Documenting the History of Marginalized Groups: Organizations of People with Psychiatric Histories

A Preliminary Guide to the Historical Records of Mental Health Consumer/Survivor/Ex-patient Organizations in New York State

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The Community Consortium, Inc.
Albany, NY
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The Community Consortium, Inc.

The Community Consortium is a not-for-profit, tax-exempt charitable organizations made up of psychiatric survivors and their allies. Our goal is to promote the full citizenship and civil rights of people who have been excluded from participation in their communities because they have been identified as psychiatrically disabled. Through a range of activities including training, public policy consultation, technical assistance, public education, and cultural and historical projects, the Community Consortium works to end marginalization and build inclusive communities.

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Introduction

A primary reason for the marginalization of people with psychiatric histories is that their experiences have often remained hidden from both scholars and the general public. As noted in the New York State Archive’s *Strategic Plan for Documenting Mental Health in New York State* (2001), “the voices of service recipients are virtually silent in the historical record.” The Plan further states that “Most support and advocacy organizations, under-staffed and focused intently on their missions, seldom devote scarce time or resources to documenting their work or caring for the documentation they do create. Therefore, this critical component of the history of mental health in New York is virtually absent from the historical record.”

The significance of consumer/survivor/ex-patient (c/s/x) organizations and individual activists to the history of mental health in New York State cannot be over-stated. As noted in the *Strategic Plan for Documenting Mental Health in New York State*, the state’s mental health system has been in operation for over 200 years. It has directly impacted the lives of literally hundreds of thousands of individuals. Yet fewer than 85 collections of records exist in New York State that document the experiences of these individuals, and the vast majority of these are clinical records, which provide the system’s perspective, not the patients’ perspectives. C/s/x organizations, the first of which began over 30 years ago in New York State, are virtually the only places, outside of individual patient memoirs, where one will find first-hand accounts of the experience of psychiatric treatment, of societal prejudice and discrimination, critiques of diagnosis and treatment from an experiential perspective, the experience of recovery, and the development of c/s/x political activity on mental health issues.

With support from a Documentary Heritage Grant from the New York State Archives, the Community Consortium set out to address this gap in the historical record by conducting a preliminary survey of the archival holdings of organizations run by and for current and former recipients of mental health services. The board members of the organization have decades of combined experience providing training, technical assistance and mentoring to ex-patient organizations in New York State, and have played key leadership roles in the state-wide c/s/x movement. The organization has an understanding of the history and organization of the c/s/x movement in New York, and has the trust of most of these groups, an essential factor in documenting the history of a marginalized group.

Some preliminary work had already been done within the c/s/x community about the importance of getting c/s/x perspectives included in the historical record. Darby Penney, the Project Director, worked statewide on these issues between 1999-2003. Her work included

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1 There is no consensus among people with psychiatric histories about how to refer to people who have been mental patients. Among the terms used are mental health consumer, recipient of mental health services, psychiatric survivor, ex-patient, people with psychiatric disabilities, mental patients, people with psychiatric histories. One widely accepted shorthand term is consumer/survivor/ex-patient (c/s/x). Many organizations run by and for people with psychiatric histories refer to themselves as “peer-run” organizations. These terms will be used interchangeably in this document.
establishing the C/S/X Oral History Project, giving workshops for c/s/x groups with State Archives staff on documenting community organizations, and doing presentations across the state on the Willard Suitcase Project and the State Hospital Cemetery Restoration Project.

Despite this preliminary work and the organizations’ familiarity with the c/s/x movement, we found this project more difficult to complete than we had anticipated. More than 25% of the 100 groups on our initial list proved to be unreachable – mostly because they went out of existence and we were unable to locate contact people who may have had the group’s records. Other organizations turned out to be satellites of larger parent organizations, and some turned out to be single individuals who did not have records. A number of organizations indicated that their files were not organized in any way, and that therefore they could not complete the survey. Several organizations refused to participate, either because they felt it was too much work, not a priority, or just not something they were interested in. Other groups agreed to participate but never sent in their survey forms, despite numerous reminder calls and e-mails. Others submitted incomplete or clearly inaccurate data; most of these were received in the last weeks of the project, so there was no time for follow-up.

The experience of working on this project was a humbling one. The difficulties we encountered gave us first-hand knowledge of the many reasons it is so difficult to document the history of marginalized people. Many of these organizations are poorly funded (if at all), and run by volunteers or part-time staff who are under-paid and over-worked. Many do not have systematic administrative procedures in place, and many also deal with leadership changes and turmoil on a regular basis. Like people with psychiatric histories themselves, their organizations often struggle with a lack of resources and a lack of knowledge about how to work within large systems.

We extend our sincere gratitude to the organizations who participated in the project. We understand that this preliminary guide is just a first step, and hope to have the opportunity to continue to work with the c/s/x movement in New York State to make sure their experiences are part of the historical record.

Special thanks to the Project Advisory Committee: Steven Periard, Ronald Bassman, and Susan D’Entremont.
Guide to the Historical Records
Title: Organizational records, 2002-present

Volume: 7.95 cubic feet

Types of records:
- Administrative 1.5
- Correspondence .1
- Education/Training 6
- Events/Activities .1
- Financial .1
- Programs/Services .1
- Publicity/Public Relations .05

Formats: file folders binders

Historical Note:

Albany County Consumer Advocacy Board for Mental Health, Inc. (ACCAB) began in 1996 under the auspices of another peer-run agency, Community Living Associates Program, Inc. The program’s funder, Albany County Department of Mental Health contracted with The Council of Community Services of NYS to assist ACCAB in becoming an independent, nonprofit organization, which was achieved in 2003.

