Section 1 – Overview and Benefits for Group Members

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Hello, as consumers or as mental health professionals, you’re considering participating in a new program called Wellness Self-Management and I’m here to urge you to go forward with this. When I participated in the Presidents New Freedom Commission, one of our most inspiring experiences was a conversation with former First Lady, Rosalynn Carter, who reflected on the 25 years since she chaired the last Presidents commission and what she said was in that 25 year period, the biggest change in mental health is that today, we know it is possible for any person to recover. Now recovery is hard work, it doesn’t happen automatically and two of its key ingredients are first, hope, that it is possible communicated by mental health professionals and believed by consumers of mental health services and second, approaches to facilitate recovery that are practical and proven to work and Wellness Self-Management is one of those practices. Only in the last ten years have we had approaches to recovery, rehabilitation and treatment that have been demonstrated by researches to be effective, so as you go forward and make a decision to participate in Wellness Self Management, you’re at the forefront of change here in New York State among professionals and consumers who are deciding to adopt what we call evidence-based approaches. I urge you to make a positive decision, we all want to make change in our lives as professionals, as consumers, this is a proven approach that you’ll find is practical and doable that will allow consumers to achieve positive change and professionals to do what we want to do, which is to assist the people we are working with to make positive change in their lives.

Good luck going forward; I hope you chose to participate in this wonderful new approach.

Break
Hello I'm Frances Priester.

What is WELLNESS SELF MANAGEMENT?
Wellness Self-Management is a program designed to provide adults with information, knowledge, skills and tools to support their recovery. The term recovery has often been associated with drug and alcohol problems. In the WELLNESS SELF MANAGEMENT program, you will learn what recovery means when applied to mental health problems.

The WELLNESS SELF MANAGEMENT program is designed to assist you to:
- Increase your knowledge and skills to manage serious mental health problems.
- Improve your mental and physical health
- Develop confidence to pursue important life goals
- Increase hope about the future
- Make informed decisions about mental and physical health services
And to recognize your strengths and to build upon what you do well.

It may be helpful to think of the Wellness self management program as an educational class in which the subject is about the things a person needs to know and do to improve the quality of his or her life.

This class includes the use of a personal workbook which belongs to the learners.

Some of the topics covered in the WELLNESS SELF MANAGEMENT workbook include:
- Understanding what helps and what hinders recovery
- Understanding mental health problems: symptoms, causes and treatment
- Understanding how having goals helps recovery
- Understanding how Social supports and community resources help recovery
- Coping with stress and symptoms
- Using medication in a way that supports your recovery goals
- Developing and using a relapse prevention plan
- Knowing and using your strengths to support recovery
- Finding and using coping strategies that work for you
- And finally Understanding the relationship between physical and mental health

WELLNESS SELF MANAGEMENT is important because it provides participants with information and tools to better manage mental and physical health problems. This enables individuals to spend less time managing illness and more time on pursuing goals and having fun. In a WELLNESS SELF MANAGEMENT group or individual program, the focus is on each participant as a person first and foremost.

Let's listen to what a number of people who completed a WELLNESS SELF MANAGEMENT group have to say:

If you are unable to access any information or utilize any electronic service on our site, please e-mail Melissa Hinds-Martinez at hindsma@pi.cpmc.columbia.edu, or call her at 212-543-5941.
Break

**Annette:**
Wellness help me with my relationship with my family through the fact that I communicate with them more. At first it was hard relating to them because of my mental illness. I felt shy, I felt lost, I felt guilty and ashamed. To talk to them about anything at all, but now I can relate to them without feeling of guilt without feeling of shame without feeling of… feeling degraded or beneath them. I feel on the same level with them now. It’s still hard to let out some of my personal secret with the psychiatrist. Now, but now, I can relate to her much more. I can tell her mainly what’s on my mind and I get more feedback from her that way.

**Kevin:**
As far as going to the doctors, you know, I use to miss a lot of appointments and I wouldn’t give the doctors a chance to help me. What I do now, I listen more, you know I make my appointments now, you know, I take my medicine on time and just, just, you know just live. Because it’s about you, its about you making that decision, its about you making that choice, you know no one is pushing you, you know you’re not being forced, you know its just you doing what’s right for you.

**Marie:**
I go to Stanford Brown in Manhattan. I’m studying to be a Medical Assistant. I made plans for this like when we got to goals and what you want to do. We were midway through and I said I would like to go back to school and at that time it was just a thought and I worked on it, I worked on it. I had encouragement from my peers in my group and the facilitators and I started October 30th.

**Maria:**
What’s different in my life now is that, I could make choices. I could decide on my own. I don’t need anybody to decide for me anything that goes on in my life, especially with my mental health.

**Lonise:**
I would tell my peer to join because it would help you in your recovery. It’s an excellent workbook; it’s just not something that’s thrown together and your reading and oh well I’m gonna go anyway cause I have to go. I think if you was to join that group, you would go because you would have the initiative to go to the group. It’s something that’s so positive, so enlightening, that I mean when I have that group on Tuesday afternoons, I looks so forward to going to that group. I’m like, “yes, I got group, I can’t wait to go.” I mean because you’ll learn something new every session that you go. It’s not just the same old monotonous stuff that you’re doing over and over and over again. You learn something new each time that you go.
**Eddie**

In a group setting, there’s things that are said that you think that you’re the only one that has that problem, but you find out that you’re not alone. You know it’s ah, it’s very common, really.

**Michael**

I think everyone that’s been in an institution at one time or another in their life can benefit from Wellness. It tells you a lot about available programs for you, ideas on work and employment, ah new careers. It brings you a lot of hope for the future.

**Rickie:**

Take a risk; you know um, change is possible. I never in my life thought that change was possible and then as I said going through this book and reading some of the stuff in there, I was like wow, you know. This is not stuff that I’m just going to use here, but stuff I’m going to use in the future, stuff I’m going to use in the community, um it can help me deal with my family better, it could help me deal with my friends better, you know. And it just gives me, I think would give anybody an opportunity you know to have hope and to really become grounded in themselves, you know, and I just really think that it’s a great way to show that recovery does work, you know, and it gives you the tools and the skills you need in order to recovery. You know where we didn’t have that before, now we have that and its structured but it’s coming on an equal basis because the group leaders are working with us and their learning along with us.