

**Project Return: The Next Step
Wellness Centers
Proposal to the Department of Mental Health**

Introduction:

Project Return: The Next Step (PR:TNS) will pilot two client-run Wellness Centers, one at Augustus Hawkins Mental Health Center and one in Long Beach. With the Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) as their core, the centers will integrate mental and physical health education and support/maintenance strategies to help clients continue in their recovery and pursue their goals for healthy lives.

PR:TNS identified a Wellness Center as an exciting new concept based on an innovative client-run approach pioneered at Boston University's Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation. There are, the University reports, "alarming mortality and comorbidity rates in persons with psychiatric disabilities." In response, it has designed wellness services, believing that the importance of looking at the scope of needs for a healthy life "has been ignored, neglected and unemphasized."

The Wellness Center concept of addressing mental and physical health is based on the realization and research that people with mental health issues also have a high incidence of serious physical health problems, including diabetes, high blood pressure and weight problems, which are an increasingly common side effect of the newer medications.

In researching this option, PR:TNS found that the Boston University approach acknowledges that "the concept of recovery is rooted in consumers' experiences and their articulation of what has helped them to heal." The wellness option provides "educational opportunities to strengthen and broaden their knowledge of the physical, intellectual (and) emotional ... practices" that support their recovery.

Goal:

The goal of the PR:TNS Wellness Centers is to improve clients' well-being by offering support and maintenance strategies for their physical as well as mental health needs, which will help improve their quality of life and abilities to live, learn and work in the community.

Objectives:

The objectives for each site are to: 1) offer mental and physical health management support groups to 100 to 150 individuals per year; 2) to help at least 50 individuals develop healthy lifestyle plans, based on their specific physical and mental health recovery goals; and 3) to hire clients as full-time coordinator and peer supporters and to train them in WRAP as well as health awareness and maintenance techniques.

The Long Beach site has an objective to provide medication services to 100 individuals per year; for the August Hawkins site, the objective is to develop a relationship with an Augustus Hawkins psychiatrist to provide medication services to 100 Wellness Center clients.

Please note: these are full year objectives. For 2004-05, the Wellness Center at Augustus Hawkins will open in October and so will operate for nine months this year.

Strategies:

PR:TNS will open two Wellness Centers, one to be based at the Augustus Hawkins Mental Health Center, and one in Long Beach, at a community location with convenient bus access. The centers will serve individuals who are living in the community, may have completed an

integrated service program, and may or may not be connected to a mental health clinic. Each center will serve approximately 100 to 150 individuals per full year.

Under the direction of PR:TNS' associate director, each center will hire a PR:TNS full-time coordinator and clients in two FTE peer support-health advocate positions. The positions will take on a "personal trainer" type of role in helping individuals identify and pursue their mental and physical health recovery goals.

The two centers will share a full-time nurse practitioner, experienced in both mental and physical health care. The nurse practitioner will focus on the interaction between these areas and what individuals can do to achieve and maintain their well-being. In Long Beach, staff will include a half-time psychiatrist, who will provide medication services to individuals; PR:TNS will discuss the possibility of having a psychiatrist at Augustus Hawkins provide these services to clients served at the Augustus Hawkins Wellness Center.

To help individuals develop healthy lifestyles, the Wellness Centers will offer services in seven areas: 1) groups, using WRAP and Procovery; 2) illness/health management, which covers nutrition and exercise; 3) paraprofessional training for work as peer supporters or life coaches; 4) education, covering skills building and self-advocacy; 5) holistic/alternative medicine, which includes stress/anxiety reduction and yoga; 6) goal oriented counseling; and 7) medication, which covers prescriptions and education. A chart is attached.

PR:TNS plans to use WRAP as its primary support strategy. PR:TNS' associate director recently became certified as a WRAP trainer; in fact, she is the only individual in Southern California approved to "train the trainers" in WRAP. This approach helps clients learn how to use self-help skills to deal with symptoms and to incorporate these skills into daily life. In this approach, developed by national self-help advocate Mary Ellen Copeland, individuals put together self-care plans that include daily maintenance lists, early warning signs and crisis planning.

Similarly, the Center's peer advocates will help individuals put together physical health self-care plans. Health promotion classes, organized by the nurse practitioner, will focus on awareness building and support strategies. Topics of the classes and groups, based on client interests and objectives, will include nutrition, exercise and healthy choices for living with conditions such as Diabetes, and alternatives to additional medications for issues such as anxiety and stress. PR:TNS will contract with community specialists to help with some of the classes.

In Long Beach, the center's psychiatrist and nurse practitioner will provide medication services to individuals who have no ongoing connection to a mental health clinic or program. They also will offer classes in the effects and side effects of medication.

Evaluation:

The Wellness Center will evaluate its effectiveness based on clients' success in meeting and maintaining the goals in their specific well-being plans. When clients develop these plans with the help of their peer supporter-health advocate, they will identify three well-being goals, and the Center will review the progress toward their goals every six months.

Project Return: The Next Step
Members

Recovering ISA/ACT
Members

Wellness Recovery Action Plan

Medication

Goal-Oriented Counseling

Cognitive Restructuring of Emotional Issues
Personal Relationships
Depression Management

Groups

WRAP - Procovery
Anger Management - Domestic Violence
Dual Diagnosis - Ups and Downs
Voices Anonymous

WELLNESS CENTER

Mind - Body - Spirit
[A Guided Exploration
of Personal Recovery]

Holistic/Alternative Medicine

Stress/Anxiety Reduction
"Chicken Soup for the Soul"
Yoga - Tai Chi
Meditation

Traditional Medicine

(Health Management)
Smoking Cessation - Nutrition
Exercise - Weight Management
Senior Health

Healthy Lifestyles

Education

Skills-Building - Self-Advocacy
Understanding SSI

Certificated Para-Professionals

Peer Supporters
Life Coaches