

# Voice and Choice in Wellness and Recovery

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# Objectives for Today's Talk

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- Place the civil rights of individuals with disabilities and co-occurring mental health disorders on your social justice agenda
- Consider ways to promote Voice and Choice within activities that advance mental health wellness and recovery



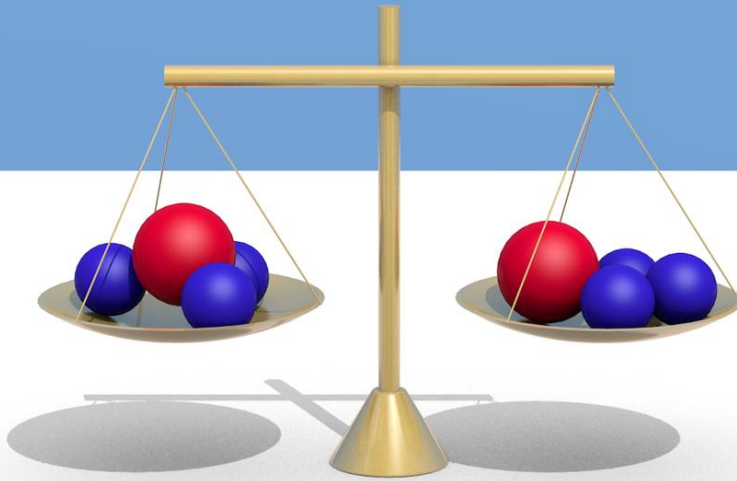


## Treatments, supports and services?

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**Considerations:**  
Independence  
Interdependence  
Choice  
Voice  
Safety

## How to balance duty to care with support for choice, voice and self-determination



- We are trained to assist vulnerable individuals and act in ways that help keep them safe, but...
- Are we providing opportunities for choice, self-expression and self-determination?
- Do behavioral health challenges and the need for care preclude the rights of individuals to live in accordance with their values and preferences?

# Person-centered versus Illness-centered care

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- Driven by strengths and values rather than by diagnosis
- ✓ Holistic care
- ✓ Shared decision making
- ✓ Helps individuals reach their valued health outcomes
- ✓ Considers Quality of Life





# The Issues (or at least some of them...)

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- **Access** to competent providers who understand the multiple challenges of developmental disorders and co-occurring mental illness
  - Diagnostic overshadowing that obscures recognition of *bona fide* mental health disorder
  - Limited functional communication which creates barriers to accurate assessment and to tailoring care to individual preferences and needs
  - Geographic Location and associated problems with accessing qualified providers
- **Parity**
  - Behavioral health is still not considered to be on a par with medical services
- **Affordability**
  - Also an “access issue,” insofar as being able to pay for needed care. Many competent providers are only accessible via out-of-pocket payment for their services

# Voice in Wellness and Recovery

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# Functional Communication

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- Individuals with limited language skills need opportunities to express their wants, needs and preferences
- Picture Exchange Communication Systems (PECS)
- Communication Boards
- Pictorial Calendars
- Translators







# The Language of Wellness

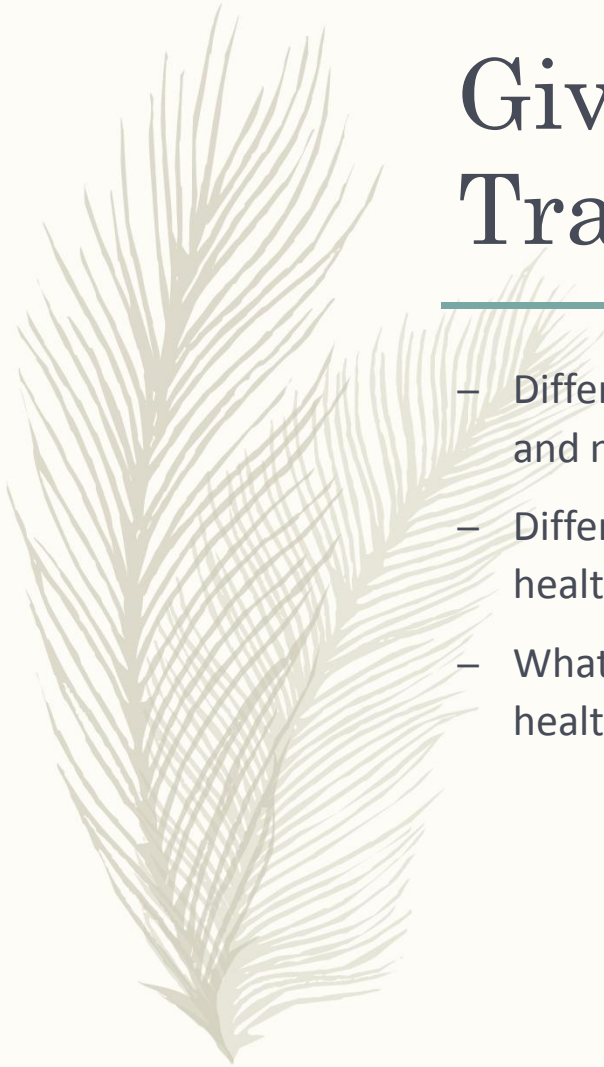
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- Mental health has its own unique jargon
- Provide individuals, their families and staff with:
  - information about mental health disorders,
  - explanations of medications,
  - develop a list of questions to discuss with the health care provider
- Review emergency protocols if relevant and discuss accessing the acute care system [http://www.sccatnj.org/news\\_information.htm](http://www.sccatnj.org/news_information.htm)

