



THE
EVOLUTION
OF US

Annual Mental Health Recovery Conference 2019



May 20-21

Hotel Madison, Harrisonburg, VA

#VOCALCon2019



Virginia Organization of Consumers Asserting Leadership

Staff

Deidre Johnson, Executive Director
Erin Crettier, Operations Manager
Don Johnson, REACH Program Director
Yolande Long, Network Coordinator
Heather Orrock, Co-OPP Program Director/Development Director
Malaina Poore, Network Program Director
Megan Sharkey, REACH Program Manager
Isata Turay, Executive Assistant

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Jeff Leonard, Auxiliary Committee
Ryan Tempesco, Auxiliary Committee
Ellen Vann-Caldwell, Auxiliary Committee

We wish to thank The Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration for providing fiscal support for this conference.

Thank you to Jessica Daggett, for editorial assistance, and Erin Slayton for this year's logo design. We also wish to acknowledge attorney Heather Zelle, J.D., Ph.D, from UVA's School of Psychiatry and Public Policy. Heather will be available to help attendees create a Psychiatric Advance Directive. Please inquire at the Registration Desk for more information.

MONDAY

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Keynote Performance with Savannah Hatcher

Shenandoah Ballrooms

Savannah is a Richmond based violinist, pianist, and vocalist who produces and releases her own original songs and music videos. Savannah combines her training as a classical musician with her experience as an improviser and entrepreneur to create classical-pop crossover music about social issues, her struggle living with Bipolar Disorder, and her love of science fiction and fantasy stories.

12:00 p.m. – 12:45 p.m.

Lunch

Shenandoah Ballrooms

1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Board Roles and Responsibilities with Heather Orrock

Blue Ridge Room

Peer-Run Programs only thrive when the Board of Directors is engaged and actively contributes to the organization's wellness. This introductory-level workshop will review the classic roles and responsibilities of board members and discuss how peer values fit in. Anyone is welcome to attend. This is strongly encouraged for anyone considering running for the VOCAL Board of Directors.

(1.5 CE hours)

Self-Compassion and the Shared Human Condition with Bently Wood

Shenandoah B

This workshop will discuss the three elements of self-compassion: self-kindness (vs. self-judgement), common humanity (vs. isolation), and mindfulness (vs. over-identification). We will learn its value to mental and emotional wellness.

(1.5 CE hours)

**Hearing Voices Network: More Than Just Hearing Voices
with Stephen Dawe**

Madison Room

Come learn about the history of the Hearing Voices Network, which includes the three freedoms: to interpret your experience in any way, to challenge social norms, and to talk about anything, not just voices and visions. Hearing Voices Network has a no judgment approach, embracing no assumption of illness, use of plain, non-clinical language, and sharing of experiences. (1.5 CE hours)

**What Do You Mean I Can Call Off?
with Don Johnson**

Shenandoah C

The Department of Defense encourages service members to seek mental health services if they need it, but does the chain of command? What happens when they do, or if they do not? When that service member separates from the military and that structure and discipline are gone, what happens to them then? Walk along with Don in his journey of recovery, from soldier to civilian, through mental health, substance use, suicidality, the justice system, and treatment. This workshop will be useful to those who work with and care for veterans, or would like to better understand some specific challenges faced by veterans. (1.5 CE hours)

2:45 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.

VOCAL Annual Meeting

Shenandoah C

This year we will celebrate where we have been and where we are headed. Elections will be held for five Director positions. We ask all members to be present to exercise their rights as voting members.

4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

**Street Outreach and Wellbeing with Ragan McManus
and Nicky Fadley**

Shenandoah C

Harrisonburg's Strength in Peers, in partnership with the local Continuum of Care, operates a Street Outreach program that addresses issues surrounding homelessness, substance use, mental health, and trauma-related experiences. This workshop highlights what it takes to conduct street outreach, and showcases how meeting people where they are leads to empowerment and recovery. Workshop participants will complete their own Strength in Peers Wellness Plan, which is used by the organization when conducting one-on-one peer support sessions with participants. (1.5 CE hours)

**Movin' and Groovin' 2 Combat the Blues
with Myra Anderson**

Madison Room

Feeling blue? Let's move! Many people are familiar with the awesome feeling we get from spending time on the dance floor. Did you know that the physical movement of dance can actually help reduce depression, stress, and anxiety, and increase a sense of connectedness? This lively and active workshop will examine the scientific explanation behind mood-boosting movement, and the positive effects that dance/movement have on our mental health. Participants will learn practical ways to use dance/movement to improve mental well-being. We will be movin' and groovin' to fun, upbeat tunes! So put on your boogie shoes and come ready to bust a move! (1.5 CE hours)

