

Title of Presentation: Conceptualization and Assessment of Mental Health Practitioners' Recovery Promoting Competence

Principal Presenter: Zlatka Russinova, Ph.D.
Title: Sr. Research Associate
Organization: Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation, Boston University
Address: 940 Commonwealth Ave., West
Boston, MA 02215
E-mail: zlatka@bu.edu

Additional Presenter: Marsha Langer Ellison, Ph.D.
Title: Sr. Research Associate
Organization: Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation, Boston University
Address: 940 Commonwealth Ave., West
Boston, MA 02215
E-mail: ellison2@bu.edu

Additional Presenter: Sally Rogers, Sc.D.
Title: Director of Research
Organization: Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation, Boston University
Address: 940 Commonwealth Ave., West
Boston, MA 02215
E-mail: erogers@bu.edu

Mental health and rehabilitation professionals play a very important role in implementing the vision of recovery as outlined in the President's New Freedom Commission Report (2003) and in transforming the mental health system to deliver recovery-oriented services across different modalities of treatment offered to people with psychiatric disabilities. It has been well documented that serious mental illness presents a major challenge to the professional competence of mental health and rehabilitation practitioners (Garske, 1999; Goldman, 1996; Lefley, 1998). Numerous first accounts of consumers have reported that interactions with mental health professionals have left them feeling disrespected, discouraged, and hopeless. At the same time, both consumers and mental health and rehabilitation professionals have emphasized the invaluable role of practitioners' hopefulness for the unfolding of the recovery process (Deegan, 1997; Minkoff, 1998; Orrin, 1996; Russinova, 1998).

This presentation discusses the basis for introducing the concept of "mental health practitioners' recovery promoting competence" and the psychometric properties of a new instrument developed to measure this concept. This new instrument titled the Recovery Promoting Relationships Scale (RPRS) assesses providers' recovery promoting competence from the point of view of the clients they serve. Conceptually we defined the

construct of “recovery promoting competence” as representing a complex set of practitioners’ attitudes, skills and strategies that facilitate the recovery of mental health consumers. Presented research on the conceptualization and development of practitioners’ recovery promoting competence has been funded by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research.

Presenters will describe the two-stage process implemented to develop the RPRS instrument. The first stage consisted in a mixed method study identifying the relevance of different attitudes, skills, and strategies used by mental health practitioners specifically to enhance the process of recovery that allows a person to find purpose and meaning in life and grow beyond the catastrophic effects of mental illness (Anthony, 1993). Over 900 consumers, consumer-providers and mental health and rehabilitation providers completed an anonymous internet survey composed of both closed items and open-ended questions inquiring about specific interactions with providers that consumers experienced as important for their recovery process. Both quantitative and qualitative data from this survey informed the development of the items to constitute the RPRS instrument. These items were grouped in four preliminary categories: a) strategies and skills fostering hope; b) strategies and skills fostering empowerment; c) attitudes, strategies and skills fostering a sense of acceptance and self-acceptance; and d) attitudes, strategies and skills strengthening the client-provider relationship. Formulated items were further revised through series of cognitive interviews.

We tested psychometrically the initial version of the RPRS instrument during the second stage of the study. Data were collected from a total of 370 individuals with serious mental illness. The test-retest reliability and convergent validity of the new instrument were established with a sub-sample of 58 respondents. We employed both Item Response Theory and Classical Test Theory approaches to inform the establishment of the psychometric characteristics of the RPRS instrument. Findings from both approaches will be presented. Presenters will discuss the applicability of this new instrument to both clinical practice and research.