ACCAB’s mission is to provide peer advocacy and peer support to Albany County residents with psychiatric disabilities. Its services include information and referral, individual and systems advocacy, social and recreational opportunities, and self-help and peer support.
Title: Project records, 1999-present

Volume: 2.5 (estimated)

Formats: file folders

Historical Note:

ADVOTEC was founded in 1999 to provide advanced training and technical assistance to peer-run advocacy groups, and to act as a central networking point to enhance communication and collaboration among peer advocacy groups on a statewide basis. Free training for peer advocacy groups teach practical applications of mental hygiene law and the use of advocacy strategies to assist people within the mental health system. The project administrative support through the Resource Center, Inc., which also serves as fiscal agent. Topics covered in advocacy training include: History of the Consumer/Survivor/Ex-patient Movement; What Is Peer Advocacy; Ethics of Peer Advocacy; Skills in Negotiation; Conflict Resolution; Patients’ Rights; Confidentiality of Clinical Records; Access to Clinical Records; Article 9 Mental Hygiene Law; Protection and Advocacy Services; OMH Customer Relations Line.

In 2003, ADVOTEC also began providing trainings on self-advocacy. These trainings provide peers with important tools to help them increase their advocacy efforts at the state and local levels, and to advocate on their own behalf with service providers.

ADVOTEC offers a Resource Guide for Peer Advocates, a referral resource for peer advocates to Protection and Advocacy and other legal service agencies in each region of the state. The guide includes information on how to document and file a complaint. The 2003 edition of this resource guide was updated to include a listing of all public access law libraries in New York State.
Title: Organizational records, 1996-present

Volume: 76.5 cubic feet

Types of records:
- Administrative: 15
- Correspondence: 6
- Education/Training: 22.5
- Events/Activities: 3
- Financial: 15
- Programs/Services: 7.5
- Publicity/Public Relations: 7.5

Formats: file folders, photographs

Historical Note:

Founded in 1977, the Baltic Street Mental Health Board is a not-for-profit corporation originally established to promote community awareness of the needs of people in Brooklyn who were served by South Beach Psychiatric center. In 1996 the agency, received its first grant for the Brooklyn Peer Advocacy Center. Since then, growth has occurred at an extraordinary pace as a result of the agency’s achievements in providing high-quality, cost-effective services along with career opportunities for people in recovery. The organization’s services include supported housing, bridger services, individual advocacy, information and referral, employment services, social and recreational services, education and training, peer counseling, and self-help at several sites in Brooklyn, Staten Island, the Bronx, and Manhattan.

Baltic Street Mental Health Board, Inc. is a consumer-run mental health organization that assists persons who are in recovery from mental illness to achieve successful and satisfying lives in their communities. By offering a comprehensive array of programs and services, the Baltic Street Mental Health Board helps people obtain jobs, housing, social supports, education, vocational training, health benefits, financial entitlements, and other community services that greatly enhance their quality of life. The organization is dedicated to empowerment and full inclusion for recipients of mental health services by decreasing the stigma and alienation often experienced by persons with mental health labels. A majority of the agency’s staff and Board of Directors are current or former recipients of mental health services.
Title: Organizational records, 2001-present

Volume: 6.45 cubic feet

Types of records:
- Administrative .5
- Correspondence .25
- Education/Training 1.5
- Events/Activities .25
- Financial .1
- Programs/Services .25
- Publicity/Public Relations .1
- History of Psychiatry 3.5

Formats:
- file folders
- audio tapes
- video tapes

Historical Note:

The Community Consortium was founded in 2001 by leaders in the consumer/survivor/ex-patient leaders in New York State. The Community Consortium is a not-for-profit, tax-exempt charitable organization made up of psychiatric survivors and their allies who bring a wide range of expertise to the organization. Through a range of activities including training, public policy consultation, technical assistance, and public education, the Community Consortium works to end marginalization and build inclusive communities.

Activities have included two of the organization's board members serving as guest curators for the New York State Museum's 2004 exhibit, "Lost Cases, Recovered Lives: Suitcases from a State Hospital Attic," as well as one board member serving as guest curator for an exhibit on state hospital cemeteries at the Arts Center of the Capital Region. The Community Consortium also provides training for Independent Living Centers on how to better serve people with psychiatric disabilities. The group has also collaborated with the New York State Archives and New York State Museum to provide public educational programming on mental health history from the patients’ perspectives, with funding from the New York Council for the Humanities. The Community Consortium received a 2003-04 Documentary Heritage Grant from the New York State Archives to survey the holdings of peer groups in New York.
Title: Organizational records, 9/1999-9/2003

Volume: 4.5 cubic feet, plus 294 audio cassettes, 201 transcripts on digital media (3 ½" floppy disks), 12 videotapes, 49 mini-DV cassettes

Types of records: Administrative 1.4
Correspondence .01
Education/Training .75
Events/Activities .07
Financial .19
Publicity/Public Relations .08
Interviewee records 2

Formats: file folders audio tapes videotapes Mini-DV cassettes 3 ½" floppy disks

Historical Note:

The C/S/X Oral History Project began in 1999 to document the history of the mental health system in New York State from the perspective of consumers, survivors and ex-patients. The project was created by Darby Penney, then director of the Bureau of Recipient Affairs for the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH), in order to help add some balance to the historical record on public mental health in the state by gathering oral histories of c/s/x to complement the more than 100,000 cubic feet of records from state psychiatric centers.

