



# OCA Newsletter January 2011

DHSS - STATE OF NEBRASKA

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## Peer Support & Wellness Specialist Training



January 2011 Peer Support & Wellness Specialist Training Class

The Office of Consumer Affairs was very pleased to co-host a **2011 Peer Support and Wellness Specialist Training Class.**

This training is utilized by people with lived experience with mental health

conditions, addictions, and/or trauma experiences.

What is unique about this curriculum is that it teaches trauma informed peer support strategies of communication. It encourages people to step out of their comfort zones to develop new relationships and understandings of others in their community.

The OCA was honored by the partnership of

**Lisa Alexander-** Lincoln Regional Center Peer Advocate

**Ken Timmerman-** Region 6 Consumer Specialist

**Paige Hruza-** Peer Specialist of Midplains Center

**Susan Hopson-** Region 2 Warmline Volunteer

**Susan Hancock-** Region 5 Consumer Specialist for dedicating a week to facilitate this intense training curriculum.

This training was held in Kearney, NE and applications were accepted from across the state.

Roxann Hamilton & Friend, Scott Loder, and Kathleen Hanson presenting a wellness garden.



## From Beginning to End

It's hard to believe just a few months ago I was issued a name badge and riding along to meet the facilitators of this new training the Office of Consumer Affairs was heading up. I can proudly say that I live and breathe Peer Support and Wellness on a daily basis. It was a

great pleasure realizing after one day of training that I am not the only one who lives in it each day. I watched as people who may have had an inkling of what peer support is became enlightened by what it truly is. While seeing those who worked on it with a daily basis be-

came enlightened by how much more they could learn from peers and the training.

By Matt Luna

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Lincoln Memorial,  
Washington, DC

## Wrong Side of the Bed

The day deceived my sleep  
Hacking effortlessly through my feeble, unfeasible  
Attempts to postpone its presence with dingy  
sheets  
Hung haphazardly atop Venetian blinds.  
My skill seemingly stunted  
No doubt a reaction to the state I was under.  
Last night's lover leaving leftovers in my veins and  
As I attempt to open  
My crusty, bloodshot eyes I can feel the sun  
Caressing my retinas with callused hands.  
Another morning mandated by medication,  
So I pull pillows onto my pallid mask  
Frightened to face the day.  
Moving, at last, in slow motion  
Like the Bionic Woman on sedatives.  
Just one destination for me  
As I dig through heaping ashtrays  
Searching for a butt.

Written by: Stacy Kendrick



Elsie de Nova of the Virgin Islands Department of Health, Carol Coussons de Reyes of Nebraska OCA, and Dorris Farrington-Hepburn of the Virgin Islands Department of Health at the TTI Kickoff in Washington, DC

## OCA Recommendations on Reframing Smoking Cessation for Peer to Peer

Peer Support & Wellness Specialists in Nebraska rely largely on the theory of Intentional Peer Support for their curriculum.

In the heart of those philosophies are some important statements that conflict the largest theory of smoking cessation used by professionals in the United States. These differences point out some important properties of the peer support profession.

The most common method of smoking cessation training for professionals suggests to use 5 A's— Ask, Advise, Assess, Assist, and Arrange.

We recommend these simple changes in focus for peers using the 5 A's:

Asking lots of questions can create an

atmosphere of defensiveness among peers, so we recommend telling folks what you know.

**TELL (ASK)-** Instead of *Asking* all peers about their smoking usage, *Tell* all peers that you offer a peer group for people that want to try smoking cessation.

Peers emphasize mutuality versus taking on an expert role. We don't advise each other, but share experience and strength.

**INVITE (ADVISE):** Invite peers interested in quitting smoking to access more education on the topic through a support group or a doctor.

Peers also share lived experiences versus assessing.

**SHARE(ASSESS):** Share a dialogue with peers about challenges you both have faced or are facing in quitting and what influences readiness to quit.

**ASSIST:** Assist in accessing information to quit.

**ARRANGE:** Arrange follow-up appointments for the person with yourself and professionals.

10 Peers in Nebraska have been trained to lead smoking cessation groups. **To learn more about accessing this peer to peer training contact the Office of Consumer Affairs.**

By Carol Coussons de Reyes

**Nebraska Tobacco Quitline: 1-800-784-8669**

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## *Out of No Where— Lisa Alexander*

My mind stretches inward  
The words you speak are barely heard  
Yet I yearn for a connection with you  
But I am not available  
I have logged out, checked out  
Intentionally I pull myself out of the abyss of no where  
And share this present moment with you  
It is difficult not to run away and escape  
But the pain does not compare to the old suffering  
I accept your words which sometimes sting  
I accept myself as being in process  
I accept the struggle to remain present



**OCA Facilitators: Lisa Alexander of Lincoln Regional Center, Susan Hancock of Region 5, Carol Cousins de Reyes of the OCA, and Ken Timmerman of Region 6 at the Peer Support & Wellness Specialist Training in Kearney, Nebraska**

## **Peer Support & Wellness Specialist Certification Testing in Nebraska**

The Office of Consumer Affairs is very pleased to announce that we will be introducing a testing opportunity to the 2011 training class and the facilitator's in January. The **next testing class will become available in August of 2011** and is open to anyone with 40 hours of documented peer support training.