Community Employment Recovery Project with Rick Gilbert Blue Ridge Room

Since its conception in 2007, Recovery Services (MPNN RS), the 100% peer run division at the Middle Peninsula-Northern Neck Community Services Board, has developed a thriving assisted employment program. In June of this year, the Office of Recovery Services at DBHDS selected MPNN RS for grant funding to develop a pilot program with the goal of assisting individuals with felony histories to find competitive employment. Offenders reentering society face many obstacles to success outside prison. Many are eager to find work, a place to live, and a means of transportation, but find these basic ingredients for success difficult to acquire. The barriers that they face can be frustrating and demoralizing, often leading many to revert to a life of crime as a means of supporting themselves and their families. We postulated that, if we removed the transportation barrier and made no secret of our candidates' past transgressions, many hiring authorities, anxious to fill positions, would welcome our referrals. During this moderated workshop, raw contact numbers will be outlined for those who might consider a similar undertaking. Recruiters from the project will share successes and challenges they have encountered, and attendees will hear from candidates who were employed during this project. www.wannawork.us (1.5 CE hours)

REVIVE! Training with Rachel Kline

Shenandoah B

REVIVE! is the Opioid Overdose and Naloxone Education (OONE) program for the Commonwealth of Virginia. Currently, REVIVE! provides training on how to recognize and respond to an opioid overdose emergency with the administration of Naloxone (Narcan®). This training covers understanding opioids, how opioid overdoses happen, risk factors for opioid overdoses, and how to respond to an opioid overdose emergency with the administration of Naloxone. (1.5 CE hour)

5:45 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Dinner

Shenandoah Ballrooms

6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

12 Step Meeting

Madison Room

LGBTQ+ Meet-up

Mezzanine

REVIVE! Training

Blue Ridge Room

7:30 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.

Dance Party and Karaoke with DJ Jeff Roher

Shenandoah Ballrooms

Tuesday

7:30 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.

Breakfast

Shenandoah Ballrooms

9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Finding Connection with Families with Laura May

Blue Ridge Room

The family support movement has begun. Come learn the basics of how to work with family members to support peers. Have you wondered how to help family members understand and support peers in their recovery? Key points will include: family perspective taking, resources for families, understanding the recovery process for families, and some common barriers. (1.5 CE hours)

**Hope in Christ in the Midst of Suffering
with Meredith Bond**

Shenandoah B

Meredith will give a brief presentation before participants break off into small prayer/hope groups to explore faith-based practices helpful for dealing with chronic pain. Workshop participants will explore how deformative suffering can become transformative, discover that working as a community can soothe wounds, and discern how to interpret suffering through biblical understandings. There will also be centering exercises helpful for healing. (1.5 CE hours)

Self-Care with Ellen Vann-Caldwell

Shenandoah C

This seminar will help participants better understand how to care for and love themselves. Self-care will be defined and experienced through such activities as goal setting, affirmations, relaxation techniques, journaling, hobbies, etc. This brief seminar aims to open avenues to individual explorations of self-care. (1.5 CE hours)

Creating Safer Spaces for LGBTQ+ Peers with Ryan Tempesco and Marty Grizzle

Madison Room

Do you want to know more about how to be an ally to LGBTQ+ individuals, including ways to create more inclusive environments in your agency or support groups? Statistically, we know that bullying, health disparities, stigma, and discrimination create both stress and barriers to care. In this interactive workshop we will answer your questions, explore the language we use, and consider our inherited ideas about gender and sexuality. (1.5 CE hours)

10:45 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

Beethoven and Bipolar: An Exploration of Music and the Brain with Savannah Hatcher

Shenandoah B

Using Beethoven's Waldstein Piano Sonata, we will explore the wide range of emotions expressed in the composition and how they could be a manifestation of Beethoven's unique brain chemistry. We will then create our own music in a group experience as a way of expressing our emotions through music, learning basic improvisation skills. (1.5 CE hour)

