



Compassionate person-centered outreach and support.

The Challenge

Our current mental health “system of care” is not reaching a small but significant group of people. These are individuals, known to their families and loved ones, who have not benefited from typical mental health services, in some cases despite frequent hospitalizations and treatment interventions. They are often warehoused in institutional settings, or languishing in their families’ basements, cycling in and out of hospitals and jails, isolated and stuck. They do not trust the “system” to meet them where they are and are not interested in engaging with traditional programs. Those who care about them often feel helpless and desperate.

The New Approach

We are a group of mental health advocates, family members and peers, who have come together to engage in a new approach, grounded in proven non-coercive principles, for supporting people who have not been helped by traditional mental health services.

In this new approach, we offer sustained, respectful, flexible, compassionate connections both to those who are struggling and to their families. Our approach is grounded in an abundance of compassion for families and their loved ones. Healing happens where there are relationships and trust.

This approach taps the power of a new paradigm in mental health care that is bringing recovery to people with mental health conditions worldwide. The paradigm is based on proven principles that have evolved simultaneously in a wide range of peer and professional settings: ¹

- Conducting compassionate outreach over time
- Establishing relationships rooted in trust
- Grounding all interactions with respect and empathy
- Providing support by peers who have been through similar experiences.

How it Works

Our approach of peer outreach will be unusual in several ways:

- It will be led through a collaboration of peers and family members, a collaboration that will extend into all phases of implementation.
- It will invite referrals from people who have a loved one about whom they are concerned, and whom they observe to be stuck and struggling with a mental health condition.
- One key to success is consistent person-centered outreach over time, focused on support rather than coercion. This strategy recognizes that people who refuse contact at one moment may welcome it in another. The goal is to help create the conditions to thrive and make choices for their own wellbeing.
- Another key is a special focus on offering families’ strategies for communication to help build more collaborative relationships. Family members who have had similar experiences are available to work with the caregivers and friends involved in the person’s life, to explain the new approach, offer strategies, and identify resources.
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In Closing

We will provide compassionate, person-centered support to individuals and families affected by mental health challenges and disconnected from traditional care. Through respectful, non-coercive outreach and peer-led relationships, we aim to build trust, offer meaningful choices, and support pathways that honor each person’s unique journey and values.

¹ Guided by such principles, initiatives in leading organizations have had impressive success in bringing recovery to those with serious mental health challenges. Examples include [Soteria](#), [Open Dialogue](#), [the peer respite movement](#), [Hearing Voices Network](#), and the growing [INSET initiative](#) in New York State. Their approach has become the gold standard for organizations like the [World Health Organization](#), the [Council of Europe](#), and [SAMHSA](#).