With funding from OMH, the C/S/X (Consumer/Survivor/Ex-patient) Oral History Project began in late 1999. Steven Periard was hired as Project Director, and he worked with other ex-patients to collect the oral histories of their peers who had received mental health services in the state. The interviewers received training in oral history techniques from folklorist Mary Zwolinski. From 1999 to 2003, the project collected over 200 narratives documenting the history of mental health from the ex-patient’s perspective. In 2003 (the same year it was defunded by OMH), the C/S/X Oral History Project was awarded the Debra E. Bernhardt Award for Excellence in Documenting New York State History by the New York State Board of Regents.
Title: Organizational records, 1998-present

Volume: 6.5 cubic feet

Types of records:
- Administrative: 1.5
- Correspondence: 1.5
- Education/Training: .5
- Events/Activities: .5
- Financial: .5
- Programs/Services: .5
- Publicity/Public Relations: .5

Formats: file folders, video tapes

Historical Note:

The Center for Career Freedom is a non-profit corporation founded in 1998 with a mission of rehabilitation and recovery of persons with chronic psychiatric disabilities leading to competitive employment. Most of the 14 staff are survivors of mental illness and have extensive experience in business, counseling and teaching. The Center is a business school licensed by the NYS Department of Education, a Department of Social Services One-stop Workforce Training Provider, and a Microsoft Certified Office Specialist Training Center. The organization also offers career counseling, short-term cognitive behavioral therapy, and a drop-in center. In addition, the Center is a part of the Social Security Administration Ticket to Work Employment Network and a VESID Employment Network Provider. The Center also conducts and publishes research on the economics of recovery.
The Empowerment Center
60 South Third Avenue
Mount Vernon, NY 10550
Title: Organizational records, 1994-2004
Volume: 270 cubic feet (estimated)
Types of records:
- Administrative: 30
- Correspondence: 30
- Education/Training: 30
- Events/Activities: 60
- Financial: 30
- Programs/Services: 60
- Publicity/Public Relations: 5
- Other (unspecified): 15
Formats: file folders, binders, art work, photographs, video tapes, scrapbooks

Historical Note:
The Empowerment Center had its beginnings in May 1993, when a group of ex-patients of mental illness met in a church basement in White Plains to form a task force to investigate inpatient care in area hospitals. Simultaneously, at Harlem Valley Psychiatric Center, Pat Finneran, a patient, approached a staff member, John Rock, about her concerns regarding life on the ward, and they organized meetings with patients to review common problems on the wards and advocated for solutions. Upon discharge, Pat’s tenacity led to Rockland Psychiatric Center’s acceptance of a peer advocacy program funded through Westchester County. The Inpatient Task Force received county funding for a peer-operated clubhouse. Both programs, originally under the Westchester Independent Living Center, were merged as the Westchester Consumer Empowerment Center in 1994. In 1998, the organization was incorporated as an independent peer-run program.

Known today simply as The Empowerment Center, the organization has more than 25 peer staff and serves people from 5 counties. The Center “serves people who, like ourselves, have been on the receiving end of mental health services. We work for the expressed interest of our peers. Our mission is to preserve the freedom of personal choice, make information available, promote kindness, understanding, tolerance, perseverance, acceptance and demonstrate respect of ourselves and others.” The Center has held 12 Peer Advocacy Training Courses, graduating over 200 advocates, and provides peer advocacy services at 8 hospitals in the Hudson Valley. They operate Peer Support Centers in New Rochelle and in Orangeburg, a Peer Bridger Program, a toll-free Peer Support Telephone Line, a food program for homeless people, and an alternative resource library.
Hands Across Long Island, Inc. (HALI)          Ellen Healion, Executive Director
P.O. Box 1179                                     631/234-1925
Central Islip, NY     11722                      631/234-7258 - FAX
                                                        ellen@hali88.org

Title: Organizational records, 1988-present

Volume: 161.32 cubic feet, 568 computer disks/CDs

Types of records: Administrative 37
                             Correspondence 19
                             Education/Training 13.66
                             Events/Activities 5.66
                             Financial 55
                             Programs/Services 23
                             Publicity/Public Relations 8

Formats: file folders     audio tapes    videotapes    binders
                                 photographs    video tapes    maps/drawings    scrapbooks
                                 card files    computer disks & CDs

Historical Note:

Hands Across Long Island is a grassroots mental health empowerment organization started in 1988 by and for recipients, ex-patients and survivors of the mental health service system. Recipients compose 80 % of the Board of Directors and 93 % of the staff. Beginning with 13 Self-Help groups throughout Suffolk County, NY, HALI now provides 37 Self-Help groups and 16 Double Trouble Groups, as well as a Resource Center for Survivors and other special interest areas for recipients. Other HALI services include Supported Housing, Advocacy services, Drop In Center, Food/clothing Pantries, Social events, Vocational and Educational supports, Inpatient supports, Peer Case Management, Sports Program, Education/Training for Professionals, and Alternative options (yoga, chiropractic, meditation, music, writing, aromatherapy, etc.)