Ethics with Mary McQuown

Blue Ridge Room

Name a profession and you will find they have a Code of Ethics that guides their work. Peer support is no exception. Certified Peer Recovery Specialists (CPRS) have a Code of Ethics that they agree to abide by. There are boundaries within peer support work. This workshop will introduce participants to the Code of Ethics for Peer Recovery Specialists. (1.5 CE hour)

Evolution of Me, You, and US with Mary Alyce Poole Madison Room

The hope of recovery is often at the root of peers' personal journeys. Mary Alyce will share her personal journey, including how others have contributed along the way. The audience, whether at the beginning their journey or already on their way, will be encouraged to share their journeys as well. We will have small group discussions on HOPE, helping yourself then helping others, and overcoming barriers that get in the way. (1.5 CE hour)

**Creating Positive Change: Substance Use Disorder and Recovery
with Kathy Harkey and Katherine McKenzie**

Shenandoah C

This workshop will address dual diagnosis: the co-occurrence of substance use disorder and mental health in an individual. It will provide an interactive learning environment offering information on substance use disorder and recovery. Participants will receive information on creating positive change through advocacy and partnerships. Tangible resources will be provided to participants. (1.5 CE hours)

12:15 p.m. – 1:15 p.m

Lunch

Shenandoah Ballrooms

1:30 p.m.–3:00 p.m.

**Understanding and Contracting with Managed Care
with Pamela Binkley**

Blue Ridge Room

If your agency has ever thought about contracting with a managed care organization (MCO), this workshop is for you. You will leave with knowledge of the ins and outs of contracting with a MCO: how managed care works, how to identify what programs you offer that might be funded, the pros and cons of working with managed care, and what steps are needed to move forward. (1.5 CE hour)

**Going from Good to Great: Effects of Compassion Fatigue
in Professionals with Jennie Amison**

Shenandoah C

Studies show that caregivers play host to a high level of compassion fatigue. Day in, day out, people in the helping profession can struggle to function in care-giving environments that constantly present an emotional challenge. In this profession, we try to affect a positive change in society, a mission so vital to those passionate about caring for others, it is sometimes perceived as elusive, if not impossible. Working in a caregiver capacity can take its toll on everyone – from full-time employees to part-time volunteers. (1.5 CE hour)

**Hope Fiendz CD Project: Peer-Driven Community Inclusion
Project with Larry Almarode**

Shenandoah B

Friends 4 Recovery Whole Health Center (Chesterfield County), was awarded a grant in the spring of 2018 to provide awareness and prevention of the opioid epidemic. In a multi-faceted response, one outcome of the grant was a CD with twelve Richmond area musicians performing songs based on the recovery stories of those with lived experience of opioid use disorder. We would like to share the lessons learned through this project with the peer community at large. (1.5 CE hours)

**Writing an Effective Opinion Piece with Jessica Daggett
and Malaina Poore**

Madison Room

If you've got a way with words, one of the most effective means of advocacy is the opinion piece. Whether it's an op-ed in a traditional newspaper, a blog post, or a think piece for an online news site soliciting stories, some of the best opinion pieces persuasively combine personal experience and factual evidence to garner support of and encourage insight about a topic or claim. Join Malaina Poore and Jessica Daggett, who have backgrounds in the written arts, to discuss how anyone can construct an effective and successful opinion piece. (1.5 CE hours)

3:00 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.

Closing Remarks

Shenandoah Ballrooms

Thank you for your participation in this year's conference.
We couldn't do it without you!

PRESENTERS and STAFF

Larry Almarode has served as Executive Director of Friends 4 Recovery Whole Health Center, a peer-run wellness and education center in Chesterfield County, for the past 4 years. He currently serves as the Vice President of the Virginia Behavioral Health Advisory Council, having previously served as their secretary. Larry is a Virginia DBHDS “train the trainer” and a peer supervisor for peer recovery support specialists. He has worked as a peer navigator for the Arlington County CSB and Magellan Health. Larry served as a subject matter expert for the International Certification & Reciprocity Consortium (IC&RC), where he was part of the team that developed the test currently used for peer certification in Virginia. Larry has lived experience with mental health challenges, but he is also a friend and family member of those dealing with SA issues, having lost his fiancée to alcoholism.

