



# Recovery Assistants

Specialized Homecare for People with Mental  
Illness

Connecticut Mental Health Waiver

January 2018

2013 HCBS Conference  
September 16, 2013  
Arlington, VA

# Learning Objectives

## **How to...**

1. Create a Recovery Assistant service
2. Develop a training for this service
3. Identify the ways this service has benefitted the recipients

**WHEELER**

Nursing  
Homes

MFP

rebalancing

Team  
ACT

Olmshead  
decision

OPA

De-Institutionalization

Mobile  
Crisis

# Maintenance to Recovery



Maintenance



Recovery

- Then:
  - People did not believe in recovery
  - Huge hospitals to house clients
  - “Stabilize” and “Maintain”
  - Custodial care
- Now:
  - People can recover
  - Recovery is not linear, it’s a process
  - Principles of psychiatric rehabilitation model work
  - People need support in the community
  - Emphasis on skills and abilities



# SAMHSA, 2011

## Definition of Recovery

A process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential.

Source: <http://www.samhsa.gov/newsroom/advisories/1112223420.aspx>

# CT Dept. of Mental Health (DMHAS)

## Interpretation of Recovery

- *We endorse a broad vision of recovery that involves a process of restoring or developing a positive and meaningful sense of identity apart from one's condition*
  - ***Who am I?***
- *and a meaningful sense of belonging while rebuilding a life despite or within the limitations imposed by that condition.*
  - ***Where do I fit in the world around me?***

Source: CT Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services

# So what is a “**Recovery Assistant**”?

- The Fine Print:
  - **A flexible range of supportive assistance provided face-to-face** in accordance with a Waiver Recovery Plan that enables a participant to maintain a home/apartment, encourages the use of existing natural supports, and fosters involvement in social and community activities. Service activities include: performing household tasks, providing instructive assistance, or cuing to prompt the participant to carry out tasks (e.g., meal preparation; routine household chores, cleaning, laundry, shopping, and bill-paying; and participation in social and recreational activities), and; providing supportive companionship. The Recovery Assistant may also provide instruction or cuing to prompt the participant to dress appropriately and perform basic hygiene functions; supportive assistance and supervision of the participant, and; short-term relief in the home for a participant who is unable to care for himself/herself when the primary caregiver is absent or in need of relief.

