Welcome to the Honest, Open, Proud (HOP) Network Newsletter! We hope that this provides useful updates to what is happening with the HOP Program around the world and create constructive discussion about how we can improve and innovate!

What you missed on the Jan. 14th Conference Call

Vet-to-Vet, by Kyle Lloyd
Greetings and Happy New Year 2016! I hail from the Great State of Indiana now celebrating 200 years of glorious statehood. My presentation is a brief on some reflections on the USN Submarine service or ‘silent service’ as they call it. I tell a little about my story Recovery Surfaces found as a short story printed in the new book, “Coming Out Proud to erase the Stigma of Mental Illness: Stories and Essays of Solidarity.

In this presentation I tell of how I’m using the Honest, Open, and Proud manual and workbook for study materials in a Vet-2-Vet peer mutual support group and how well it is being received in this particular instance of application. And finally I illustrate a comparison of the submarine missile launch trajectory to the trajectory of a disclosure of our lived experience stories. Closing is made by making an appeal to celebrate any of our successes no matter the size of this accomplishment.

HOP in California, by Malia Fontecchio
Malia L.J. Fontecchio, MSW, is the CA HOP Lead. She spoke about California’s HOP work. HOP recently received a grant from SAMHSA, which enabled them to train 100+ new HOP facilitators, and bring the HOP group to 90+participants throughout California. California is also working on the Spanish translation of the HOP workbook. The HOP program is part of the Peer Professional Training curriculum in Los Angeles and will be brought to a new cohort of peer professionals next month. In California, they are also working on bringing HOP to college campuses.

Honest, Open, Proud – The Adolescent Experience, by Sue McKenzie
HOP-High School was a natural extension of the evidence-based HOP program for adults. With half of mental illnesses beginning by age 14, the story one tells oneself gets shaped very early. The daily decisions around disclosure happen in
The context of school, sports, work, extended family and the broader community.

The HOP-HS program is five one-hour lessons with a booster session. It is designed to be possible to work into a school day with a school counselor or social worker leading the group with a young adult co-facilitator that brings lived experience. Youth explore the story they have been telling themselves, skills to change hurtful self-talk, the pros and cons of talking to others in various settings, how they would respond to negative reactions to their disclosure, and practice telling their story from a strengths based perspective.

WISE (Wisconsin Initiative for Stigma Elimination) developed and piloted the high school version after conducting community participatory research with Pat Corrigan and Blythe Buchholz and engaging youth in the design process. Ten trainers are conducting facilitator trainings throughout Wisconsin. WISE staff will present HOP-HS at the Annual Research and Policy Conference for Adolescent Behavioral Health in Tampa in March.

Nicolas Rüsch is leading the translation into German. WISE, Pat Corrigan and Maya Alkhouja are conducting a randomized control trial in 2016 to compare outcomes with the RCTs conducted on the adult version of HOP. The workbook and facilitator manual can be downloaded at:
http://hopprogram.org or http://wisewisconsin.org/resources/honest-open-proud/

Veterans Embrace Honest, Open, Proud Program, by Jon Larson

2015 turned into a productive year for the Honest, Open, Proud (HOP). The network team expanded the availability of HOP for Veterans within the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). Jon Larson provided two facilitator trainings for VHA facilities in Columbia and Charleston, SC. Michelle Andra became the first VHA master trainer and joined Jon to provide a third VHA HOP training in New York City.

Eighty VHA peer support specialists successfully completed the 2 day trainings, obtained HOP facilitator certification, and provided numerous HOP sessions within VHA settings. Certified HOP facilitators learned how to teach decision making skills, methods of disclosure, and tools to craft personal stories. For 2016, the HOP network team plans on additional trainings within VHA settings and continues to provide technical support for VHA certified facilitators.

Development of a web delivered HOP version to support mental health professionals’ decision making around disclosure of personal experiences of mental health problems, By Katrina Scior and Henry Clements

Synopsis

The proposed project follows from the first ever web based national survey on mental health problems and associated experiences of stigma among UK clinical
psychologists and trainees, which we are currently conducting in collaboration with the British Psychological Society (BPS). The survey results, based on over 800 responses, indicate that a substantial proportion of the profession experience significant mental health problems, frequently accompanied by a perceived need for secrecy and fears about the potential consequences of “being found out” or disclosing. This places them not only under intense stress, but also potentially in a paradoxical position - working to empower users of mental health services while feeling unsupported and disempowered themselves - and can threaten their fitness to practise.