On a statewide level, HALI provides self-help development services to consumers in, or with a history of involvement with, the criminal justice system. HALI has received numerous honors for its commitment to peer-services, including recognition by the United Nations’ World Health Organization for its work as a grassroots, community-based peer-run organization.
Housing Options Made Easy, Inc
75 Jamestown Street
Gowanda, NY 14070

Glenn Hooten, Executive Director
716/532-5508
716/532-5618 - FAX
ghooten@housingoptions.org

Title: Organizational records, 1990 - present

Volume: 135.5 cubic feet

Types of records:
- Administrative 31.9
- Correspondence 17.3
- Education/Training 2
- Events/Activities 2.6
- Financial 44
- Programs/Services 36
- Publicity/Public Relations 1.5

Formats: file folders  audio tapes  binders
photographs  video tapes  maps/drawings  scrapbooks

Historical Note:

Housing Options Made Easy, Inc., is a not-for-profit agency developed and operated by individuals diagnosed with mental illness. The agency provides individual rental assistance and community support services including individual and systems advocacy, education and training, self-help and peer support in Erie, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, and Allegany Counties. The organization was founded in 1990 by past and present recipients of mental health services in Gowanda, NY, in order to advocate for better housing for people being discharged from psychiatric hospitals.

The philosophy of Housing Options is based on recipient empowerment and participation in all aspects of the services and supports provided through the agency. Recipients participate in needs assessments, program development and evaluation. Services and supports are designed to lead individuals to further independence; people are encouraged to find out what their rights are and to exercise them. People choose freely among a menu of services that they can access as needed. Housing Option's Board of Directors and staff consist of a majority of people who are or have been mental health recipients.

The agency has grown from initially serving just ten people to its present day status as a multi-service agency with an annual budget of more than one million dollars serving hundreds of individuals.
Title: Program records, 1999-present

Volume: 18.2 cubic feet

Types of records:
- Administrative 3.5
- Correspondence 1.5
- Education/Training 5.5
- Events/Activities 2.5
- Financial 0.2
- Programs/Services 3.5
- Publicity/Public Relations 1.5

Formats: file folders  binders  video tapes  card files

Historical Note:

The Howie the Harp Advocacy Center is a semi-autonomous program under the auspices of Community Access, a non-profit organization providing an array of services to mental health consumers and their families in New York City. Founded in 1995 by the late Howie the Harp, a national leader in the consumer/survivor/ex-patient movement, the program’s daily operations are run by mental health consumers. The Howie T. Harp Center offers a Peer Specialist Training Program, which prepares mental health consumers for positions in human services agencies, as well as an Assisted Competitive Employment Program. The Center also offers a year-long employment training program for mental health consumers who have been incarcerated in jails or prisons. Other services include workshops on such issues as parenting, financial planning, career advancement, time management and stress management. The Center also offers social and recreational activities, peer counseling, self-help, and advocacy services.
Title: Coalition records, 1994-present

Volume: 10.61 cubic feet

Types of records:
- Administrative 2.12
- Education/Training 2.12
- Events/Activities 3.19
- Financial 1.06
- Programs/Services 1.06
- Newsletters & Flyers 1.06

Formats:
- file folders
- binders
- card files
- photographs
- video tapes
- scrapbooks

Historical Note:

The Mental Health Coalition is a peer-directed project which promotes empowerment through advocacy, education, training, and advancing the consumer voice in Monroe and surrounding counties. The Coalition had its roots in a small group of consumers, family members and providers who began to meet monthly in 1991 to discuss the rights of consumers to have a voice in their mental healthcare. This group formed a multi-stakeholder coalition and held a forum on consumers’ issues and concerns, developed a mission statement, and published a newsletter. In 1992, the Coalition began advocating for a drop-in center for peers; eventually, establishing the Self-help Drop-in Center. The Mental Health Association of Rochester/Monroe County provided a home for the Coalition in 1992, providing administrative, mentoring and fiscal services. The Coalition established its own Board of Directors and drafted by-laws in 1993, and became a subsidiary of the Mental Health Association.

In 1994, the Coalition began offering workshops on topics such as job discrimination, the Americans with Disabilities Act, advocacy and empowerment. Currently, the Coalition offers a Peer Information Network which includes a website, bulletin board project, a newsletter, and technical assistance in the development of consumer councils in area mental health programs. The group also provides information and referral, systems advocacy, education and training, self-help and peer support, and a resource library.
Mental Health Peer Connection
3108 Main Street
Buffalo, NY 14214
Marcie Kelly, Director
716/836-0822, x-162
716/835-3967 - FAX
mkelley@wnyilp.org

Title: Organizational records, 1999-present
Volume: 6 cubic feet (estimated)
Types of records: Administrative
Correspondence
Education/Training
Events/Activities
Financial
Programs/Services
Publicity/Public Relations
Formats: file folders audio tapes video tapes

Historical Note:

Mental Health Peer Connection is a peer-driven advocacy organization serving Erie County, NY. It is dedicated to facilitating self-directed growth, wellness, and choice, through genuine peer mentoring. Part of the family of agencies of the Western New York Independent Living Project, MHPC got its start in 1993, when the WNY ILP received reinvestment funds from the New York State Office of Mental Health for an Individual Advocate, a Systems Advocate, and a patient advocate at Buffalo Psychiatric Center. In 1994, WNY ILP received reinvestment funding to assist people transitioning from acute care hospitals into the community.