Source: Application for 1915 (c) HCBS Waiver: CT.0653.R01.00

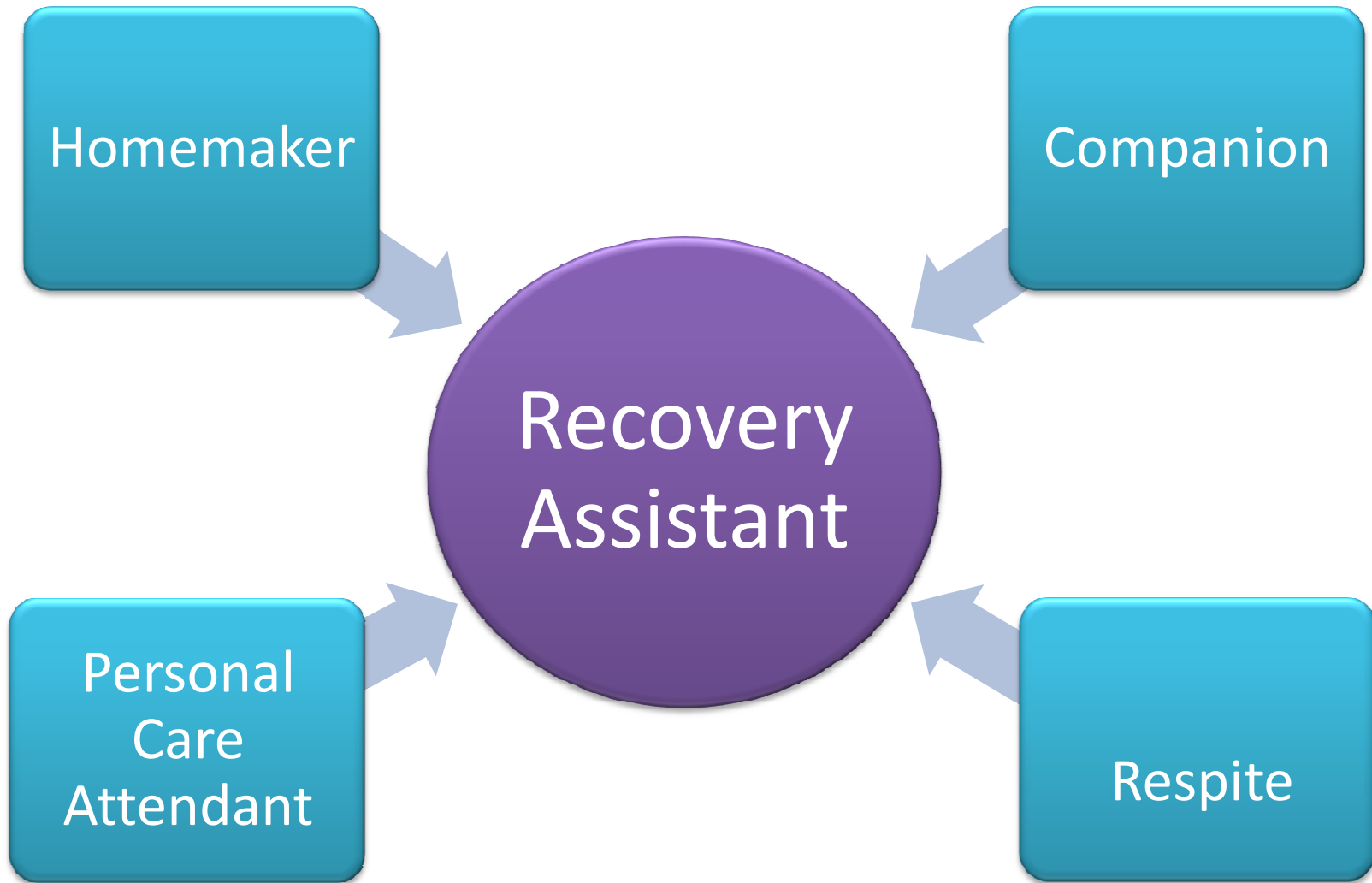
- In Plain English:
  - Staff **cues**, **prompts** and **assists** an individual in his/her recovery from Severe Mental Illness
  - This service teaches **skills**, instead of “doing for”
  - All actions **centered on the person**, not the diagnosis!

# What does a **Recovery Assistant** do?

- Based on principles of *psychiatric rehabilitation*
- Combination of multiple services
  - 1 staff performing 4 functions
- Helps the client learn skills to live independently in the community
  - Cooking, cleaning, budgeting, social integration
- Works with clients who exhibit both **positive** and **negative** symptoms of mental illness



# Combination of Services



# RA Job Description

- Assist, cue and prompt clients by (i.e., billable):



- Increasing life skills (e.g., meal prep, cleaning, budgeting)



- Decreasing risky behavior & substance abuse

- Teaching to schedule and attend appointments



- Acting as a companion and support system

- RAs cannot bill for:

