for the Southern Region.

As the Senior Program Manager for [Project Return](#), one of the largest and oldest client-run organizations in Los Angeles County, I often look back at all the gifts I have received in recovery. I struggled being a single parent of three, with major depression. I found it hard to see past the dark days, not knowing what tomorrow might bring. I would only hope that the next day would get better. Yet as time progressed so did my symptoms, bills kept piling up, and it seemed as if everything around me continued to spiral out of control.

One day while waiting at a local food bank I noticed a job posting that caught my eye. The job requirements listed that the applicant must have "lived experience". The deadline for submission was that day at 5 p.m. and I had an old resume in the glove compartment of my car. I hadn't been employed in over a year and a half. I pulled out the resume, went into the food bank and asked if they would fax over my crumpled resume. As I walked away I felt I was finally able to do one good thing for myself. To my surprise I received a call two weeks later for an interview. I was so nervous when I arrived at Project Return for the interview, but I was greeted by the nicest people

who put me at ease. I soon learned that this was an agency run by people who were mental health consumers themselves. A week later I received a call informing me I got the job, and I nearly passed out.

Working in the mental health field has been one of the greatest gifts. I am able to give back and carry the message of hope to others who are in need. All the while it keeps me grounded knowing that the tools I have learned really do aid in my personal recovery. Five years later I can truly say I wake up each morning knowing that I can get through the day and that if it happens to be a day in which I am struggling I have support from those who I work with and from my family. My family too, had to adapt to the change and through programs offered for family members they were able to educate themselves, and find the support needed in order to understand me. Today I feel understood and



Angelica Garcia

this allows me to feel okay about practicing self-care when needed, without being judged.

(continued on page 2)

Do you know who supports part-time employment and/or job sharing?! According to the U.S. Department of Personnel Management "Part-Time Employment and Job Sharing Guide", key to achieving "family-friendly workplaces" is to tap into all the personnel flexibilities and resources available. The Federal Government has long recognized the value of part-time employment. In fact, in 1978 legislation encouraging part-time employment for Federal employees was enacted.

The guide provides information about creating part-time and job sharing options, including that doing so supports employees who seek to:

- ⇒balance routine and/or unexpected work and family demands;
- ⇒recover from an illness;
- ⇒pursue an education;
- ⇒devote time to volunteering;
- ⇒participate in a special hobby or interest; or
- ⇒make time for themselves.

The use of part-time employment and job sharing can also benefit employers. Part-time employment opportunities can: (continued on page 2)



Other Points of Interest in This Issue

WWT 2012-13 Preview P. 2

Welcome New TAC— P. 2
Technical Assistance
Coordinator

Dark to Light in Los Angeles

(continued from page 1)

In Los Angeles County we have many trainings and work opportunities for mental health consumers, youth and families, many offered by the Department of Mental Health to enhance our skills as peer providers. We encourage the people we serve to find meaning in recovery, by attending support groups, trainings, conferences, and by building new relationships with other peers. As we continue to educate ourselves about mental health we get a better understanding of how to help others while maintaining our own wellness. Recovery is an attainable goal.

Never in my darkest days did I think that I would see the sun shine as bright as it does today, that someone would entrust me to oversee three programs for [Project Return](#), and build all the wonderful relationships I have today.

WWT Welcomes New Greater Bay Area Regional TAC

Though missed, we are pleased to announce the promotion within UACF of Deborah Van Dunk, our previous WWT TAC for the Greater Bay Area, and we warmly welcome **Cindy Claffin** as our accomplished new WWT TAC for the Greater Bay Area Region!

Cindy has a BA in Sociology and will have her Master's in Business Administration next June. Cindy is a member of the California MH Planning Council representing the family voice. She has a background working in Children's MH as a parent partner, advocating, supporting and empowering parents to navigate the mental health, school and the juvenile justice systems. As training director for a decade, a parent of a child and raising a grandchild with MH challenges, she brings great and valued experience to this position.
[Cindy Claffin](#), 916-643-1530 ext 109



PT/Job Sharing Helps All

(continued from page 1)

⇒attract or retain highly qualified employees or those with special skills who may not be able to or may not want a full-time schedule;
⇒serve as a performance incentive;
⇒increase employee effectiveness;
⇒provide work coverage during recurring workload surges;
⇒reduce employment expenditures when employees voluntarily reduce their work schedules; and
⇒support agency affirmative action goals.

Source: <http://www.opm.gov/employment-and-benefits/worklife/officialdocuments/handbooksguides/pt-employ-jobsharing/index.asp>

WWT Project Manager and TAC, Superior Region, [Donna Matthews](#), (916) 379-5353

Southern Region Heats Up

The Southern Regional TAC headed to the scorching counties of San Bernardino, Imperial and soon to Kern. Some issues counties are tackling regarding consumer/youth/family/parent employment are:

- ◆ developing job descriptions
- ◆ dual role strain among staff,
- ◆ Copeland-Certified Wellness Recovery Action Plan—WRAP facilitation,
- ◆ recovery outreach to facilities where the people served reside to provide WRAP classes.

To spread training to remote counties, the next one-day WWT Southern Regional Training will be in Bakersfield, Kern County in November. We hope to be able to provide Continuing Education Units again, to ensure we draw an integrated audience.

WWT TAC, Southern Region [Karin Lettau](#) (619) 246-7797.

WWT 2012-13 Preview

WWT staff are jumping into this new fiscal year with great gusto and anticipation. Our new, accessible, WWT website will be launched in the next month with a projects tab for the Consumer, Youth, Family and Parent (CYFP) Peer Certification documents.

We are now planning for the WWT Statewide Stakeholder Summit for Peer Certification to be held next spring culminating with recommendations to the State for California Peer Certification.

Other WWT work for this year include a total of 48 Technical Assistance visits to serve counties in all five regions throughout the state, a total of six one-day regional trainings, four webinars, a monthly networking call for parents and caregivers, and also the monthly call for public mental health employees or interns with lived experience.

We are developing a WWT Toolkit on recruiting, hiring and retaining employees with lived experience in public mental health, and building a marketing and distribution plan to guide the dissemination of the many products we have created and assembled.

Please see our [WWT website](#) for more information and join our calls!

Peer Certification Monthly Calls

Please join our monthly call to learn the latest on the state Peer Certification and give your input to shape the Statewide Stakeholder Summit next spring. The teleconference calls are on **the 4th Wednesday of each month from 12 to 1 PM**. Call 1-866-633-8010, Code: 1015102631. For more information, contact [Karin Lettau](#) (619) 246-7797.

Ron Shaw is the WWT Central Region TAC Coordinator:
[Ron Shaw](#), (916) 567-0163