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One more Suburban journal

Speaker to discuss treating mental illness

As a kickoff to an innovative "Recovery Through Procovery" system change demonstration project, the Missouri Department of Mental Health and BJC Behavioral Health in Kirkwood and Farmington are bringing Kathleen Crowley, a nationally renowned writer and speaker from California, to St. Louis.

Crowley, author of the book "The Power of Procovery in Healing Mental Illness: Just Start Anywhere," will be in town Thursday, April 7, Friday, April 8 and Tuesday, April 12 to conduct three one-day trainings on applying procovery principles and

strategies for transforming the lives of individuals with serious mental illness.

The Recovery Through Procovery demonstration project focuses on using the procovery model to work with consumers, families, providers and communities to promote recovery through changing attitudes, building hope and building skills.

Crowley is director of procovery training and development for the Health Action Network, a nonprofit organization based in Los Angeles with the mission of empowering individuals in health care. Crowley served on then-Gov. Tommy

Thompson's Wisconsin Blue Ribbon Commission on Mental Health and speaks, trains and consults nationally on procovery.

"It is easy to feel paralyzed by what seems an overwhelming task of overcoming serious mental illness," Crowley said. "By studying individuals who have succeeded in overcoming mental illness, we have identified basic inspirational principles and concrete, practical, proven strategies that don't cost more, don't take more time, but use the power that all individuals have regardless of the limitations of symptoms and systems.

"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."

Leslie Skeen, site manager for BJC Kirkwood, said, "Much of what makes a difference in overcoming mental illness and substance abuse revolves around finding inspiration and hope, and developing practical skills for

life. This is the vision of procovery that BJC wants to offer through this pilot."

The kickoff trainings are open to consumers, family, staff, providers, faculty, students and community leaders at no charge. This program will be funded by the Missouri Department of Mental Health and BJC Behavioral Health. All sessions are from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

For consumers and family (same session repeated twice), the dates are:

- Thursday, April 7, Kirkwood United Methodist Church, 201 W. Adams Ave. For information or to register, call Georgeanne Merrell at (314) 206-3439.

- Tuesday, April 12, Mineral Area College, North College Center, 5270 Flat River Road in Park Hills. For information or to register, call Rebecca Counts at (573) 756-5353.

For staff and interested residents, the date is Thursday, April 8, at Kirkwood United Methodist Church. For information or to register, call Georgeanne Merrell at (314) 206-3439.