



# **BRIDGES:**

**Building**

**Recovery of**

**Dreams and**

**Goals through**

**Education and**

**Support**

**Sita Diehl, Joy Prater and Sue Pickett**

**UIC Self-Determination Summit**

**April 15 – 16, 2009, Chicago**

# What is BRIDGES?

- A consumer-run evidence-based program
  - Education courses
    - 10 session: BRIDGES Crossings
    - 8 session: BRIDGES version R
    - 5 session: BRIDGES Footsteps (inpatient curriculum)
  - Support group method
  - Developed by consumers and family members
  - Copyright owned by NAMI Tennessee
    - Operated in collaboration with the Tennessee Mental Health Consumers Association

# History

- Developed in Tennessee 1994-1995
  - Corresponds to *Journey of Hope* (Now With Hope in Mind)
    - Catalyze healing within the family
  - Designed for rural and urban areas
  - Course syllabus developed from 10 consumer-run focus groups across TN
    - Lessons written by consumers, edited by consumers and family members, reviewed by experts
  - Disseminated to 11 states, Canada and England
  - Two federal studies: COSP/SAMHSA & UIC/NIDRR

# Design

- Recovery Philosophy
  - Philosophical influence
    - C/S/X movement leaders: Copeland, Deegan, Chamberlin
    - Academics: Harding, Anthony
  - Trauma model
    - Developed from intensive consumer-consumer interviews
  - Technical information in lay language
    - From inside the peer perspective
    - Curriculum incorporates teachers' lived experience
- Team teaching/facilitating
  - Technical assistance & support

# Political Climate in Tennessee

- Founded early in TN recovery movement
  - State investment
- Now 49 peer centers across state
- TMHCA is strong, partners with NAMI
- Certified peer specialists
  - BRIDGES as training component

# BRIDGES and Employment

- Economic security/ supported employment
  - BRIDGES as springboard to employment
    - Meaningful work
  - Everyone who teaches BRIDGES is paid to do it.
    - Contract
      - Teachers paid \$30 per session
      - Often springboard to employment
    - Part of peer service job
      - Peer Support Center
      - Certified Peer Specialist

# BRIDGES Curriculum

## 1. Philosophy of recovery

- Trauma recovery model

## 2. Psychiatric diagnoses

- Consumer viewpoint
- Lay language

## 3. Crisis planning, suicide prevention

## 4. Building social support

## 5. Medications

## 6. Mental health treatment

## 7. Psych rehab

- Employment

## 8. Communication skills

## 9. Problem-management

## 10. Self-advocacy skills

# Additional Modules

- **Course allows flexibility based on student needs and interests**
  - Personality Disorders
  - Eating Disorders
  - Attention Disorders
  - Dissociative Identity Disorders
  - Dual Recovery - Mental illness & Addiction
  - Criminal Justice
  - Wellness
  - Spirituality



# BRIDGES Teachers

- Intensive 3-day initial training
  - TMHCA, Jenny Roman
- Periodic refresher training
- Classes monitored for fidelity to model
  - Technical assistance provided if necessary

# BRIDGES Support Groups

- Process
  - Check in – Brief statement round robin
  - Problem management – in-depth assistance to one or two group members
  - Read BRIDGES affirmations (NOT steps)
- Support groups in jails

# Support Group Facilitators

- Intensive 2-day training
- Periodic refresher training
- Volunteer position, not paid
- Common venues
  - Peer Support Centers
  - NAMI Affiliates

# Technical Assistance for Teachers and Facilitators

- Field staff
- Convention/Regional Meetings
- Membership meetings
- Implementation manual
  - Monitoring – technical assistance

# BRIDGES and TMHCA programs

- Regional coordinators
  - Satisfaction and challenges
  - Comparison to non-peer services
  - Feedback from other regional coordinators
  - Partnership with NAMI
  - Power of role modeling

# Exploring How BRIDGES Improves Recovery Outcomes: UIC NIDRR-funded Research Study

- Test the effectiveness of the peer-led Building Recovery of Individual Dreams and Goals (BRIDGES) in improving consumers' recovery and community integration outcomes
- These outcomes include:
  - Empowerment
  - Emotional and physical well-being
  - Quality of life
  - Enhanced recovery
  - Social support
  - Self-stigma
  - Employment status
  - Service use

