What do people involved in WSM services have to say?

Consumers say...

“...It leads you to take steps on your own. I realize what I can do”

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“This group gives me tools I can use... different from other groups”

◆

“I was very angry, I wasn’t dealing with it. I wasn’t taking my illness seriously. Now I decided to start taking my meds on time and not skip it”

◆

“I thought I could never handle a job but now I’m looking forward to getting a job”

◆

“It helps pinpoint symptoms ‘I can feel the storm coming’ and prevent it from happening”

◆

“I asked my mom to help me with the WSM book. I told her about the program... it gives me a push to keep going”

◆

“It’s so upfront, right in your face... it’s like having a parent with no penalties”

◆

“I like the cultural background part, it doesn’t violate your cultural background”

Administators Say...

“The WSM initiative is a terrific, engaging, and empowering intervention for mental health consumers. Giving staff a set of clear guidelines on how to involve consumers in the management of their own illnesses, this intervention helps our consumers take more responsibility for their recovery. Staff and clients love it!!!!”

Amy Dorin, Senior Vice President, FEGS, NYC

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“The timing of the wellness self management program perfectly married with SUS’s organizational transformation efforts. For staff and consumers, it is the bridge between our values and ethics work and practical strategies to support individuals toward their recovery. The program’s success demonstrates the power of collaboration.”

Donna Colonna, Executive Director, Services for the Underserved (SUS) New York City

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“The WSM program has added an important new dimension to the way person-centered planning, rehabilitation and recovery services are provided at ICL. ...consumers and staff have been equally enthusiastic about the positive results they have seen and the satisfaction they have experienced putting WSM into practice.”

Michael Blady, LCSW-R, Associate Executive Vice President, Institute for Community Living, Inc.

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“WSM has been an extraordinary success for both clients and staff. For clients, it gave them the opportunity to acquire concrete skills while giving them an unprecedented feeling of accomplishment and hope. The program invigorated the staffs’ belief in recovery. WSM has become an essential, foundational service for our recovery oriented agency.”

Peter D. Beitchman, DSW, Executive Director, The Bridge, Inc.

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“Clients actually have something to look forward to. People are alive and alert... up and active.”

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“It’s really helpful because until now, they didn’t have anything they could take home. People have the book now. Consumers talk about how they were able to sit down with the psychiatrist and therapist and ask questions.”

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What is WSM?

Wellness Self-Management (WSM) is a curriculum-based clinical practice designed to assist adults to effectively manage serious mental health problems. The topics covered include a number of research-informed approaches that are organized into a comprehensive and coordinated set of practices.

The WSM program was based on Illness Management and Recovery (IMR), one of the nationally recognized evidence-based practices for adults with serious mental health problems. In addition to IMR-related topics such as recovery, mental health wellness and relapse prevention, the WSM approach includes lessons emphasizing the connection between physical and mental health.

It may be helpful to think of WSM as a comprehensive curriculum that covers many topics providing information, knowledge and skills that help people to make decisions that support recovery. These topics have been organized into a personal workbook, and include:

- Understanding what helps and what hinders recovery
- Understanding how having goals helps recovery
- Social support and using community resources help recovery
- How family and friends may support your work in WSM
- Developing and using a relapse prevention plan
- Knowing and using your strengths to support recovery
- Finding and using coping strategies that work
- Understanding mental health problems: symptoms, causes and treatments
- Making decisions about medication that work for you
- The role of a healthy lifestyle and mental health

Why is WSM important?

**For Consumers:**
WSM is important because it provides consumers with research-based 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 enjoying life. WSM is also designed to reinforce principles of recovery including shared decision making, informed choice, involvement and hope.

**For Clinical Staff:**
The WSM curriculum, materials, consumer workbook and corresponding training integrates a number of core clinical skills. These include motivation enhancing strategies, basic cognitive-behavioral approaches, teaching techniques and practical group leadership skills. WSM is designed to support clinical staff in providing WSM services in group and individual modalities.

**For Mental Health Agencies:**
It provides a comprehensive, structured, systematic and cost effective individual and group curriculum that can be implemented, sustained and spread in a practical and efficient manner.

Who provides WSM services?
WSM may be provided by mental health practitioners and peer specialists who have received WSM training.

How long will WSM last?
The length of time varies based on a number of factors such as the treatment setting, the length of stay of people in the treatment program, individual or group modality, use of the entire or selected parts of the curriculum, frequency and pace of meetings. In general, it takes about a year to complete the entire curriculum in groups that meet weekly for an hour or so. Some programs may offer WSM more than once a week. It is important to remember that there is not a correct length for the program.

Can family members or friends play a role in supporting a person involved in WSM?
Yes. The person involved in the WSM program is offered an opportunity to identify friends or family members he/she may want involved. Family or friends may help by providing encouragement, discussing topics of interest with the consumer, providing assistance with reading the material or completing action steps.

What principles guide WSM?

- Recovery is possible
- Emphasis on personal strengths
- Informed decision making
- Cultural relevance
- Consistency with research findings

Are WSM Services Mandatory?
No. Participation in WSM is voluntary.

Can a person end his/her involvement at anytime?
Yes! The decision to continue to participate in WSM is left up to the individual.

Has the WSM workbook been translated into other languages?
The workbooks are currently available in English, Spanish and Chinese.