

National Coalition of Mental Health Consumer/Survivor Organizations

Application for Associate and Supporter Level Membership

The National Coalition of Mental Health Consumer/Survivor Organizations (NC) is pleased to make available these new membership levels. Previously, only one primary advocacy/networking organization per state was accepted as a member and there were no other membership categories. There will continue to be one primary consumer-run statewide organization per state. In addition, the NC is opening up opportunities for other groups to join the NC as either an Associate Member or a Supporter Member.

To apply for Associate and Supporter level membership, your state must already be a member of the NC. These new membership levels are being made available to facilitate development of closer working relationships between groups within a state as well as on a national level; to increase communication, collaboration, advocacy, knowledge of resources, public education efforts and tangible resources within the NC.

Organizations may apply for Associate Member status if their state is already a member of the NC. Associate members are consumer-run organizations who wish to formally join the NC.

Groups of individuals (not incorporated) may apply for Supporter Member status if their state is already a member of the NC, they are consumer-run, and they wish to formally join the NC.

Applicants for either of these membership levels should send one copy of their application to their statewide organization, and one copy to the National Coalition at info@NCMHCSO.org. To find your statewide organization go to the “members listing” at www.ncmhcsso.org. The NC statewide organization shall:

1. determine if the applicant meets the criteria for membership,
2. inform the applicant and the NC of the membership decision and dues amount,
3. accept dues payment, and
4. pass 50% of the dues on to the NC.

Annual dues for Associate Members are .1% of revenue.

Annual dues for Supporter Members are \$100.

For any questions, call the NC office -- toll free 877-246-9058 or write to info@ncmhcsso.org.

We welcome your participation – We are building our voice and our political power.

**National Association of Consumer/Survivor Organizations
Application for Associate and Supporter Level Membership**

Organization or Group Name:

Address:

City:

State:

Zip:

Director:

Phone:

E-mail:

Fax:

Organizational/Group Information. If not applicable, note "NA"

Organizational/Group structure: not-for-profit corporation (associate level)

unincorporated association (supporter level) Other (please explain) _____

___ % staff who are mental health consumer/survivors

___ % decisions made by consumer/survivors

___ % people in leadership positions who are consumer/survivors (Director, etc)

Is the Director a consumer/survivor? Yes No

___ % Board of Directors who are consumer/survivors

The agency's Board of Directors or, for Supporter Level a majority of the group membership, must agree in writing to membership in the National Coalition and support its Mission Statement, Statement of Purpose, and Principle of Respect (on reverse).

Please include a letter showing the support of your board or other governing organization or group.

Month/Year founded:

Amount of annual operating budget:

State/County/Region represented:

Number of people in your organization or group:

Explain how you network, connect and interact with consumer/survivors in your area, region or state:

Organizational Mission Statement/Group Purpose Statement: (copy here or attach)

Organizational Activities: Briefly describe the activities of your organization/group (or attach descriptive material)

Does your organization / group have any of the following peer-run programs? (check all that apply)

information & referral

employment services

education/training

systems advocacy

individual advocacy

peer counseling

self-help/ peer support

crisis alternatives

drop-in center

Organizations/Groups that meet the following requirements may request membership: (please check to indicate you qualify)

a. Run by consumer/survivors. A consumer-run organization has consumers in the majority on both its board and staff (when organization has staff).

b. Agreement with the values in the Coalition's Mission Statement, Statement of Purpose, and Principle of

Respect (attached). Membership also means that member organizations will advocate that the voice of consumer/survivors be central to decision making at all levels. Members also agree to be in regular communication with their networks and to ensure that they are inclusive and representative.

c. Willingness to participate in Coalition activities.

Send completed form to: NCMHCSO by email to: info@ncmhcsso.org and also your statewide NCMHCSO organization. Look up their address on www.ncmhcsso.org.

