Introduction to the Mental Health Consumer/Survivor movement

A 2-hour, off-campus seminar for anyone interested in learning about the Mental Health Consumer/Survivor movement

Facilitated by Sandy Watson

About the “Introduction to the Mental Health Consumer/Survivor Movement” seminar.

Many consumers, carers, community members, workers and managers remain unaware of the rich and fascinating history of the mental health consumer/survivor movement. This seminar helps consumers, survivors and peer workers to know their social and political history and identities, as well as supporting mental health workers and managers to better understand the movement and its aspirations.

The Mental Health Consumer/Survivor movement has a rich history, one that is often overlooked in mental health and community services. There are specific identities (mad, psychic warrior, reality tester, lunatic liberationists) and terminologies that mental health workers and many consumers remain unaware of, such as the specific usages of the terms ‘consumer’ or ‘survivor’. However, the international consumer/survivor movement has extensive influence; e.g., having advisory status at the United Nations through the World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry, and is an instrumental contributor and commentator to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006).

This introductory seminar will help services build service user and worker confidence in relation to consumer & survivor aspirations towards participation and leadership; peer work, as well as personal recovery. It is essential knowledge for peer workers to have a sound understanding of the Mental Health Consumer/Survivor movement and its current contributions: its politics, activism, leaders, research, literature, humour and diverse resources. To know where we are going means to know something about where we have come from.

Target Group

This off-campus seminar is designed for anyone interested in learning about the history of the Mental Health Consumer/Survivor movement and its significant, often transformative, contributions to improving understandings about, and the rights and treatment of, people affected by mental distress.
About the Facilitator
Sandy Watson is the facilitator of the Introduction to the Mental Health Consumer/Survivor Movement seminar. She is the Consumer Education Coordinator at the NSWIOP, is a consumer and has done extensive presenting on a variety of consumer topics. Sandy Watson can be contacted via email: Sandy.Watson@nswiop.nsw.edu.au

If you are interested in this seminar, you may also want to explore others that you can schedule on the same or on another day: e.g.,

The Lemon Looning Game [COM027]  
A consumer perspectives game for mental health & community workers facilitated by 2 consumers - suitable for an inservice or for a staff training day.

Purposeful Storytelling in Peer Work [COM029]  
A presentation primarily for peer workers on how to use lived experience safely and with purpose. This is also suited to a mixed audience.

The Lived Experience of Recovery [COM028]  
An introductory seminar open to anyone interested in learning about the key elements of personal recovery.

History of the Mental Health Consumer/Survivor movement
• Early socio-political history & communications
• Trends in the movement
• Key figures & events

Introduction to resources
• Networks & organisations
• Online resources

Powerpoint slides will be used, and handouts are provided.

There are small group discussions, where people sit around tables to discuss perspectives.

Please note:
Due to the nature of the topic area, and although the content and discussion will be managed sensitively, occasionally a course participant might experience some level of distress or discomfort arising during the seminar.

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