The WNY ILP developed so many recipient-run programs that, in 1998, it developed Mental Health Peer Connection as separate agency under the umbrella of the WNY ILP. MHPC provides peer advocates and mentors in the Buffalo Psychiatric Center, Mental Health Court, in the local acute psychiatric hospital, in diversion Assisted Outpatient Treatment-Care Coordinated Treatment, and in housing programs. The agency also offers education programs on Mental Health Rights, Advance Directives, Empowerment, and on how to stay out of the hospital. They have a vocational program that serves homeless people and people that have spent years in the mental health system, as well as a systems advocate that is involved in every county implementation meeting that concerns people diagnosed with mental illness. MHPC also provides independent living skills, advocacy, peer counseling, benefits advisement. With a staff of 21 full-time and 7 part-time peer staff, MHPC served over 350 individuals in 2003.
Title: Project records, 1998-present

Volume: 13 cubic feet (estimated)

Formats: file folders

Historical Note:

The Peer Education Project, a project of the Resource Center, Inc., is a statewide project started in 1998 that employs part-time Peer Educators, who are current or former recipients of mental health services. Peer Educators provide impartial information on New York State’s Prepaid Mental Health Plan (PMHP, a managed mental health care plan) to individuals receiving services at New York State Office of Mental Health outpatient clinics. Peer Educators provide recipients with information about the services available through the benefit package, and ensure that PMHP enrollees understand their rights and responsibilities. Through group informational and one-on-one sessions, enrollees learn skills to help them to participate fully in developing and implementing a personal service plan based on their own needs and desires.

Peer Educators also provide workshops and self-help activities to assist recipients to develop additional skills to enhance their sense of empowerment and to promote their recovery. Some of the topics addressed are self-advocacy skills, using wellness self-management techniques, building a support system, and how to start and run a self-help group. During 2003, Peer Educators interacted with over 29,000 recipients of mental health services in group settings and one-on-one sessions.
Peer Networking Group of Central NY
327 W. Fayette St. Suite 210
Syracuse, NY 13202
Emile Guel, Coordinator
(315) 473-1544
315/473-0568-FAX
png@northnet.org

Title: Organizational records, 1997-present

Volume: 6.5 cubic feet

Types of records:
- Administrative 2
- Correspondence 1
- Education/Training 1
- Events/Activities .5
- Financial 1
- Programs/Services .5
- Publicity/Public Relations .5

Formats: file folders

Historical Note:

The Peer Networking Group of Central New York was begun in 1997 by a small group of people with psychiatric histories with the goal of helping their peers in a 20-county area of Central New York to gather and share information and knowledge. There was no model for them to follow, so they blazed their own trail.

The group’s goals are to network on a monthly basis; use their personal experiences to help their peers navigate mental health, social service systems, and alternatives; create an atmosphere that fosters self-determination and leadership development; provide mentoring; and encourage diversity in all their activities.

The PNG holds monthly meetings for education, information exchange and networking. At these meetings, consumers/survivors/ex-patients, educators, and service providers can meet as equals to exchange ideas and information in a safe and comfortable setting. Attendees suggest topics and speakers for these meetings. Peers, county officials, and NYS Office of Mental Health staff have presented at PNG meetings. Attendees from a 20-county area return to their communities to share information with other peers.
Title: Organizational records, 1990-present

Volume: 38.56 cubic feet

Types of records:
- Administrative 9.92
- Correspondence 4.55
- Education/Training 7.68
- Events/Activities 2.38
- Financial 8.25
- Programs/Services 4.65
- Publicity/Public Relations 1.13

Formats:
- file folders
- binders
- card files
- photographs
- video tapes
- scrapbooks

Historical Note:

PEOPLe, Inc. had its beginnings in two peer support groups founded separately in 1988 in Kingston and in Dutchess County, NY. Members of the two groups knew each other, and came together to create a more formal organization. In 1989, the organization was incorporated as PEOPLe, Inc. (Projects to Empower and Organize the Psychiatrically Labeled), and soon received funding from the State Office of Mental Health to provide advocacy and peer support.

PEOPLe currently employs 30 peers and serves people with psychiatric labels in Ulster, Dutchess and Orange Counties. Its services include individual and systems advocacy, information and referral, employment services, social and recreational opportunities, education and training, peer counseling, self-help and peer support, drop-in center, and crisis alternatives.
Title: Organizational records, 1995-present

Volume: 22.5 cubic feet (estimated)

Formats: file folders binders

Historical Note:
The Resource Center, a state-wide peer-run organization, began in 1995 with federal funding from the Center for Mental Health Services, with a mission to provide technical assistance services and mentoring to peer-run program in New York State. In January 1999, the program became independently incorporated as the Resource Center, Inc. The organization’s mission is to foster self-determination, equality, and integration into the greater community for individuals diagnosed with psychiatric disabilities and for peer-operated entities in New York State, through education, training and technical assistance. The Resource Center, Inc. provides training for peer-run groups on many organizational and management issues, including: board training, leadership development, ethical standards, team-building techniques, cultural competency and creating by-laws. In 2003, the organization began offering professional development for peers working in the system throughout the state. Topics include ethics in the workplace, empowerment of recipients of mental health services, conflict resolution in the workplace and developing standards of peer support.