Jennie Amison is currently employed with the Virginia Department of Corrections as an Offender Workforce Development Specialist at Coffeewood Correctional Center in Mitchells. She holds a Bachelor’s degree in Special Education from Norfolk State University, and a Master’s degree in Education Administration from Strayer. She is a certified as a: Substance Abuse Counselor, Advance Alcohol and Drug Counselor, Corrections Manager, General Instructor with DCJS, and Certified Peer Recovery Coach. Jennie is also a Dialogue Practitioner and has been trained by the Matrix Institute in Matrix Outpatient Substance Abuse Treatment. She is currently working on a second Master’s degree in Human Resource Management. She enjoys spending time with family and helping others.

Myra Anderson is a hip-hop dance instructor, certified fitness instructor, social justice activist, social entrepreneur, spoken word poet, and motivational speaker. A native of Charlottesville, Myra has been on the journey of mental, emotional, and physical wellness since she was 11 years old. She is the founder of Brave Souls on Fire, which is dedicated to bringing forth the power of poetic and artistic expression.

Myra is a Peer Recovery Specialist, Certified Health Coach, presenter for In Our Own Voice (NAMI), and chair of the Peer Advocacy Council with Region 10. A member of the Descendent Advisory Committee of Monticello, Myra enjoys reading, writing poetry, dancing, karaoke, playing Scrabble, and UVA basketball. She also likes spending time with her adorable nephew, Kingston.

Pamela J Binkley, MS, is the manager at Recovery and Resiliency FL and WA, and joined Optum in April 2008 after 20 years of experience in behavioral health. Ms. Binkley plays a key role in the development of peer support and community-based, non-traditional services, and advocates on behalf of consumers as services and policies/procedures are developed around behavioral health. Her experience includes working/supervising in a variety of capacities with community-based programs, psychiatric rehabilitation, drop-in/peer support centers, Certified Peer Support Services, and Supported Housing and Employment. Ms. Binkley is certified to teach Youth and Adult Mental Health First Aid, QPR, WRAP, Seeking Safety, and other evidence-based or best practice curricula.

Meredith Bond began teaching in 2008, and later graduated Magna Cum Laude with a Bachelor in Fine Arts from VCU in 2015, shortly before opening her business, Grace Wins Explorative Arts, LLC. She is currently halfway through her studies at Union Presbyterian Seminary, where she is pursuing her Master of Arts in Christian Education. Meredith desires to continue combining her background in the arts with Christian education to assist those who are suffering to find peace and healing.

Erin Crettier spent five years in retail management, and then began volunteering for VOCAL in November, 2016. A passion for mental health advocacy and social justice led her to VOCAL's offices. She graduated from VCU in 2007 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre: Costume Design. Erin currently resides in Richmond and is the Operations Manager for VOCAL.

Jessica Daggett is a Registered Peer Recovery Specialist and currently works for Magellan Complete Care of Virginia. Previous to that, she was a Peer Recovery Navigator for Magellan Health's GAP program and worked at the Hampton-Newport News CSB in various capacities. She received a Master in English Studies at Illinois State University, has taught composition at the university level, and freelanced as a reporter for Hampton Roads' Daily Press. Jessica also serves on VOCAL's Board of Directors.

Stephen Dawe has faced many challenges during his life. His long journey of recovery has turned into a process of transformation. For the past 12 years he has worked as a peer specialist in the mental health care system. During those years, Stephen accomplished many things he thought were impossible for him. His life, while not absent of struggle, is filled with family, friends, and a sense of purpose. He has been involved in advocacy with a number of organizations. He is grateful for his family and friends, and to the people who have honored him by walking with him as a peer specialist. All of these people have taught Stephen many valuable lessons. He currently co-facilitates a weekly online Hearing Voices Network USA group.

Nicky Fadley is the founder and Executive Director at Strength in Peers in Harrisonburg. Grounded in her lived experience with mental health recovery and overcoming trauma, she focuses on developing peer recovery support programs and advocating for individuals who struggle with behavioral health challenges. Nicky has over 12 years of experience in nonprofit public health, including seven years in grant writing and program management.

Rick Gilbert went to work for the Middle Peninsula-Northern Neck CSB in 2010 as a peer counselor in the Substance Abuse Department. He became their Forensic Peer Specialist in 2011 and conducted groups for legally involved persons for the next seven years, including a 12-month therapeutic community at Northern Neck Regional Jail and weekly Motivational Enhancement groups on behalf of District 33 Probation and Parole. For five of those years, Rick was also the co-facilitator of Parenting With Love and Limits (PLL), an evidence-based group therapy for legally involved teens and their families. Rick completed the first Certified Peer Recovery Specialist training offered in the Commonwealth, is a certified CIT Trainer and served as Secretary of the Behavioral Health Advisory Council for 2012-13. Last year, Rick celebrated 10 years in recovery from alcoholism, narcotic addiction, and clinical depression. He has a teenage daughter in her first year at UVA and lives with his wife in Lancaster County.