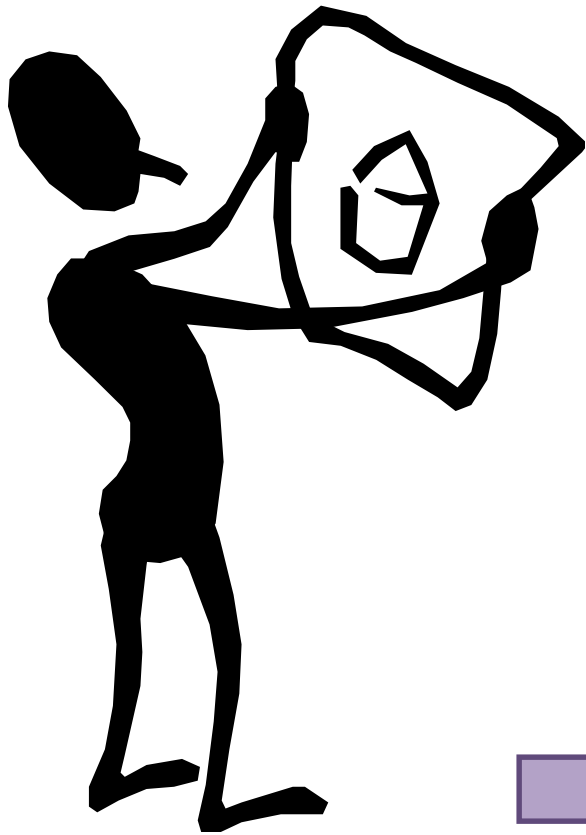
- Telephone contact

- No shows, cancellations

- Anything where the client is not present

- Transporting clients

# How to Build the RA Service





# Marketing/ Outreach

- Recruited providers from all areas of the state
  - PNPs, behavioral health agencies and state-operated facilities
  - The provider determines its service area
- Hired an Outreach & Engagement Specialist
- Numerous training and informational sessions
- Mailings to probate courts
- Pens, sticky notes, etc.



# Credentialing Requirements

## Provider

- Accredited by CARF, Joint Commission, CHAP or other approved agency
- Credentialed by ABH
- Enroll as a Medicaid billing provider
- Provide supervision by a licensed clinician
- Re-credentialed every two years

## Staff

- 18 years old
- HS diploma or GED
- Valid CT driver's license
- **Complete RA Training**
- Complete 6 hours a year of post-education training

# RA Training Process

- **Original Process (2009-2013)**
  - Initially an in-person training of two classes
  - Participants required score  $\geq 80\%$  on 33 question exam
- **Current Process (2013- present)**
  - Mandatory online module
    - Must score  $\geq 80\%$  on 20 question exam
  - Mandatory in-person one day training
    - Must score  $\geq 80\%$  on 22 question exam





# RA Training

- ABH has conducted 136 trainings to date
- Over 1,000 individuals trained to date
- The training has received an average satisfaction score of over 90%

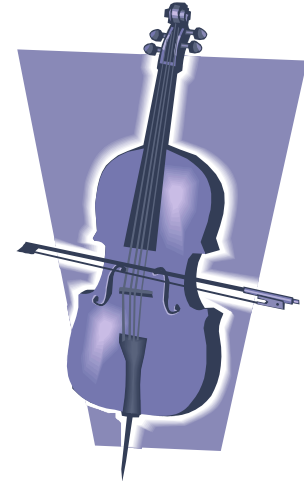


# RA Role – A paradigm shift

A Recovery Assistant should:

- Use motivational interviewing techniques to encourage the individual to work towards their personal goals, dreams, hopes and aspirations.
- Assist the individual to do for themselves rather than “do for” the individual. Try and know their limits
- Work towards self empowerment; use their name, and ask for their input and assume they are listening.
- Be empathetic, not sympathetic to the individual’s situation and remain professional at all times.
- Always consider professional boundaries at all times when working with the individual.
- ***Always treat the individual as a person not as a diagnosis.***

# The Soloist



*One day I asked about his hopes and dreams.*

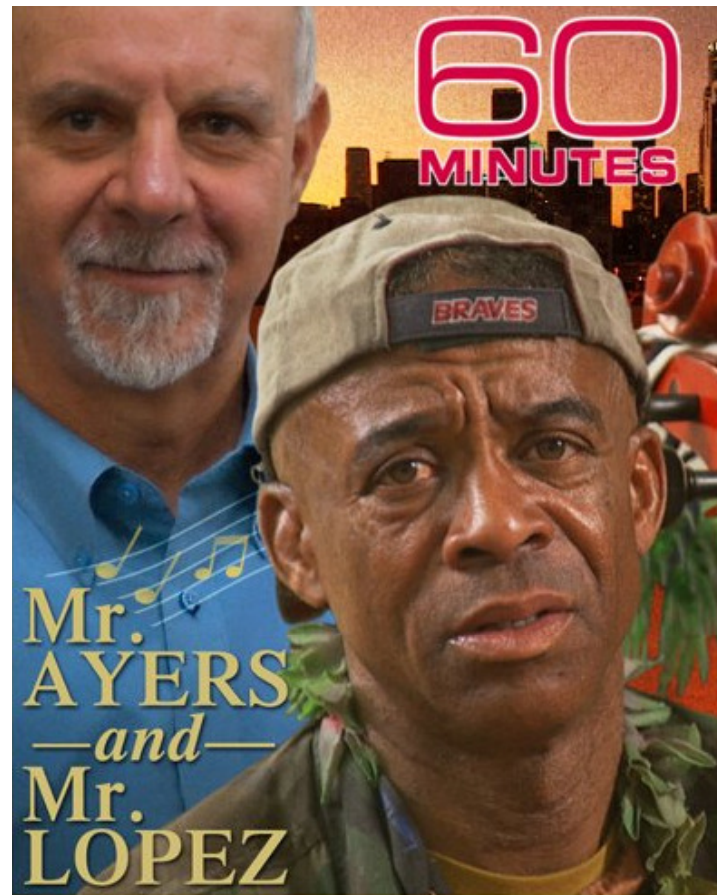
*"Oh, that's easy," [Nathaniel] said. "I need to get these other two strings, but I don't have the money right now."*