The Resource Center supports H.O.P.E. Line (Helping Other People Toward Empowerment), a toll-free warm line providing peer support to recipients in St. Lawrence and Hamilton Counties in northern New York. The organization is also the home of two other major initiatives, the Peer Education Project and the Self-help Source, and serves as administrative and fiscal agent for two off-site programs, ADVOTEC and the Peer Networking Group. These latter four projects are listed individually in this guide.
Title: Project records, 2000- present

Volume: 26 cubic feet (estimated)

Formats: file folders audio tapes video tapes

Historical Note:

The Self-Help Source, a project of the Resource Center, Inc., was started in 2000 as a statewide toll-free call-in and online service designed to provide broad access to free self-help information. Information on the availability of self-help groups is continually updated. Books and audiovisual materials are researched and reviewed. Materials on the development and facilitation of self-help groups are also available. The SHS webpage offers an announcement section that provides links to resources including: free articles and publications, free online classes, resources for free and/or inexpensive computer purchases, various archives of interviews and free programs, upcoming conferences, workshops, trainings, events given by recipient-run groups, and job opportunities in the recipient community. There is also a weekly online newsletter for people who subscribe through the website.

The website offers direct access to a database of mutual support groups throughout the state and to a database that directly links to online self-help articles. Currently, over 1,500 links to articles on self-help issues are provided. In 2003, the website reported over 13,000 visitors. However, in an effort to reach a larger audience the web host was upgraded, and in January 2004, the website received over 14,000 visitors in one month. There is a substantial amount of information given in Spanish for the Spanish-speaking community throughout the SHS site. The project also has a lending library for use throughout New York State, which offers a wide selection of books and audio-visual materials on self-help, alternative and natural healing, life skills, recovery stories, biographies, and more. The project director presents a workshop entitled, “An Introduction to Using the Internet and the World Wide Web As A Self-Help Resource” and offers a more comprehensive training, “Learning to Use the Computer Online for Self-Help” to peer-run groups across New York State.
Appendices: Survey Materials
Dear Colleagues:

The history of psychiatry and the mental health field has largely been written from the perspectives of government, institutions, and mental health professionals. At the Community Consortium, we believe that the viewpoints of people who have been through the mental health system need to be included in future historical works, and that we as a community need to have access to the materials that will let us write our own histories.

The Community Consortium, Inc., a not-for-profit organization of people with psychiatric histories and their allies, has been involved in several historical projects from the perspective of consumers/survivors/ex-patients (c/s/x). When state support for the C/S/X Oral History Project ended in September 2003, we began searching for new funding to continue this vital project, which has already recorded over 200 oral histories on deposit with the New York State Archives. We’ve produced a 12-minute video called “Here Lies?: State Hospital Cemeteries in New York,” and curated an exhibit of the same name at the Arts Center of the Capital Region in Troy, NY., in Fall 2003. Two of our members are guest curators of the exhibit “Lost Cases, Recovered Lives: Suitcases from a State Hospital Attic,” which opened at the New York State Museum in Albany in January 2004, and runs through September. Broadening the public’s understanding of mental health history to include our stories is one of our passions.

The Community Consortium has received a Documentary Heritage Program grant from the New York State Archives to help document the history of consumer/survivor/ex-patient (c/s/x) organizations and activism in the state. The C/S/X Historical Documentation Project’s goal is to survey c/s/x groups and activists about the kind and amount of records they have, and to publish a guide to collections which will help scholars and researchers, including c/s/x, find and use valuable materials about our organizations.

In the first step of this project, we are interested in getting a general idea about the amount and types of records that c/s/x groups have. Participating in the survey does not obligate a group to open its records to scholars and researchers. The project can help groups learn how to best preserve their records and how to make decisions about who they will allow to have access to the records. While we encourage groups to make the records available in ways that they feel comfortable with, it is not a requirement of participating in the survey.

We invite you to take part in this unique project to document and preserve our history. We have developed an electronic survey form which can be completed in MS Word, and returned as an e-mail attachment or on a disk. This survey form asks you to describe the kinds and amounts of records that your organization has. Full instructions and an explanation of terms
will be included. A fact sheet about the project is enclosed. Since we have not been able to locate an e-mail address for your organization, we would like to know if your group has an e-mail address or if a group member has access to e-mail. We would prefer to send the survey as an e-mail attachment. If that is not possible, we can mail you a disk with the survey, which you can complete in MS Word, and mail back on the disk. We would prefer not to send or receive hard copies of the survey, since that would require re-typing lots of information, but will do so if it is impossible for your group to respond electronically.

Please let us know where we can e-mail a survey to you, or where we can mail a disk. We can be contacted at community@capital.net or at (518) 677-2891. We look forward to your participation in this project. Together we can help ensure that our movement’s place in history is documented.

Sincerely,

Darby Penney
Project Director
What is the C/S/X Historical Documentation Project?
The C/S/X Historical Documentation Project is an activity of the Community Consortium, Inc., a non-profit organization of people with psychiatric histories and their allies. It is funded by a Documentary Heritage Program grant from the New York State Archives. The goal of the project is to help preserve the history of the c/s/x movement in New York State by collecting information about the records of c/s/x groups and the papers of individual activists. The first step toward this goal is to survey organizations about the type and approximate amount of historically significant records they have. After the survey is completed, we will produce a guide to collections.