# BRIDGES Research Study

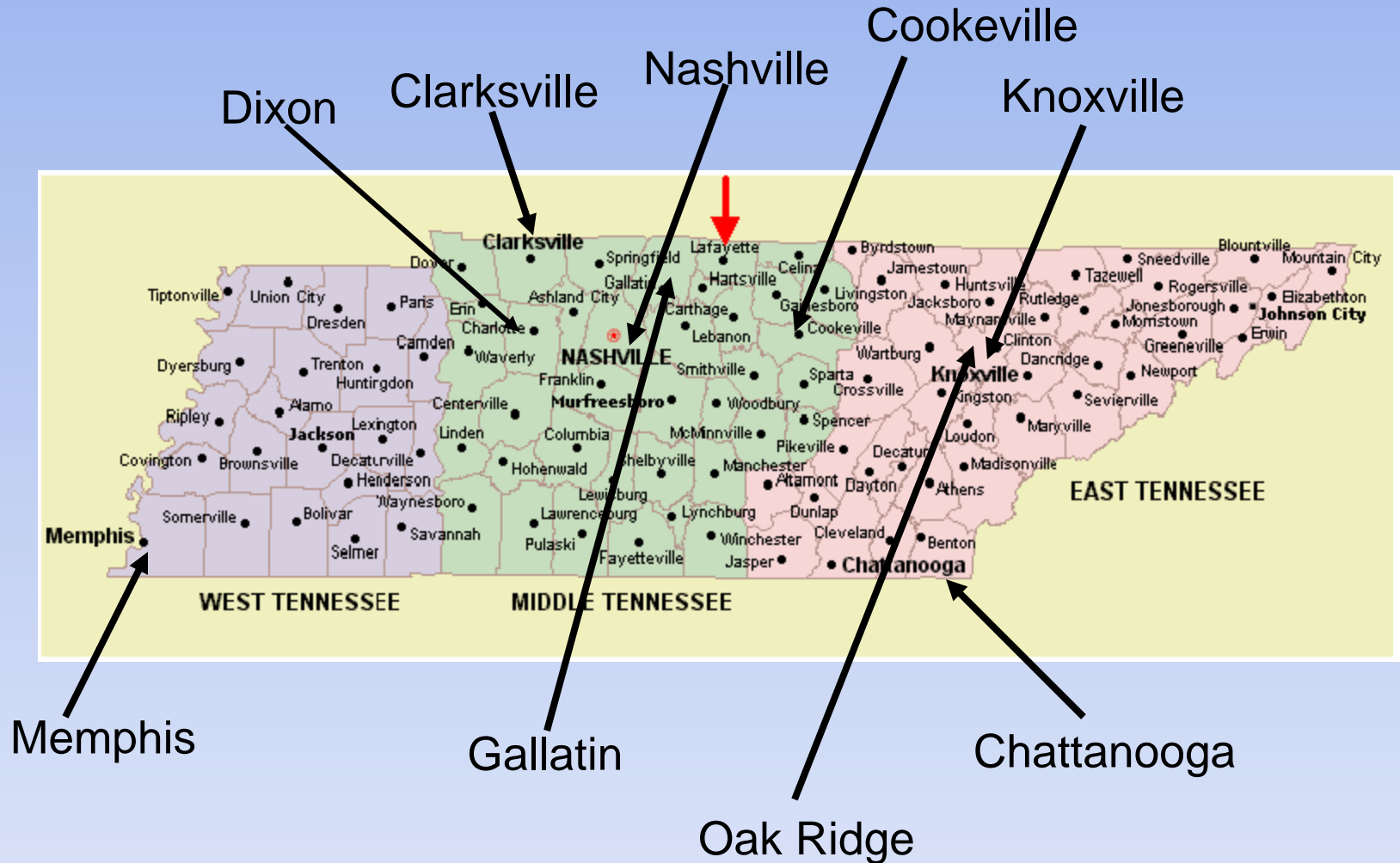
- Study Personnel
  - Judith A. Cook (PI) & Sue Pickett (Co-I), University of Illinois at Chicago
  - Pam Steigman, (Study Director)
  - Jane Burke-Miller (Study Biostatistician)
  - Sita Diehl, NAMI-Tennessee & Anthony Fox, TN Mental Health Consumer Association (Local Project Directors)
- Funded by the NIDRR/U.S. Department of Education & CMHS/SAMHSA
- All participants who wish to join the study complete 3 interviews:
  - Time 1: Enrollment
  - Time 2: 3 months post-enrollment
  - Time 3: 8 months post-enrollment
  - All interviews are conducted by phone by the UIC Survey Research Lab (SRL)
  - Subjects are paid \$20 for their first interview, \$25 for their second interview, and \$30 for their third interview. They receive an \$10 bonus for completing all 3 interviews.