This test has been designed from competencies that were outlined as important by the creators and utilizing the state-wide code of ethics for Peer Support & Wellness Specialists, which can be found online. After successfully completing the exam, peers will be offered continuing education and co-supervision

opportunities to maintain the certification. The OCA found certification was really important to the Peer & Wellness Specialist Workforce in communicating who we are and what we stand for. It is also a way of communicating to other professionals what to expect from a **Peer Support & Wellness Specialist**.

**4 KEY TASKS OF PEER SUPPORT & WELLNESS SPECIALISTS-**

**CONNECTION  
WORLDVIEW  
MUTUALITY  
MOVING- TOWARDS**

## **Co-Supervision for the Supervisors of Peer Support & Wellness Specialists**

As director of the Office of Consumer Affairs, I recognize that supervisors don't always understand how to incorporate the profession of peer support within their workforce successfully. **Providers that utilize peer support are often very dedicated to transforming to a recovery model** and are eager to have a Peer

Support & Wellness Specialist working for them.

The desire to have this workforce doesn't always mean that the supervisor understands what to do if they run into challenges incorporating the position.

There may even be pushback from other professionals that the supervi-

sor is working with that see peer support as infringing on the territory of their own profession. Therefore, every Certified Peer Support and Wellness Specialist will be able to offer co-supervision from the OCA to their own supervisor to **strengthen the recovery focus** of the organization by utilizing peers in the workforce.



**Bob Glover of NASMHPD, Kathryn Power of SAMHSA, Richard Di Geronimo of SAMHSA, and David Miller of NASMHPD at the Transformation Transfer Initiative Conference in Washington, DC.**

## From a Veteran's Viewpoint

"I think we are the strongest nation in the world. We use our resources wisely, but (to) too far an extent to cover the rest of the world (adequately). America needs to be an isolation country and support Great Britain and the other allied powers as WWII.

We need to keep our soldiers in America. Show of force causes peace and prevents conflict.

I have fallen down and gotten up. A person can fall down and stay down or they can get up. I've gotten back up."

**David Olsen,  
US Navy**

*"No hero but I've got my medals"*

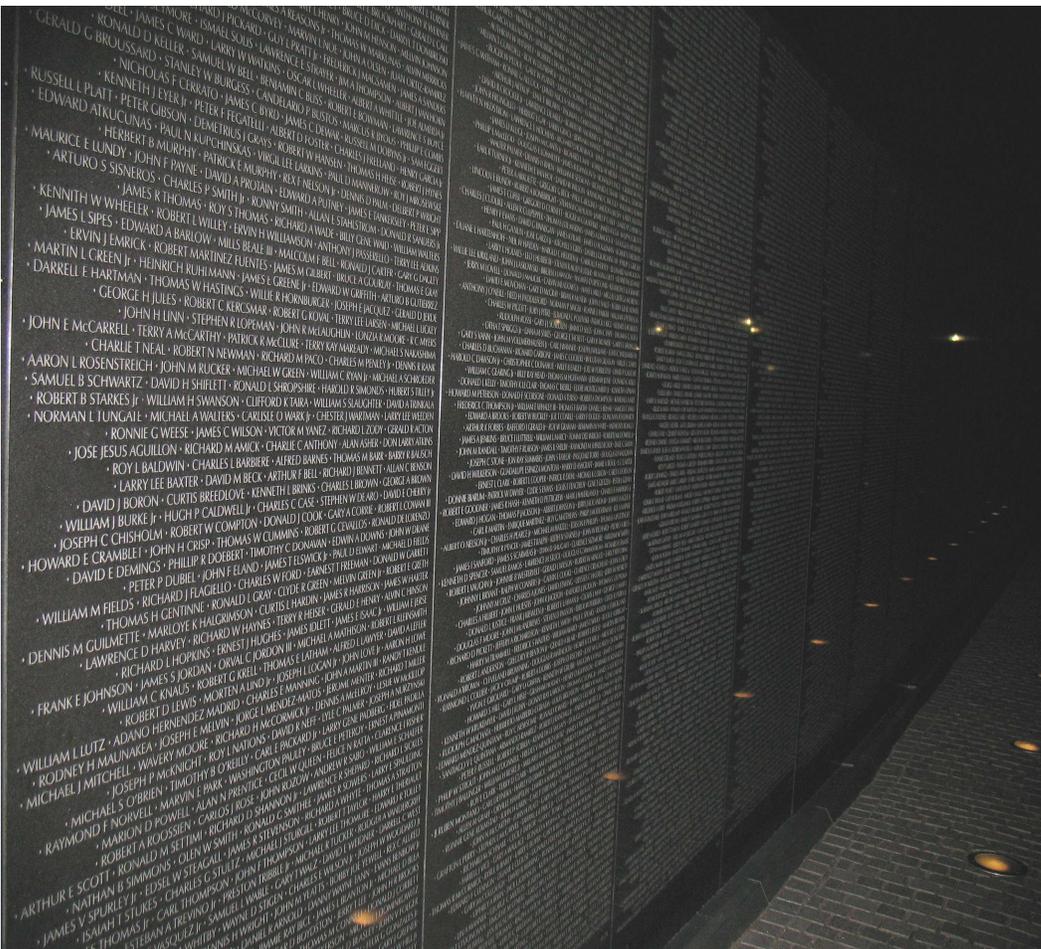
Peer Support & Wellness Training Class Member



