



Today's Panel: Involving Peers to Advance Recovery

Charles Houston has worked at the Oceanview-Merced-Ingleside (OMI) Family Center in San Francisco since 2010, where he serves in the roles of Systems Navigator, Administrative Support Person and Group Facilitator. There, Charles has taken the lead in the Therapeutic Socialization Program. As the Coordinator of that Program, Charles modified and enhanced the “Coffee Pot” program and created and developed the “Janitorial Program”. Both programs have resulted in improved outcomes for consumers, e.g., an increase in their engagement in community activities. Charles has also facilitated Tobacco Free Project groups and co-facilitated Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) groups. As a member of Team OMI, Charles participated in a year-long training program through Advancing Recovery Practices (ARP): “A Quality Improvement Collaborative”, sponsored by the California Institute for Mental Health. Charles is in his fifth year of recovery from drugs and alcohol and continues to reach out, encourage and support others in their recovery. Charles believes that “Everyone needs some type of recovery”.

Sharon Kuehn works for Peers Envisioning & Engaging in Recovery Services (P.E.E.R.S.) as the Alameda County Social Inclusion Campaign Program Manager, WRAP Advanced Level Facilitator and Project Advisor to the Working Well Together Technical Assistance Center. In guiding the Social Inclusion team in its endeavors, oversees a groundbreaking consumer-run effort to eliminate stigma and create welcoming communities for people in mental health and substance use recovery. Sharon's leadership in the California and national consumer movement has included developing the first consumer-run training contract through the statewide Mental Health Co-Op (Wellness Recovery Educators), leading the Mental Health Managers in Recovery, serving as a lead consultant in the development of Recovery Training and Consumer Employment content for the California Institute for Mental Health, and representing the statewide client voice as the Executive Director of the California Network of Mental Health Clients. Sharon's current passions include sharing Capacitor Body-Mind-Spirit Wellness Tools and WRAP for Healing Trauma and developing a statewide plan through MHSA Workforce Education and Training (WET) to fund Whole Health Peer Support in California.

Mertice "Gitane" Williams brings cultural sensitivity, spirituality, story-telling and a self-help perspective to her work in mental health training and education. Gitane is a consultant with Crestwood Behavioral Healthcare, Inc. She develops employment programs as a Vocational Wellness Educator. She also advises the California State Department of Mental Health from the consumer perspective as the Chair of the Client and Family Member Task Force.