# BRIDGES Study: Overview

- RCT: Consumers in TN are randomly assigned to either the intervention group (receive BRIDGES shortly after enrollment) or the control group (9-month BRIDGES course waiting list)
- All subjects complete 3 interviews:
  - Time 1: Enrollment
  - Time 2: 3 months post-enrollment
  - Time 3: 8 months post-enrollment
  - All interviews are conducted by phone by the UIC Survey Research Lab (SRL)
  - Subjects are paid \$20 for their first interview, \$25 for their second interview, and \$30 for their third interview. They receive an \$10 bonus for completing all 3 interviews.



# BRIDGES in Tennessee: Study Sites



# BRIDGES Study: Overview, continued

- Interviews assess empowerment, emotional and physical well-being, quality of life, social support, hope, enhanced recovery, stigma, service use, and employment status
- The study uses the 8 session version of the BRIDGES curriculum, meeting for 2-1/2 hours per week
- All instructors are experienced BRIDGES teachers who completed a special training on study procedures prior to delivering the intervention.

# Recruitment Procedures

- At each site, TN local coordinators distribute recruitment materials, meet with potential participants to talk about the study
  - Interested individuals call UIC NRTC study 800 number and are screened for eligibility
  - Eligible individuals are sent consent documents and study materials, and are interviewed by SRL
- Our BRIDGES instructors are so enthusiastic about the study that they also assisted with recruitment!

# Study Progress and Accomplishments

- 541 individuals screened for Waves 1-5
  - 493 eligible and agreed to participate
  - 428 (87%) completed Time 1 interviews
- 212 individuals randomly assigned to the intervention group and 216 individuals randomly assigned to the control group
- Wave 1-4 BRIDGES classes completed for intervention group participants
  - On average, participants attended 5 of the 8 BRIDGES classes
  - 54% attended 6 or more classes

# Wave 1-4 Intervention Group Participant Characteristics

- 56% female, 44% male
- Mean age: 43 years
- 53% Caucasian, 35% African American, 4% Hispanic/Latino
- 66% High school graduate/GED
- 87% unmarried
- 52% living in their own home or apartment
- 72% had been hospitalized for psychiatric reasons
- Most common self-reported diagnosis:
  - 47% bipolar disorder; 21% depression; 20% schizophrenia spectrum
- Most were not working, but 59% foresaw themselves holding a job in the next year

# Preliminary Outcomes

- Intervention group subjects had significant improvements from Time 1 to Time 3 for the following outcomes\*:
  - Reduced psychiatric symptoms
  - Reduced maladaptive coping
  - Decreased service needs
  - Increased hope
  - Increased self-advocacy
  - Increased recovery

\*Waves 1-3

# Research Challenges

- Peers: Working with University Researchers
  - Fidelity
  - Recruitment vs. participation
  - Need for consistency & fidelity
- Researchers: Working with non-researchers
  - Dedicated, but poor, overwhelmed

# Hard Times and BRIDGES

- What is economy doing to BRIDGES?
  - TN is broke
    - Mental health system is taking significant cuts
    - Peer programs have been notified of cuts
  - Economic stimulus funds bring hope
    - Possibilities
      - FMAP Medicaid (TennCare) relief
      - May shift \$\$ burden away from MH authority
      - But not without strenuous legislative advocacy
    - Pitfalls
      - Stimulus funds are all allocated , going to state government



# Into the Future....

- Future of BRIDGES

- Implementation in hospitals, jails/prisons & veterans' organizations
- Provide a vital link to community peer support

- Concluding points

- TMHCA is proud to offer BRIDGES as an empowerment and recovery tool. Many TMHCA members have found a purpose in life as a result of BRIDGES.
- Preliminary study results show the BRIDGES participants experience several significant changes in key recovery outcomes at the end of the course, and maintain these changes 6 months after their BRIDGES classes have ended.
- BRIDGES has been transformative for students, even more so for teachers. Effective in combination with other consumer run programs such as drop-in centers, WRAP and peer mentoring.

# Questions? Comments?

Joy Prater  
Tennessee Mental Health  
Consumers Association  
Telephone:  
[jprater@tmhca-tn.org](mailto:jprater@tmhca-tn.org)

Sita Diehl  
NAMI Tennessee  
(615) 361-6608  
[sdiehl@namitn.org](mailto:sdiehl@namitn.org)

Sue Pickett, Ph.D.  
University of Illinois at Chicago  
Telephone:  
[PICKETT@psych.uic.edu](mailto:PICKETT@psych.uic.edu)