**Institute of Peace-  
Washington, DC**



## Nebraska's Wreath at the WWII Memorial in Washington, DC



"I learned quite a bit and it was a fast paced... I wasn't too sure when it started but got on board as time went on."

**Joseph Jones  
Veteran  
Comments on the  
Peer Support & Wellness  
Specialist Training Class**

## Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC

## Untitled Poem: For Alice by Stacy Kendrick

### Untitled: For Alice

The shame was born long ago,  
It grew out from the roots  
Of the Minnesota beet fields.  
The shame, passed through umbilical blood  
Embedded on the soul upon that first struggle, birth.  
The baby screamed into the night  
The pain of a thousand ragged migrant workers.  
She cried for salvation.  
Into the void, the shame consumed her.

The shame, red like beet juice  
That stained hands which toiled in dirt.  
Twisted, gnarled knuckles and callused palms  
Too tired to touch.  
Voices parched, lips like sun-dried tomatoes—  
Speak softly at harvest.



## Review of Lincoln's Melancholy by Joshua Wolf Shenk

The book chronicles **Abraham Lincoln's** struggles with depression throughout his life as well as his presidency. The interesting part of the book is that through his struggles Lincoln had used depression as a way to push toward success.

Shenk an author who has personal experience with depression pulled

together seven years worth of his own research to **shine a new light on Lincoln's dance with depression.**

Shenk also describes in great detail Lincoln's symptoms, treatments and efforts to come to terms with his depression. Alongside Lincoln's pri-

vate notes on personal and national suffering Shenk includes a poem that Lincoln published on suicide.

By  
Matt Luna  
Nebraska OCA

## Where did the funding come from for the OCA Peer Support & Wellness Specialist Training in Nebraska?

Bob Glover is the president of NASMHPD. He addressed the Transformation Transfer Initiative Grant Kickoff audience in DC. Nebraska's OCA and Ken Timmerman were invited to train other states in how Nebraska was successful in

leveraging the funding opportunity of this grant in creating our own Peer Support & Wellness Specialist Training.

The curriculum was purchased via this grant from Focus on Recovery United, Shery Mead Consulting, and Chyrell

Bellamy of Yale University.

This group trained our states current OCA Facilitator Circle Members in understanding how to deliver the materials to other peers for years to come.



Bob Glover, President of NASMHPD, and Ken Timmerman, OCA Facilitator Circle Member

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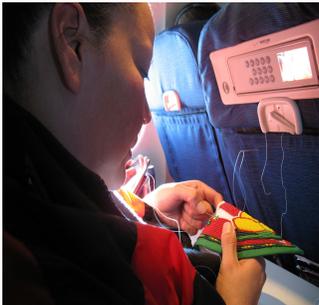
## Sloppy by Lisa Alexander

that was just sloppy  
not even funny  
not even worth it  
i missed a cue  
a chance to ponder  
brush myself off  
try it again

written by:  
Lisa Alexander



## Understanding the Perspective of Others: Worldview



**Melissa J. McGeshick**  
from the Lake Superior  
**Ojibwe (Chippewa)**  
Tribe

On the plane home from Washington, DC, I was impressed at seeing the stitch work that Melissa J. McGeshick was doing to make herself a new pair of moccasins.

She is from a tribe of about 60 members that are largely her own family members. Their tribe is referred to as the Lake Superior Chippewa, though actually the name of their tribe is spelled differently because of how settlers pronounced their name. The tribe's

real name is **Ojibwe** and is among the largest group of first nations people north of Mexico.

She shared the success her tribe has had with **reducing diabetes** and weight loss by organizing walks and runs.

After a tribal member walks or runs 100 miles they can earn a jacket with the tribe's state logo. She currently coordinates youth recreation activities and has experience as an addiction counselor for her tribe.

I told her about the National Memorial in DC and that I had heard some Native Americans may be buried there. She said that many tribes are repatriating the remains of their people.

We discussed the negative and positive connotations of the words "crazy" and "wild".

She recommended visiting the **Crazy Horse Memorial** in South Dakota and the Black Hills Artists, which is the location of the Massacre of Wounded Knee.