Alongside discussions about improved support for clinical psychologists who experience mental health problems, which will be facilitated by our professional body the BPS, we are planning on following up a specific need identified in the survey for more support around disclosure. The proposal is to adapt the existing 3-session HOP group programme and develop and test a web delivered self-help version of HOP. A self-help format is proposed instead of the existing group-based intervention, at least as the first line intervention, as the group intervention is not deemed suitable for professionals intensely concerned about the effects of disclosure on their professional standing. During the development phase it will be carefully considered (a) whether the format should be one of self-help or guided self-help, e.g. with telephone (peer) support; and (b) different options for providing follow-on peer support will be discussed – options for face to face as well as telephone and Skype peer support will be considered to ensure that such support, where desired, is accessible to members of the profession.

The primary objective of the intervention will be to reduce stigma stress and disclosure-related distress, in line with initial findings on the potential benefits of HOP (Corrigan et al., 2013; Rüsch et al., 2014) by supporting clinical psychologists and those in training in carefully reaching decisions about disclosing mental health problems and acting accordingly (alongside provision of information on rights, disability legislation and other sources of support). A participatory approach will be adopted throughout, facilitated by the fact that around 30 clinical psychologists have already expressed interest in being involved in further work in response to our recent survey.

At stage 1, stakeholders will be invited to become involved in the initial development work to ensure that the self-help guide and method of delivery respond to the needs of the profession. The Division of Clinical Psychology’s Experts by Experience group, in line with early discussions, will also be invited to engage with the project to carefully consider the potential impact of the work on service users.

At stage 2, the effect of the new manualised intervention on stigma stress and disclosure related distress among clinical psychologists and trainees will be tested in a pilot RCT. Following completion of the baseline measures, participants will be randomly allocated to either the HOP or control arm. All those assigned to the control arm, following completion of the final outcomes measures, will have the option of receiving the intervention for ethical reasons. Alongside standardised measures, reflective accounts will be solicited following each ‘session’ to allow consideration of the process and impact of specific aspects of the intervention. If shown to be of benefit, the self-help guide will be made widely and freely available. Potential future implementation across other professions and potentially the UK’s National Health Service is an option to be considered, although the provision of
support around disclosure decisions needs to be carefully balanced with broader support for health care providers affected by mental ill-health to ensure that supporting disclosure (a) does not in fact increase their vulnerability to stigma and negative employment related outcomes; and (b) is not deemed a hypocritical enterprise by those concerned about the failures of the National Health Service in supporting its staff, particularly during recent years of intense cuts and increased work pressures.

Honest, Open, Proud on College Campuses, by Kyra Wilson and Maya Al-khouja
In November of 2015, Kyra Wilson, MSW, and Maya Al-khouja, President of Active Minds at the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT), attended the National Active Minds Conference in Irvine, California, USA. They presented “Honest, Open, Proud on College Campuses” to college students from across the country. This special version of Honest, Open, Proud was developed by Maya while working with Pat Corrigan and IIT and is designed specially for college students. Since many people start experiencing symptoms of mental illness as young adults, college students face very particular challenges when deciding to come out about mental illness (for example, how to tell your parents when you go home for break!) The training materials for this special version of HOP can be found at hopprogram.org. Kyra and Maya were able to meet with over 200 college students and student leaders from coast to coast at the conference and spread the word of HOP! There has already been an initiative to start HOP groups at USC and Universities in Chicago!

There has been some discussion about a new logo for Honest, Open, Proud and on the conference call, Jan. 14th, Sue McKenzie shared her logo for the High School version (pictured left)! This was proposed to be a symbol of a safe space, where students would be able to talk about their experiences and ask for help without fear of judgment!

There has also been discussion about changing the name of Honest, Open, Proud by adding “Empowered” at the end, so that the acronym would spell “HOPE”.

If you have any thoughts or feedback on the logo or proposal to change the name, please email kyra@namicahigo.org! We’d love to hear from you!