# Giving Voice to Culture and Tradition

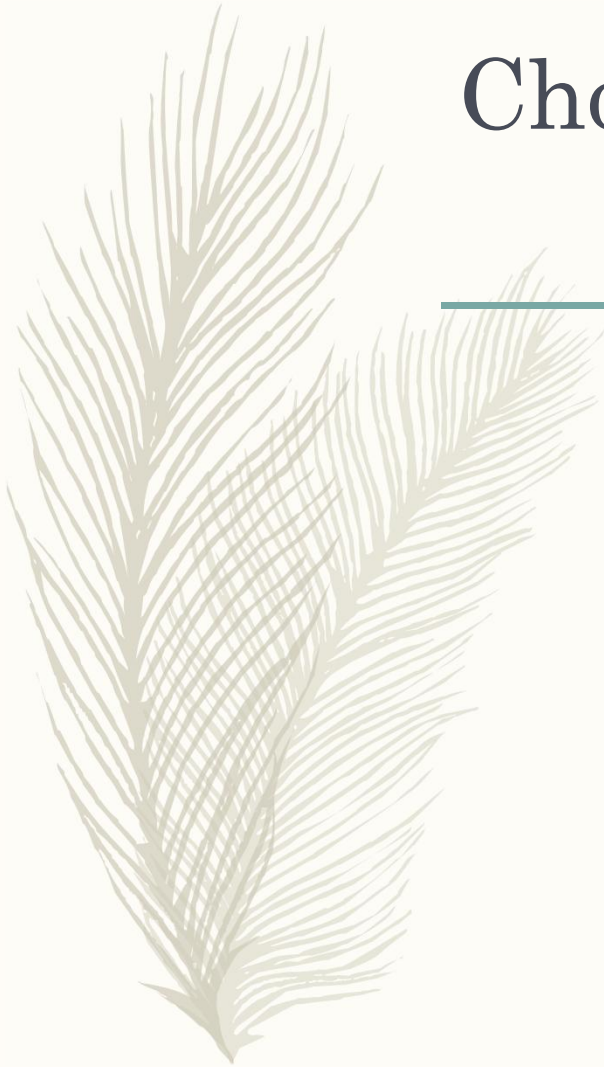
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- Different belief systems regarding psychiatry and non-medical approaches to mental health
- Different beliefs about the nature of mental health disorders
- What is the family value system around mental health wellbeing?



# Choice in Wellness and Recovery

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# Personal Choice



- Does the individual know he/she has choices?
- Are individuals asked about their preferences for treatment and providers?
- Opportunities for choices should be included in every activity
- To what extent would providing individuals with choice lessen the likelihood of behavioral problems?
- The opportunity to voice preference or indicate preference should be encouraged in every activity

MentalHealthHumor.com **CARTOON-A-THON** By: Chato B. Stewart



Road To Recovery

# Navigating Wellness

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# Positive Routine

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- Includes choice in activities
- Meaningful work and activity
- Balances necessary tasks with preferred activities
- Provides opportunities for social connection
- Provides opportunities for skills building
- Includes opportunities for exercise and movement





# Skills Building Opportunities

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- Life Skills training opportunities
- ✓ ADLs to improve functional outcomes
- Social skills training opportunities
- ✓ Social stories to improve social understanding
- Anger management
- ✓ Coping skills
- Stress management
- ✓ Relaxation techniques



# Wellness and Recovery Advocacy

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## EDUCATE!

- ❖ Place Mental Health on the Civil Rights and Disabilities Agenda through trainings, seminars and events
- ❖ Provide individuals, their families and all members of the valued team with information about how dual diagnosis impacts everyday living
- ❖ Use the Wellness Recovery Action Plan <http://mentalhealthrecovery.com/wrap-is/>
- ❖ Help all members of the valued team understand the stressors and hassles of everyday living with illness and recovery
- ❖ Help people navigate the acute care system in your state



# Surround Yourself with Like-minded Associates...

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- [http://www.sccatnj.org/news\\_information.htm](http://www.sccatnj.org/news_information.htm)
- Join the National Association for Dual Diagnosis  
[www.theNADD.org](http://www.theNADD.org)
- Lobby MCOs in your state to include practitioners with knowledge of dual diagnosis on their health panels
- Ring the Bell!

<http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/bell>

