

# Daily American Republic

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## **Planting seeds of hope vital in treating mental illness**

By *DAVID SILVERBERG ~ Staff Writer*

Having experienced severe depression requiring treatment in an institution, Kathleen Crowley knows the importance of building hope in treating mental health consumers.

Now she is the Director of Procovery Training and Development for the Health Action Network based in Los Angeles, Calif., and the author of a book entitled "The Power of Procovery in Healing Mental Illness: Just Start Anywhere." The Network was founded in 1996.

"Hope is so vitally important in the procovery process. If there is no hope, there is no motivation," Crowley said. She urged providers to "stay away from hopebusters" and to "use hopebuilders to plant the seeds of hope."

"We have to help consumers see there are a lot of possibilities for them," she said.

Crowley conducted two one-day training conferences at the Black River Coliseum to kickoff the "Recovery through Procovery" System Change Demonstration Project in Missouri. She discussed "Rethinking Mental Illness: Power of Procovery" with consumers and their families Monday and with staff, providers, faculty, students and community leaders Tuesday.

"Regardless of whether an individual can 'recover' in the traditional sense of 'returning to a prior state of health,' all individuals can move forward to Procover, to find and build new dreams and new purpose in life," said Crowley, who developed the procovery model.

The training was funded by the Missouri Department of Mental Health, Family Counseling Center of Poplar Bluff and Kennett and a \$10,000 grant from Eli Lilly. Family Counseling Center and BJC Behavioral health in Kirkwood and Farmington were selected by the MDMH to introduce Procovery in Missouri.

"Family Counseling Center is pleased to be chosen to participate in this innovative mental health/substance abuse Procovery Demonstration Project," FCC Executive Director Myra Callahan said. "As we incorporate these positive concepts and practical skills of Procovery through training with staff and communications with community and stakeholders, we believe that consumers, staff and the community will welcome this new paradigm focusing on life beyond the limitations of mental illness."

DPMH has announced a philosophical change in its psychiatric services delivery system with an enhanced focus on recovery.

"Procovery helps individuals to find a new way of life that helps him or her to accept and embrace who they are, including acceptance of their illness," MDPH Director Dorn Schuffman said.

The Procovery model emphasizes a hope-centered, forward-focused and skills-based partnership of the client, the family, the service provider and the community.

After a full-day orientation and training in the system, clients, staff, family members and community representatives will form "circles" or support groups and attend a 15-week training session that teaches the eight principles and 12 strategies of Procovery.

"The Procovery model provides a clear vision and set of principles for overcoming mental illness using a set of concrete, practical and learnable everyday skills," said Diane McFarland, director of the MDPH Division of Comprehensive Psychiatric Services. "Because its principles and strategies apply to all stakeholders (clients, families, clinicians, case managers), we believe we can improve the continuity of care within our system and improve access to care by building bridges to community services and supports."

## PROCOVERY PRINCIPLES

Eight principles fundamental to Procovery are:

- Recognize that procovery is possible and learnable skills exist to do so.
- Recognize every individual's power to impact procovery.
- Focus forward -- not backward.
- Focus on life -- not illness.
- Recognize that big problems do not necessarily need big solutions -- ordinary actions can have extraordinary impact.
- Recognize that an individual can "just start anywhere" and begin procovery from any point.
- Accept "backsliding," which is an inevitable consequence of the difficulty of healing and often an integral part of the procovery process.
- Keep hope alive.

## PROCOVERY STRATEGIES

Twelve strategies to implementing procovery, whether by staff, individuals, family or systems, are:

- Detoxify the diagnosis -- changing the manner in which a diagnosis is given and received.
- Take practical partnering steps -- in health care, compliance and choice are often mirror images, and active partnering steps by professionals, consumers, and family members, within current systems, can activate the procovery process and radically change outcomes
- Manage medications collaboratively.
- Build -- and most critically, do not extinguish -- hope.

- Create and support change.
- Dissolve stigma, particularly internal stigma.
- Use feelings as fuel for procovery, including the emotions that are consequences of chronic illness.
- Gather, utilize and maximize support.
- Stick with Procovery during crises and use those times to initiate procovery.
- Adopt effective self-care strategies.
- Live intentionally through work and activities
- Actively retain procovery.

For more information, click onto [www.procovery.com](http://www.procovery.com). or call Family Counseling Center at 573-888-9365.

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