How will the project benefit the C/S/X movement and C/S/X organizations?
The history of the mental health field has largely been written from the perspectives of government, institutions, and mental health professionals. The C/S/X Historical Documentation Project will make it possible for the viewpoints of people who have been through the mental health system to be included in future historical works. It will also enable us as a community to have access to the materials that will let us write our own histories. Every organization or individual who participates in the survey will receive a copy of the guide to collections.

What kinds of records will be surveyed?
The project is looking for information on documents that have lasting historical value and were generated by c/s/x organizations or individuals. This includes things like:
- organizational documents: by-laws, articles of incorporation, board meeting minutes
- documents about the organization’s activities: advocacy, projects, trainings, conferences;
- flyers, fact sheets, hand-outs; newsletters and correspondence; newspaper clippings,
  photographs, scrapbooks, organizational histories, posters, and brochures
A complete description of the records being surveyed is included with the project’s survey form.

If We Participate, Do We Have to Allow Outsiders Access to Our Records?
In the first step of this project, we are interested in getting a general idea about the amount and types of records that c/s/x groups have. Participating in the survey does not obligate a group to open its records to scholars and researchers. We can help groups learn how to best preserve their records and how to make decisions about who they will allow to have access to their records. While we encourage groups to make the records available in ways that they feel comfortable with, it is not a requirement of participating in the survey.

We’re not experts about archives - will we be able to complete the survey?
The survey form is simple to complete and doesn’t require special technical knowledge. The form does not ask for a detailed description of every document or file - it asks for a description of the records at a broad level. In completing the survey, you might tell us, for example, that you have 1.5 cubic feet (1 letter-size file drawer= 1.5 cubic feet) of organizational newsletters dating from 1995-2003, or .5 cubic feet of files about trainings that your organization held from 1990-2000. The information requested will not be in any greater detail than that. Complete instructions and an explanation of terms and measurements are included with the survey form.
Thank you for your help in documenting the history of peer organizations in New York State. The survey consists of two pages: a Cover Sheet asking for information about the organization, and a Record Inventory Sheet asking about your organization’s records. Please also include a brief history of your organization (about ½ page) as a separate page.

Cover Sheet
The cover sheet is, hopefully, self-explanatory. In addition to the name of the group and contact information, it asks about the organization’s structure, the geographic area it serves, and the year it was founded. If the organization is no longer in existence, please also give the year it ended. There is space to cut and paste the organization’s mission statement, and check boxes to describe the group’s activities.

Record Inventory Sheet
The Record Inventory Sheet provides space to give information about the approximate quantity and inclusive dates of seven categories of historically valuable records your organization may have, as well as space to describe records that don’t fit in any of the categories. Not all groups will have records in all seven categories, so just complete the lines that apply to your group’s records.

The purpose of this survey is to collect information about “historically valuable records” of consumer/survivor/ex-patient groups in New York State. Records are considered “historically valuable” if they document important information about the founding, purpose, history, and activities of a group. Every document produced by an organization is not necessarily of historical value. For instance, payroll records, detailed daily financial records, and routine internal memos are not considered of historical value. Some examples of “historically valuable records” include the group’s by-laws, minutes of board meetings, training materials, newsletters, fliers, fact sheets, and newspaper clippings about the group’s activities.

Categories of Records
For convenience, we have named seven categories of records that groups might have. Each is defined below, and examples are provided.

1) Administrative: includes articles of incorporation, by-laws, minutes of board meetings and committees of the board, papers that document the organization’s non-profit status (such as federal 501©(3) certificate, New York State Tax Exempt certificate, New York State Charities registration certificate), deeds of any property the organization might own, personnel records, contracts, and similar documents. Not included: routine internal memos, personnel files containing confidential information.

2) Financial: annual budgets, annual financial statements, audited financial statements, other records that give a general overview of the group’s finances. Not included: routine financial documents such as bank statements, cancelled checks, payroll records, bookkeeping records.

3) Education and Training: training curricula prepared or delivered by the organization,
training materials developed or used by the organization (such as workbooks, handouts, audio and videotapes), fliers or brochures describing trainings offered by the group. Also includes any subject files of articles, clippings, fact sheets, etc., about specific topics (i.e., electroshock, medication, rights, advocacy, etc.,) that serve as educational resources.

4) **Events/Activities**: documents describing or pertaining to events or activities organized by the group, such as rallies, conferences, public education campaigns, campaigns to change public policies. Records might include fliers, brochures, fact sheets, letters to the editor, sample letters to public officials, informational mailings, newspaper clippings reporting the group’s activities, photographs or videotapes of events. This category does not include education and training activities (see #3) or programs that provide direct services to individuals (see #7).

5) **Publicity/Public Relations**: press releases, newsletters, brochures and other publications designed to introduce your organization and its activities to the public and/or the media.

6) **Correspondence**: letters/correspondence to individuals and groups outside of the organization.

7) **Programs/Services**: documents describing or pertaining to organized programs and/or direct services provided to individuals. Often, these will be funded programs, such as housing, employment services, peer advocacy, or clubhouse programs, but they could be volunteer services, too. Records might include fliers or brochures describing the program or service, annual or quarterly reports, newspaper clippings about the program or service; informational handouts provided to people using the program or service. Not included: confidential information such as case files, sign-in sheets, identified records of individual advocacy, routine internal paperwork associated with the program or service.

