

***MAKING INFORMED DECISIONS ABOUT  
YOUR MEDICATIONS, YOUR TREATMENT  
AND YOUR WELLNESS OPTIONS***

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# INFORMED DECISION MAKING MISSION

To offer people freedom of choice  
in their journey for wellness and  
recovery...

To improve their quality of life...  
Centering on minimizing focus on  
medication and acquiring  
knowledge of alternative  
approaches to wellness.



# RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENT AND GUIDING DEFINITIONS

It can be detrimental to a user's physical and mental health to abruptly stop taking medications. We strongly discourage anyone from reducing their psychotropic medication intake without a tapering plan in place and the support of a health care professional.

## **Definitions:**

"Treatment optimization" is here defined as the support of users of the mental health system in achieving balance among a continuum of treatment and support options for optimal well being and quality of life.

"Medication optimization" is here defined as a state where individuals receive no less and no more medications than what is optimal for their long term health (Unger, 2011)

# **PURPOSE: PROVIDE EDUCATION, SUPPORT, AND INFORMATION ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT OPTIMIZATION AND ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO WELLNESS.**



## **Goals:**

- ❖ Develop user and provider competence in implementing informed decision making
- ❖ Provide medication tapering education and advocacy to influence systems change
- ❖ Empower users by offering support and guidance throughout their recovery and medication optimization journey
- ❖ Educate consumers to ask essential questions about their treatment with their professional caregivers
- ❖ Provide leading research about psychiatric medications and effects
- ❖ Contribute to the field by sharing and developing alternative approaches for wellness, such as personal medicine




# EDUCATION AND SUPPORT COMPONENTS

## Education Group

- Open to any person interested and open to discussing ideas about treatment optimization approaches and experiences
- Closed groups. New training cycle begins each quarter.
- Training is conducted by two educators, one of which has experience as a user of psychotropic medications
- Six (1-1/2 hour) education modules:
  1. Nature of Mental Health Issues
  2. Psychiatric Medication 101
  3. Alternative Treatments & Recovery
  4. Personal Wellness
  5. Wrap Up & Celebration
  6. Systems Advocacy

## Support Group

- Groups are held biweekly up to 60-90 minutes.
  - Open to any person who has completed the five core Informed Choices education modules.
  - Quorum: 3 non-facilitating participants are required to hold a group up to a maximum of 12 total participants
  - Groups are co-facilitated by two individuals, one of which will have experience as a user of psychotropic medications
  - Group members share their treatment optimization goal at the first session
  - Participants are invited to attend as many group sessions as desired.
  - New groups are established when a group has grown to consistent 12 member participation
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# EDUCATION PROCESS

## Module Components

- Objectives:** Learning Goals
- Explore:** Invite questioning of accepted practices
- Empower:** List evidence building rationale for treatment and systems change
- Scenario:** Experiential activities
- Reflect:** Handouts & articles on module topics for self-guided learning
- Act:** Suggested action steps to apply concepts to individual experience



# TOPIC 1: NATURE OF MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES



## *Objectives:*

1. Contrast traditional and alternative models of mental illness origin and treatment
2. Provide overview of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) development, mental disorder classifications and diagnostic criteria
3. Discuss role of trauma in mental health outcomes



## TOPIC 2: PSYCHIATRIC MEDICATION 101

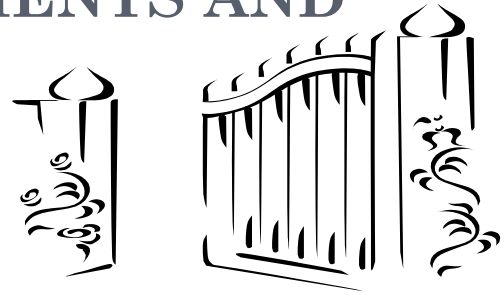
### **Objectives:**

- Brief history of psychiatric medication development and use
- Classes of psychiatric medications, benefits and side effects
- Current psychiatric medication research, development and evaluation, including 2<sup>nd</sup> generation atypical psychotropic drugs
- Literature and guidance on psychotropic medication tapering
- Shared decision-making and approaches to working with providers to optimize treatment





## TOPIC 3: ALTERNATIVE TREATMENTS AND RECOVERY



### Objectives:

- Alternative treatments to traditional mental health supports & interventions
- Efficacy of alternative and adjunctive treatments
- Wellness and recovery models
- Understand role of happiness, joy, and hope in healing
- Trauma-informed care models



## TOPIC 4: PERSONAL WELLNESS



### Objectives:

- Relationships that help and hinder recovery
- Strategies to build upon inherent resilience and hardiness
- Develop a personal wellness plan including medication optimization
- Harm reduction and benefits for wellness



# TOPIC 5: WRAP UP: DISCUSSION AND CELEBRATION

## *Objectives:*

- How has participation aided learning about treatment optimization?
- How can Informed Decision Making education experience be improved?
- Link with Informed Choices support group
- Encourage involvement in advocacy targeting treatment systems change



# TOPIC 6: SYSTEMS ADVOCACY



## Objectives:

- Advocate for reporting all pharmaceutical research findings
- Educate public and private sector mental health providers about psychotropic medication tapering and alternative wellness approaches.
- Align treatment reimbursement systems to prioritize non-pharmacological interventions over psychotropic interventions.
- Join with advocacy groups working toward systems change



# QUESTIONS?

## Contact Information

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