Marty Grizzle is a Peer Recovery Coach who works at Mount Rogers Community Services Board. Marty also serves as a WRAP Facilitator and WRAP Advanced Level Facilitator. He is the chairperson for Consumer Empowerment Recovery Education Council (CEREC) in Southwest Virginia and Vice President of the VOCAL Board of Directors.

Kathy Harkey is the Executive Director of SAARA of Virginia. Prior to joining SAARA, she was the Executive Director for NAMI-CVA. Kathy is a mental health and substance use disorder trainer. Kathy holds a Master's degree in Public Policy and a certificate in nonprofit management. She completed her internship in biogenetic research at VCU, and is the recipient of several awards.

Savannah Hatcher is a Richmond based violinist, pianist, and vocalist who produces and releases her own original songs and music videos. Savannah combines her training as a classical musician with her experience as an improviser and entrepreneur to create classical-pop crossover music about social issues, her struggle living with Bipolar Disorder, and her love of science fiction and fantasy stories. Savannah's videos are available via YouTube and her music is available on iTunes, Google Play, and Spotify. Her music has been featured on CBS6 and PBS. Her music video, "The Glass Ceiling," has been selected for and featured in many film festivals, including World Peace Initiative Cannes, Colorado International Activism Festival, Life Screenings, and Online Global Peace Film Festival. Savannah began her career as a classical musician, receiving a classical piano performance degree at VCU. In addition to her career as a musical artist, Savannah teaches classical and commercial piano and violin through her own studio, composes scores for film and theatre, and works as a freelance recording studio musician and arranger.

Deidre Johnson is the Executive Director of VOCAL. She previously held the position of Interim Executive Director and prior to that, Operations Manager. She has the unique firsthand experience of organizing the business of a statewide non-profit, as well as, a firm knowledge of recovery and peer empowerment. Deidre has been with VOCAL since 2012. She is also the founder of a nonprofit, The Ayden Christopher Foundation, which raises funds to help families in Virginia with children in the hospital with critical congenital heart defects (CHD) and to promote awareness of CHDs. Deidre has completed Peer Recovery Specialist training, Peer Recovery Specialist Supervisor training, and is working on a Certificate of Non-Profit Leadership.

Don Johnson holds an Associate degree in Applied Science from Lord Fairfax Community College and is currently pursuing his BS in Sociology. He is a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist, a WRAP(R) Facilitator, and a Peer Support Whole Health and Resiliency Facilitator. Don also has completed Mental Health First Aid training, is a Crisis Intervention Team instructor, sits on the Doors2Wellbeing National Youth Advisory Council as the veteran representative, and is also a member of the iNAPS Youth and Young Adult Peer Support Committee.

Before coming to VOCAL, Don served over two years as a Peer Recovery Specialist for the Program of Assertive Community Treatment team at Northwestern Community Services Board in Winchester and as Outreach Coordinator for Strength in Peers in Woodstock. A veteran of the United States Army, SGT Johnson served as a medic on posts worldwide, but most particularly was deployed to Baghdad, Iraq in October 2007 through January 2009 with the 86th Combat Support Hospital to the famed Baghdad ER.

Rachel Kline is a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist at Harrisonburg–Rockingham Community Services Board working with peers who struggle with substance use and homelessness. Not only is Rachel a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist, she is also a WRAP (R) Facilitator, Revive Trainer, and a Peer Whole Health and Resiliency Facilitator. She began her career working as a Nurse’s Aide for several years at various agencies and then found her calling as a Peer Recovery Specialist at Northwestern Community Services Board in November 2017. She worked within the Opioid Agonist Treatment (OBOT) Team training those within the program how to respond to an opioid overdose with REVIVE!

Rachel was born and raised in Harrisonburg, Virginia. Rachel lost her mother to the opioid epidemic in 2016 and has found this event as motivation to flourish within her community to educate, advocate and share her experiences to make a difference.

Yolande Long is VOCAL’s Network Program Coordinator, and has been a member of the VOCAL staff since 2005. Yolande holds a Master of Social Work degree from VCU, and is the former Executive Director of ABIL (Agoraphobics Building Independent Lives). Married and the mother of three grown children, with two granddaughters and a daughter-in-law, Yolande enjoys spending lots of time with her growing family and her two dogs. She can also most often be found with her nose in a book.