8) **Other**: records of any other kind pertaining to your organization that you feel are historically significant that do not fit into any of the seven categories described above.

**Quantity (approximate size in cubic feet)**

Page 3 of these instructions gives information for determining the approximate quantity in cubic feet of different kinds of records, such as filing cabinet drawers, shelving, card files, etc. It is not necessary to be exact – an approximation is fine.

**Approximate Inclusive Dates**
For each category of records, enter the month and year the records begin and end. If records are still being collected in the category, please enter the current month and year. It is not necessary to be exact – an approximation is fine.

**Record Formats**
Please use the check boxes to indicate which formats of records you have.

**Thank you for your help!** If you have any questions, please contact project director Darby Penney at community@capital.net or (518) 677-2891.
### Organizational information

Organizational structure
- [ ] non-profit corporation
- [ ] unincorporated association
- [ ] advocacy

Organization (Check all that apply)
- [ ] peer-run organization
- [ ] self-help/peer support group
- [ ] peer service
- [ ] other (describe)

Year Founded

County/ Region served

Director’s name

Organizational Mission Statement:

Organizational Activities (check all that apply)

- [ ] individual advocacy
- [ ] information & referral
- [ ] employment services
- [ ] social/recreational
- [ ] systems advocacy
- [ ] education/ training
- [ ] peer counseling
- [ ] clubhouse
- [ ] self-help/ peer support
- [ ] individual advocacy
- [ ] crisis alternatives
- [ ] drop-in center
### Organizational information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizational structure</th>
<th>□ non-profit corporation</th>
<th>□ unincorporated association</th>
<th>□ advocacy</th>
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<tr>
<td>organization</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>(Check all that apply)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>peer-run organization</td>
<td>□ self-help/peer support group</td>
<td>□ peer service</td>
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<tr>
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<td>□ other (describe)</td>
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<th>County/ Region served</th>
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<table>
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<table>
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<th>Organizational Mission Statement:</th>
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<tr>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>other (describe)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Return to: [community@capital.net](mailto:community@capital.net)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Type of records</strong></th>
<th><strong>Approximate Size in cubic feet</strong></th>
<th><strong>Approximate Inclusive Dates</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>(see instructions for definitions)</td>
<td>(See instructions for table of measurements)</td>
<td>From: (year) To: (year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Correspondence</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Education/Training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events/Activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs/Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publicity/Public Relations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (describe)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL cubic feet**

**Formats** (check all that apply)

- [ ] file folders
- [ ] photographs
- [ ] video tapes
- [ ] audio tapes
- [ ] card files
- [ ] maps/drawings
- [ ] binders
- [ ] scrapbooks

- [ ] other (describe)

Return to: community@capital.net
Darby Penney
C/S/X Historical Documentation Project
Community Consortium
85 Darwin Rd. Cambridge, NY 12816
(518) 677-2891
# Table of Cubic Foot Equivalents

(For use in estimating the volume of records)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>File Folder Drawers</th>
<th>Cubic Feet</th>
<th>Record Center Containers</th>
<th>Cubic Feet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Letter</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>10&quot; x 12&quot; x 15&quot; (standard)</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter Transfile</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3.5&quot; x 8&quot; x 14&quot; (tab)</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3.5&quot; x 8&quot; x 24&quot; (check)</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Transfile</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>6&quot; x 6&quot; x 36&quot; (map)</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ledger</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jumbo</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Shelf Units         | Cubic Feet | 6" x 6" x 48" (map)      | 1.0        |
|---------------------|------------|                          |            |
| Letter, 36" long    | 2.4        | 4" x 4" x 48" (map)      | 0.4        |
| Legal, 36" long     | 3.0        |                          |            |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Card File Drawers</th>
<th>Cubic Feet</th>
<th>For all other situations, use this formula:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3&quot; x 5&quot; x 26&quot; long</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>Length x Width x Height (in inches) divided by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3&quot; x 5&quot; x 14&quot; long</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>1728 = number of cubic feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5&quot; x 7.5&quot; x 26&quot; long</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5&quot; x 7.5&quot; x 14&quot; long</td>
<td>0.2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4&quot; x 6&quot; x 26&quot; long</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4&quot; x 6&quot; x 14&quot; long</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5&quot; x 8&quot; x 26&quot; long</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5&quot; x 8&quot; x 14&quot; long</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6&quot; x 9&quot; x 26&quot; long</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6&quot; x 9&quot; x 14&quot; long</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>8&quot; x 8&quot; x 26&quot; long</td>
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<tr>
<td>8&quot; x 8&quot; x 14&quot; long</td>
<td>0.5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Map or Plan Drawers</th>
<th>Cubic Feet</th>
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<tr>
<td>2&quot; x 26&quot; x 38&quot; Flat</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2&quot; x 38&quot; x 50&quot; Flat</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4&quot; x 26&quot; x 38&quot; Flat</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4&quot; x 38&quot; x 50&quot; Flat</td>
<td>4.4</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Map or Plan Tubes</th>
<th>Cubic Feet</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>4&quot; x 4&quot; x 38&quot; Roll</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4&quot; x 4&quot; x 50&quot; Roll</td>
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