For more information, call toll free 877-246-9058 or visit our website: www.ncmhcsso.org

National Coalition of Mental Health Consumer/Survivor Organizations

Mission Statement

The National Coalition of Mental Health Consumer/Survivor Organizations (NCMHCSO) will ensure that consumer/survivors have a major voice in the development and implementation of health care, mental health, and social policies at the state and national levels, empowering people to recover and lead a full life in the community.

Statement of Purpose

Mental health consumers/survivors are leading the transformation of the mental health field through our authentic voice and vision for self-directed recovery. Our vision of recovery goes far beyond treatment, because it is about *all* the elements that go into good lives—housing, education, jobs, social relationships, and full participation in the community. Our vision was echoed in the New Freedom Mental Health Commission Report, which sees a “future when everyone with mental illness will recover.”

Our national coalition of organizations representing people who are recovering or have recovered proposes a new consensus for the mental health field:

- **Recovery:** Recovery is real and possible for everyone. To recover, we need services and supports that treat us with dignity, respect our rights, allow us to make choices, and provide assistance with our real-life, self-defined needs. This range of services must include consumer-run and -operated programs.
- **Self Determination:** Self-determination is essential for recovery to occur. We need to be in control of our own lives.
- **Holistic Choices:** We need choices that meet our self-defined needs. We need a wide range of recovery-oriented services and supports to assist us in achieving our goals. These include assistance with housing, education, and career development, all of which can be consumer-run. We need these opportunities to achieve full integration into the community.
- **Voice:** We must have a voice in our recovery and in the policies facilitating our recovery. We are the most authentic voice in the mental health system, since mental health decisions affect every aspect of our lives. We bring our *lived experience*, therefore, we must be central in any dialogues and decisions about mental health issues at all levels. This is empowerment.
- **Personhood:** We are whole human beings and will campaign to remove stigma and discrimination. We have the same dreams as all members of the community and the ability to make our own decisions. A barrier-free community is one free from discrimination and stigma.

Principle of Respect: The Coalition maintains an inclusive culture built on mutual respect. We keep this cornerstone principle in focus so that we may work together to advance our mission.

Rationale: The Coalition includes individuals and groups with a wide range of views on mental illness and treatment. We have chosen to focus on those things that unite us, including (among others) a belief that recovery is real and possible for everyone, that we all deserve the same rights as people are not consumer/survivors, and that we support everyone's right to make their own choices about their treatment and their life. Because we all understand our personal experiences differently, it is essential for the strength and unity of our coalition that we respect one another's choices of the words we use to describe those experiences, and of the activities we may choose to participate in (or not) in furtherance of our own wellbeing.

Therefore, as a member of the Coalition we agree to abide by the following:

When we are speaking for ourselves as individuals:

1. Each of us is free to describe his/her own personal experiences in the way(s) that feel most comfortable to that person. We will not attack, demean, or in any way speak negatively or disrespectfully to one another in regard to these personal choices.
2. We understand that people may be uncomfortable with the use of certain words, or personal decisions, and yet we will support that person's right to such personal autonomy.

When we are working together to build and run our Coalition:

3. We strive to keep our focus on the greater good of the group which is to influence the national issues affecting all of us rather than on our own personal issues.
4. We shall collaborate and cooperate in order to ensure that we continue to build a strong, unified and authentic voice of consumer/survivors.
5. We will be thoughtful of each other at all times and continuously strive to work in a positive, respectful, and trusting fashion.

When we represent the Coalition while communicating with the community outside of the Coalition:

6. We shall communicate, as appropriate, that the Coalition honors individual choice and we respect that our membership represents diverse perspectives on mental illness and treatment.
7. We will distinguish, as appropriate, our personal views from those of the Coalition so as not to misrepresent the Coalition's mission and principles.
8. We will be mindful of the impact that our behavior and language has on the community and strive to communicate a message that is consistent with our principles.

We support the consensus statement on recovery endorsed by the Federal Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov). In the emerging field of "evidence-based practice," we know from our full range of lived experiences what works *because* WE ARE THE EVIDENCE!