

Bringing Illness Management and Recovery to Connecticut

While there is no known “cure” for serious mental illness, people can and do achieve recovery. Recovery from mental illness means developing a positive and meaningful identity apart from the illness and rebuilding one’s life despite or within the limitations of the condition. Research shows that by learning more about managing the symptoms of mental illness, people can move forward with their lives. One particularly promising approach to this challenge is the Illness Management and Recovery curriculum disseminated by the federal Center for Mental Health Services, described below.

Illness Management and Recovery (IMR) is an evidence-based practice, based on multiple research studies, that helps people learn to manage some of the symptoms of mental illness and, ultimately, to meet their life’s goals.

- ▶ IMR was developed by researchers in collaboration with people in recovery, families, and practitioners.
- ▶ IMR consists of weekly individual or group sessions.
- ▶ IMR provides a structured, step-by-step approach consisting of educational handouts, planning sheets, and checklists that are easy to use for both participants and practitioners.



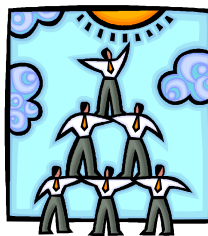
Subjects Covered in IMR

- Recovery strategies
- Practical facts about mental illness
- The stress-vulnerability model and treatment strategies
- Building social support
- Reducing relapse
- Using medication effectively
- Coping with stress
- Coping with problems and symptoms
- Getting needs met in the mental health system

The DMHAS Education and Training Division is currently disseminating IMR within four participating DMHAS operated facilities. Each of these facilities has assigned two to three senior clinicians to receive extensive training from Kim Mueser and Susan Gingerich from the Dartmouth-New Hampshire Psychiatric Research Center who were co-leaders in developing the IMR approach. Clinicians receive bi-weekly consultations to learn the nuances of this practice and will, in turn, teach other clinicians at their agencies how to use the practice. This project receives financial support from New England Health Care Employees Union District 1199 and the four participating facilities.

Sample Goals in IMR

- ◆ To live independently
- ◆ To make new relationships
- ◆ To have a job to increase income
- ◆ To avoid hospitalizations
- ◆ To perform in a choir



Participating IMR Facilities

- ◆ Capitol Region Mental Health Center
- ◆ Connecticut Valley Hospital
- ◆ Southeast Mental Health Authority
- ◆ Southwest Community Mental Health Systems

For more information on bringing IMR to Connecticut, contact Richard.Fisher@po.state.ct.us

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