

Chelan-Douglas Coalition for Health Improvement
Meeting Minutes
January 8, 2020, 3:00 PM to 4:30 PM

Introductions and Icebreaker-All

Attendance: See Sign In Sheet

In Our Own Voice Presentation: Phil-NAMI Volunteer

- It is more powerful to hear from someone that you have met with lived experience. Phil challenged the CHI members to ask difficult questions. Phil grew up in the Wenatchee Valley and enjoys the outdoors.
- Phil told his story-in his voice on what happened, helped and what's next.
- His story- At the age of 15 years old, it was hard to focus and Phil did not know why or what to do. He began withdrawing from friends and family. Phil was diagnosed with Major Depressive Disorder and received medication. His perspective changed and became hyper sensitive. He later found out he was misdiagnosed and medication is currently correct for Bipolar 2 Disorder.

What questions do you have?

- Could you explain Bipolar 2 Disorder?
 - Bipolar 1 Disorder is extreme mood swings with really low waves and hypomania. Mania is typically more hospitalized-psychosis. Bipolar 2 Disorder is not as high of mania and can be misdiagnosed.
- Did your family members seek out help from NAMI or another organization?
 - At first, they did not know what was going on. His mom was the first to seek NAMI and got Phil connected with Peer to Peer.
- Present change in diagnosis- Is there a big change in medication?
 - Yes, each medication can help with different mental illnesses.
- How did you feel talking to different providers?
 - He was working with really good Behavioral Health Nurse Practitioners. He believed that one or two had the best interest in mind. Behavioral Health Professionals can only do as much as they can with information provided. For Mental Illness-one's reality can be so distorted and hard to explain.
- Why is your relationship with your employer so good?
 - Our dialogue is open. His boss is understanding and very empathetic.
 - Did you have to approach him?
 - Yes, but he felt comfortable doing so.
- How did you feel when you got the diagnosis? As a healthcare provider, some have said it is hard to hear.
 - He felt relieved because he knew something was wrong. He asked the Doctors to check on an MRI because he wanted a tumor-something physical that could be taken out. He was battling for so long, but now life has been stable for two years. It has been life changing.

What helps?

- A medicine regimen and tools that help him through his life.
 - CPAP machine
 - 20 LB weighted blanket
- Health log and can takes the log to medical appointments
- Working out to lower anxiety
- A network: close friends, coworkers, family and medical providers
- Involvement in things-staying busy and engaged

Participate when **well** even if you do not want to for the structure, purpose and hope aspects.

- Recovery is not finished at a point in life- you know you have to do things to stay well
 - When you are not well, do not force yourself to do things. There are times of struggle.

What other questions do you have?

- What were some things that people did when you were not well that helped?
 - Any well person can just listen to them. You do not have to agree with them. Just be someone that a person can be there for.
 - Sometimes when you are not well, the idea of something can be an impossible task- things start looking too hard.
 - Ask them how can I help you? Even going grocery shopping could help them.
- Now there is Family Medical Leave. If that was available would you have taken advantage? Or what would have helped?
 - Social Services: Disability you can only make a certain amount. Applications can be too hard to handle for some people and there needs to be a support person to help you (Navigator).
- Given that this group is those that are in the field to help. We know that there is a stigmatization around mental illness. What would you say to someone that does not feel comfortable about mental illness?
 - It is the secrets and hiding that gives the power of stigma. If you can do anything to counteract that, then do so. There is a sense of freedom- the more I open up, the more people open up. Mental illness is so stigmatized.
- With challenges around mental illness, what aspect in an urban area can make it easier? From an urban city planner perspective?
 - The loop trail has been a life giving thing. No matter what time of year there are people on it.

What is next?

- Pete is pursuing schooling and working towards becoming a mental health professional.
- He is writing a poetry book about mental illness experiences.
- He is Peer to Peer certified and Nationally trained. Pete is sharing In Our Own Voice and lessening the stigma.

Questions:

- When you go to NAMI support groups is it somewhere you can open up?

- It is one of the few places that I feel accepted.
- What about confidentiality at NAMI meetings living in a small town?
 - I feel secure. We talk in the group-guidelines and reinforced.

Statement: Mental Health is not your fault, it is your responsibility.

- For the most part, I understand the statement. Yes, mental health is not my fault and I am not a victim. I do think it is my responsibility to take care of myself. Like everyone on Earth. However, there have been times at rock bottom that I do not think I could prevent it. Triggers and situations that cause depression. But some people do not know what those are. Some are genetic.
- It may be your peers and network have the responsibility to make sure you are doing well. If we see a problem, instead of sweeping it under the rug. Check in and make sure people are doing well.
- Keep in mind what I am sharing is a tiny fraction of mental health illnesses.

Mental illness is an illness. It is not someone's fault and we think it is something that people can control.

Round Table-All

- Paid Family Leave website: application and if you have qualified hours then you qualify. Visit: <https://paidleave.wa.gov/>
- Economic Development District: Working with employers who are more intune with mental health.
- PowerHouse: Low barriers to those in need or experiencing homelessness. There are opportunities for resources. Open Monday through Friday 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Some of the resources are laundry, shower, socks and sleeping bags etc.
- NAMI: There is a Peer to Peer Class. We are trying to bring the resources here. Also to advocate and educate. Behavioral Health is still not as accessible. Trying to have less stigma. Visit: <http://namicd.org/>
- Action Health Partners: A living well with Chronic Disease workshop will be coming soon.
- Professional Summit is on February 6, 2020
 - To register visit: <http://wenatchee.org/events/details/professional-development-summit-7527>.
- Chelan-Douglas Child Services: Current openings in Wenatchee School District. Opening for Childcare.
- WSDOT: 2020 City Safety Grant on WSDOT portal.
- There are current job openings for the 2020 Census. These jobs are short term.
- If folks want to share their resources please email Cindy Perryman at cindy@prn365.com

Thank you to Pete for telling his story and for those who attended.

Meeting Adjourned