

CHARG Partnership Forum

"I met someone by email. He's from the States. He's coming to Victoria! I want you to meet him!" Words that send chills through a partner's heart.

However this isn't quite internet dating. It's a whole new world. There's a global community we can learn from and I've been pursuing my interest in recovery literature and ways that, as we recover, we can contribute.

People like Mary Ellen Copeland (who I featured on last month's program, www.mentalhealthrecovery.com) are using their own knowledge of what helped them to cope, to find their way, and to excel in helping others. Gradually this resource is being acknowledged and implemented as part of the formal system. Some of us would really like to help, but trying to be part of the solution can be part of our problem.



CHARG's David Burgess

I read in a recent IAPSRs* Journal about this remarkable project in Denver, Colorado involving quite revolutionary involvement of "consumers" in a psychiatric clinic. It was titled "[The CHARG Experience with Consumer-Professional Partnership](#)". The term "partnership" has always interested me but what caught my eye was already italicized "**As far as we know, this clinic is unique in the country in that it is the only psychiatric clinic directly answerable to an all-consumer board.**" Imagine psychiatric patients sharing the responsibility of hiring and firing the pros who treat us!

I emailed the Exec. Director and author of the article, David Burgess, with some questions. He wrote back. Thoughtful answers and enthusiasm. This was great, this felt like partnership! Turned out he will be coming out this way in October, "It would be good to meet you and to strategize with you and other consumers, and also to reach out to some of the more sympathetic professionals in your area."

From the Feb/01 CHR Mental Health Renewal "Special Report":

The [Hays Clinical Review] report goes on to recommend that a process be developed to educate CHR staff and physicians regarding the nature of "consumer" initiatives. The recommendations reinforce the importance of

supporting principles of working in partnership with individuals and families and in developing a community consultation process." Here's a perfectly timed, consumer introduced opportunity.

I'd like to think we can sow a few seeds that might guide our program designers to better use some of the real consumer resources that are being underutilized. Here's a fellow with some working programs and a willingness to share.

[In partnership] the Victoria Canadian Mental Health Association hosted a morning session and lunch with David Burgess on October 3rd, 2001 at Begbie Hall.