



A Welcome to Our Community Network by Xiaoduo Fan, UMass Psychotic Disorders Program

As a way to create a more inclusive community, the UMass Psychotic Disorders Clinical and Research Program has developed the Central Massachusetts Psychosis Network to build knowledge, develop skills, and share resources that may be useful to those who are interested in psychosis, schizophrenia and severe mental illness. We hope the network will serve as a catalyst to promote collaboration among all of the Central Massachusetts community and ultimately to improve the clinical care and quality of life for those living with psychotic disorders and severe mental illness.

As a member of this network, you will receive up to date information regarding groundbreaking research, community organizations, and local resources. If you would like to be featured in our future newsletters, do not hesitate to send us information that you feel is relevant such as patient resources, upcoming events, research updates, and inspiring stories. If you know of anyone who is interested in joining this network, please share our contact information with them or let us know; we will be happy to add them to the group.

Welcome to the Central Massachusetts Psychosis Network!

EVENTS

9th World Hearing Voices Congress by Hearing Voices Network US



From August 17th-18th, Hearing Voices Network (HVN) will be holding an international congress in Boston, MA. This is a time for people all around the world to share experiences and discuss initiatives for those hearing voices, seeing visions,

and having other unusual experiences. There will be keynote and workshop opportunities each day. To learn more about the upcoming congress and to register, please go [here](#). Read more about HVN and their local support group in the **“Resources”** section!

RESOURCES

Genesis Club: Career Development Unit by Ruth Osterman and Kevin Bradley, Genesis Club

Since 1988, Genesis Club has been offering vocational training, education, employment, housing, wellness, and social supports to individuals struggling with mental illness. New members at Genesis club attend orientation and rotate between 6 different units: kitchen, membership, career development, environmental and facilities, and training and development. Members then choose one unit to join, although they continue to utilize services from the rest of the units. Within their unit, members distribute responsibilities so that they are all able to contribute to the club. One member Maura says she enjoys her duties at the club because she “[gets] help [herself], and help other people”.



The career development unit focuses on vocational rehabilitation for the members through employment and education. Many members join the club with a main goal of attaining meaningful employment, and the career development unit often draws people in. The unit offers transitional employment positions that are temporary, for only around 9 months. The club has relationships with specific businesses in the area, and these job openings are reserved for clubhouse members. The Genesis staff provides training and absentee coverage for members in transitional employment positions. Once members feel comfortable with working their transitional employment job, they can move on to supported employment. While the clubhouse still provides assistance during the job search process, the members may need to interview for the jobs. These positions do not have a time limit on them. New members are often drawn in by the club’s transitional employment program; Maura states “it’s what got my foot in the door”.



Transitional employment board that displays all the available jobs.

In addition to employment, Genesis club offers support for education. Many members had to take a break from school due to their mental illness, and the club helps them return to school and complete their degrees. The club helps members apply for their GEDs or for financial aid, and they even offer scholarships.

Membership at Genesis Club offers access to an “intentional community of support with a sense of ownership and belonging”, says Ruth Osterman, staff at Genesis Club. In order to become a member, you must be referred by a healthcare professional. To learn more about becoming a member, click [here](#).

If you are interested in Genesis Club or have any questions, please contact them by phone at **508-831-0100** or email training@genesiscub.org. For health care professionals looking to refer a patient, please email referral@genesiscub.org.

To read a Genesis Club member’s story, go to our **“Inspiring Stories”** section.

Kiva Center: Voice Hearer’s Group by Vesper Moore, Kiva Center

Hearing Voices Network offers several support groups in Massachusetts, with one group in Central MA. This local Voice Hearer’s group meets on Thursdays at 12:30 at the Kiva Center, located at **209 Shrewsbury St, Worcester MA 01604**. The group is a space for those who hear voices and/or experience reality in different ways.

Kiva is a recovery learning community that strongly values peer support. The organization is entirely peer-run, and they emphasize the importance of social connection. They also promote acceptance and openness, and this transparency is well reflected in the design of their facility. By the entrance, there is a large open space with Native American artwork on the walls and soft music playing. One member said that she feels “a sense of calm the moment [she enters]”. There are virtually no doors throughout the center, further fostering the sense of community that is central to their mission of wellness.

In addition to the Voice Hearer’s group, Kiva offers several other open support groups daily, with some that are specifically Spanish or Portuguese only. To view a calendar with all the available support groups, please click [here](#). To learn more about the Kiva Center, you can call them at **508-751-9600**.

INSPIRING STORIES

Carlos’ Story of Resilience by Rachel Madhur, UMass Psychotic Disorders Program

Carlos Maclay is a member of Genesis Club who has greatly benefitted from their supported employment and education services. When he joined Genesis Club in January, Carlos had two primary goals: completing his education and obtaining his license. Carlos had been a student at Clark University for two years before taking time off. Genesis helped him reapply, and even re-acclimated him to the school by taking him on tours so that he would feel comfortable returning. He was recently readmitted to Clark and will be returning there in the fall. In order for him to obtain his license, Genesis supported him by helping him find a driving school. Since joining the clubhouse, Carlos says he has “accomplished a lot of goals I wanted to accomplish”.

When Carlos initially joined Genesis club, he was not interested in working. He learned more about their transitional employment program, which offers temporary, short term positions to members. After he visited UMass Medical School and saw several other members working there, he felt that he could fit in as well. Currently, he is metering in the UMass mailroom for 12 hours a week, and he reports that his job has been going “very well”.

Speaking of his progress and accomplishments, Carlos says “none of this would have been possible without the support of Genesis Club. Taking part in the daily tasks and working side by side with other members and staff helped build my confidence and allowed me to pursue my goals.”



From left, member Maura Beddes, Rachel Madhur from UMass, Kevin Bradley, executive director of Genesis Club, member William Beck, member Carlos Maclay, Dr. Du from UMass, and Ruth Osterman, staff at Genesis Club.

RESEARCH PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES

Do you or someone you know have a diagnosis of Schizophrenia or Schizoaffective Disorder?

If so, you/they may be eligible to participate in one of our research studies. You will be compensated for your time.

If you are interested and would like more information, please call us at **508-856-MIND (6463)** or email MIND@umassmed.edu.

The Central Massachusetts Psychosis Network aims to create a community space to build knowledge, develop skills, and share resources regarding psychosis, schizophrenia and severe mental illness. Please share with us your novel ideas, useful resources, upcoming events, research updates and inspiring stories. If you know of anyone who is interested in joining the network or if you prefer not to be part of the network, please let us know. You may reach us by phone at **508-856-MIND (6463)** or by e-mail at mind@umassmed.edu. This network was developed by the UMass Psychotic Disorders Clinical and Research Program, which includes four major components: clinical care, research, community outreach, and global initiatives. To learn more about us, click [here](#). Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#):