Laura May is the Director of Child and Youth Programs at NAMI and the Director of Virginia Family Network, the statewide parent network. She began working in the corrections field, educating officers on suicide prevention and promoting mental wellness. Laura’s personal and familial experiences led her to volunteer roles, where she used her lived experience to help parents navigate the special education system while in Arizona. Once in Virginia, she connected with NAMI and began sharing her story with legislators and families with mental health needs through NAMI’s educational programming. She carried that work further as the Regional Family Lead for UMFS under the Systems of Care grant. Laura is excited to continue to use her experiences to support and empower families across the state.

Katherine McKenzie works out of the SAARA Center as a Peer Recovery Specialist with AliveRVA in Richmond, VA. She attended Virginia Commonwealth University and worked for I Heart Radio. Mrs. McKenzie uses her lived experiences to assist peers in their recovery process. Through her work with CIT, she educates Henrico County's first responders using her story of recovery to help reduce the stigma of addiction and to provide information on available resources provided by SAARA of Virginia. Katherine presents Voices of Recovery to peers at the RBHA Crisis Stabilization Unit where she offers insight into her own personal recovery journey to let peers know that recovery is possible. Mrs. McKenzie presents "Hidden in Plain Sight," an initiative by the Henrico County Sheriff's Office, educating parents on signs of drug use and what to do if they find that their children are abusing substances.

Ragan McManus is a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist who serves as Director of Operations with Strength in Peers. Ragan joined the team in 2017 and has provided peer support through the organization's many programs. She is a trained Supervisor of Peer Recovery Specialists and utilizes various recovery models, including 12-step recovery, WRAP(R) sober for over 10 years.

Mary McQuown, MA, CPRS, has over 20 years' experience in the behavioral health field. She spent a decade as a Virginia advocate at the local and state level. She has seven years experience in training and supervising peer providers with Recovery Innovations. Ms. McQuown is the Peer Recovery Specialist Liaison in the Office of Recovery Services, DBHDS.

Heather Orrock is the Co-OPP Program Director/Development Director at VOCAL. As the Co-OPP Program Director, she provides capacity building, organizational development, and technical assistance to Virginia's network of peer-run programs. As Development Director, Heather is responsible for planning, organizing, and directing all of VOCAL's fundraising activities. Heather holds a Bachelor's degree in Sociology from The College of William and Mary and is a 2010 graduate of the Emerging Nonprofit Leaders program. She is also certified in Nonprofit Board Education by BoardSource and has completed Peer Recovery Specialist training.

MaryAlyce Poole, CPRS, started the first support group in Richmond for those with bipolar illness. A graduate from Loyola University's Limex program and the Virginia Institute of Pastoral Care, she was one of the first people who worked as a peer in Chesterfield County. She was part of the Intensive Community Treatment Team, and completed the first class of WRAP(R) facilitators. Retired in 2013, she presently works part time at Chester House. Mary Alice is an author: her 2014 autobiography is "Walking in HOPE, Living in GRACE."

Malaina Poore, MA, is the Director of the VOCAL Network. She has led mental health workshops and readings in graduate psychology classrooms at James Madison University, Modern Times Bookstore in San Francisco, and many places in between. Her writing has been published in the Journal of Participatory Medicine, Amoskaeg, Mutha magazine, and other publications.

Megan Sharkey was raised in coastal New Jersey and attended undergraduate university in Pennsylvania. Knowing that she wanted to live in a city and having an uncle who is Richmond-based, Megan made the move to Virginia. Since settling in Richmond, she has worked to complete her Master of Social Work at VCU, with a concentration in Administration, Planning, and Policy Practice. Megan's interests include participating in social justice efforts, exploring other worlds through books, listening to public radio, and spending quality time with loved ones. Megan first learned of VOCAL in 2016 while interning with another local mental health organization. Megan is VOCAL's REACH Program Manager.

Ryan Tempesco is an openly transgender transition-age youth who has found peace and wellness through community support, connection, and understanding. He is the youngest Certified Peer Recovery Specialist in Virginia and is currently the Program Support Coordinator for Doors To Wellbeing National Consumer Technical Assistance Center, a program of The Copeland Center for Wellness and Recovery. He tries to bring optimism with him wherever he goes and is a constant advocate for wellness, as well as equal rights in his community.

