

CHOICES, Inc., Soteria-Alaska, & Peer Properties: Agents for Positive Change

NAMI-Anchorage Annual Meeting
March 16, 2006
Jim Gottstein

The Setting

- Mental Health System at Least Doubling Chronicity
- Effective Non-Drug Treatments
- People Entitled to Non-Drug Choices
 - (Also Entitled to Drug Choices)
- Neuroleptics Harmful – Very Deadly
- No Scientific Proof of Brain Defect Theory of Mental Illness

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Goals

- Substantially Increase Recovery Rate from diagnosis of Serious Mental Illness
- Non-Coercive
- System Support of People's Non-Medication Choices

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Recovery – JG Definition

Getting past a diagnosis of mental illness to a point where a person enjoys meaningful activity, has relationships, and where psychiatric symptoms, if any, do not dominate or even play a major role in their life.

Recovery: Responsibilities and Roadblocks, by Jim Gottstein,
<http://akmhweb.org/recovery/RecoveryResponsibilitiesRoadblocks.pdf>

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Three Components

- Soteria-Alaska—Alternative to Hospitalization
- CHOICES, Inc.—Choice in the Community
- Peer Properties—Peer Run Housing

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Soteria-Alaska

- Non-coercive, non-drug option for people who would otherwise be facing hospitalization.
- Trust has provided planning funds to present a full-blown business plan at its September meeting
- Trying to Replicate Original Soteria-House Model
 - 6-8 People
 - Two staff at all times.
 - 48 hour shifts

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Consumers
Having
Ownership
In
Creating
Effective
Services

- “Consumer” Run
- Non-coercive, Non-drug Choices In Community
 - Helping People Get What they Want
 - Ch. 9 of “Community Mental Health: A Practical Guide” (Mosher & Burti)
 - “Pass-Through” to Other Consumer Run programs
- Working with Community Mental Health Center
- Just Received Independent Case Management/Flexible Support Services Grant
 - Trying to Leverage to Sustainability
- Number of pass-throughs

Peer Properties

- Peer Run Housing
- Allows Non-drug Choice
- No “services,” but peer support principle
- One 4 bedroom House Owned & Operated
- 11 Unit Grant/Low Income Housing Tax Credit Construction Project Recently Abandoned
 - Too Expensive to Operate?
 - Too Complicated Financing?
 - Too Little Organizational Capacity?
- Three Six-Plexes on Ingra Available, but no way to buy
- Still Need Organizational Capacity for Expansion

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The Next Six Months Could See Substantial Progress

- Soteria-Alaska
- CHOICES, Inc.

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Suggested Reading

- *Mad in America: Bad Science, Bad Medicine and the Enduring Mistreatment of the Mentally Ill* (2001) by Robert Whitaker
- *Rethinking Psychiatric Drugs: A Guide to Informed Consent*, by Grace E. Jackson, MD, (2005)
- *Brain Disabling Treatments in Psychiatry: Drugs, Electroshock, and the Role of the FDA* (1997) by Peter Breggin, MD.
- *Community Mental Health: A Practical Guide* (1994) by Loren Mosher and Lorenzo Burti
- *Soteria: Through Madness to Deliverance*, by Loren Mosher and Joyce Hendrix with Deborah Fort (2004)
- *Psychotherapy of Schizophrenia: The Treatment of Choice* (Jason Aronson, 1996), by Bertram P. Karon and Gary R. Vandenbos

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Q & A