Isata Turay was born and raised in Sierra Leone and immigrated to the United States in 1992. She has since become a U.S. citizen and has lived in Richmond since 1997. She holds a Bachelor's degree in French and Political Science from Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone, and a certificate in International Business from VCU. She is also the proud mother of a 24-year old son, who is also in Richmond. You may have already met Isata, as she has been an avid volunteer with VOCAL since 2005, and was actually on hand to help with the early VOCAL conferences. Isata is an advocate for mental health rights and the rights of girls and women.

Ellen Vann-Caldwell hails from New York, but has lived in Richmond for the past 20 years. She has a Bachelor's degree in Theology, a Master of Divinity, and a Master's degree in Christian Education from Virginia Union University. Ellen has been employed as a Family Service Worker with Richmond's Department of Social Services for the past seven years. She serves on the auxiliary and governance committees for the VOCAL Board of Directors. Ellen has two grown children, seven grandchildren, a puppy named Duck, and two cats - Cookie and Whitefeet!

Bently Wood was born and raised in the New River Valley. He was married for 22 years and has two daughters: Chelsea, 27, and Bailey, 21. Bently currently works for New River Valley Community Services as a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist and is a recent graduate of the Montgomery County Virginia Drug Court Treatment Program. He works with residential, partial hospitalization, and aftercare clients, as well as facilitating a SMART Recovery(R) group with clients at a crisis intervention facility. Bently is in recovery from substance use disorder, as well as managing mental illness. He spends his free time talking with his boyfriend, who recently relocated to Missouri, and enjoying healthy relationships with his daughters and his friends in recovery. He loves his life living as an openly gay man, working to inspire others to find hope. Gratitude in everything is the way he tries to live today. Just for today!

Heather Zelle, J.D., Ph.D., is licensed as an attorney in Pennsylvania and as a clinical psychologist in Virginia. She completed her graduate training in Drexel University's joint J.D./Ph.D. program with Villanova University School of Law. Her clinical work includes conducting forensic assessments examining psycho-legal issues such as competency to stand trial, criminal responsibility, and capacity to waive Miranda rights. Her research and policy interests include capacity to waive Miranda rights, guilty pleas, and advance health care directives with instructions for mental health care. Currently, Zelle is coordinating the research efforts regarding the integration of advance directives with instructions for mental health care into routine care in Virginia. She is also integrally involved with implementation efforts for advance directives in Virginia.

**If you need to speak to someone during the conference, we hope you will find you are surrounded by peer support. There are two warm lines available; Alive RVA Addiction Recovery Support Warm Line at 833-4PEERVA (833-473-3782), from 8am until midnight, 7 days a week, and the MHAV Warm Line 866-400-6428, which is available from M-F 9am - 9pm , Sa-Su 5pm-9pm. In a crisis, please call the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 800-273-8255.

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Monday

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Keynote Address	Shenandoah Ballrooms
12:00 p.m. – 12:45 p.m.	Lunch	Shenandoah Ballrooms
1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.	Board Roles and Responsibilities	Blue Ridge Room
	Self-Compassion & the Shared Human Condition	Shenandoah B
	Hearing Voices Network:	
	More Than Just Hearing Voices	Madison Room
	What Do You Mean I Can Call Off?	Shenandoah C
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	Community Employment Recovery Project	Blue Ridge Room
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9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	Finding Connection with Families	Blue Ridge Room
	Hope in Christ in the Midst of Suffering	Shenandoah B
	Self-Care	Shenandoah C
	Creating Safer Spaces for LGBTQ+ Peers	Madison Room
10:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.	Beethoven and Bipolar:	
	An Exploration of Music and the Brain	Shenandoah B
	Ethics	Blue Ridge Room
	Evolution of Me, You, and US	Madison Room
	Creating Positive Change:	
	Substance Use Disorder and Recovery	Shenandoah C
12:15 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.	Lunch	Shenandoah Ballrooms
1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Understanding and Contracting	
	with Managed Care	Blue Ridge Room
	Going from Good to Great: Effects of	
	Compassion Fatigue in Professionals	Shenandoah C
	Hope Fiendz CD Project: Peer-Driven	
	Community Inclusion Project	Shenandoah B
	Writing an Effective Opinion Piece	Madison Room
3:00 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.	Closing Remarks	Shenandoah Ballrooms