*He had no use for a house, he said, or a car or anything else.*

*"All I want is to play music, and the crisis I'm having is right here," Nathaniel said, pointing to the missing strings*

Source: <http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/la-me-lopez17apr17,0,4390036,full.column>

The Soloist, Steve Lopez



- “Mr. Ayers and Mr. Lopez”
- Originally aired March 22, 2009
  - CBS 60 Minutes

*Source: 60 Minutes home video*

*Photo Source: Amazon.com*

# Basic RA Training Curriculum

## Online (Day One)

- More fact-based content
- General introduction to the MH Waiver
- Pass exam with  $\geq 80\%$

## In-Person (Day Two)

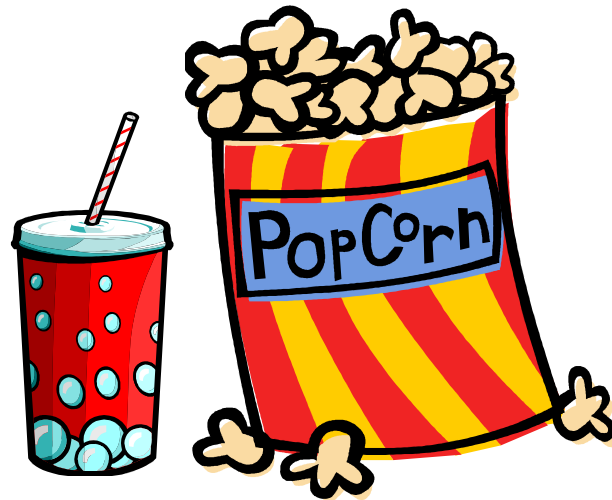
- More interactive
- Sections presented by experts in each field
- Activities generate discussion on gray areas such as boundaries and handling unusual situations
- Pass a second exam with  $\geq 80\%$

# In-Person Agenda

9:00 to 9:30	Introduction/Role of the RA
9:30 to 10:00	Boundaries
10:00-10:30	Wellness
10:30 to 11:30	Providing Support
11:30- 11:45	Documentation
11:45 – 12:30	Lunch
12:30-1:30	Mental Health
1:30-2:15	Group Activity scenarios
2:15-2:30	Review- Jeopardy
2:30-3:00	Test/Evaluation



# Sample Video



- “Is schizophrenia linked to violent behavior?”
- Originally aired Jan 31, 2013
  - CBS Evening News with Scott Pelley

Source: <http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=50140154n>

# Post Education



- All Recovery Assistants are required to complete **six hours** of post education every year after certification
  - Starting in 2012, all RA's must attend a boundaries training conducted by ABH once every two years
- ABH has provided training in boundaries, diabetes, wellness, active listening and toolkit building



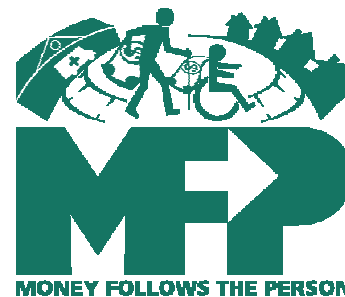
# **How have clients benefitted?**

**Research on the impact of the  
Recovery Assistant service in  
the MH Waiver**

# Research/Data



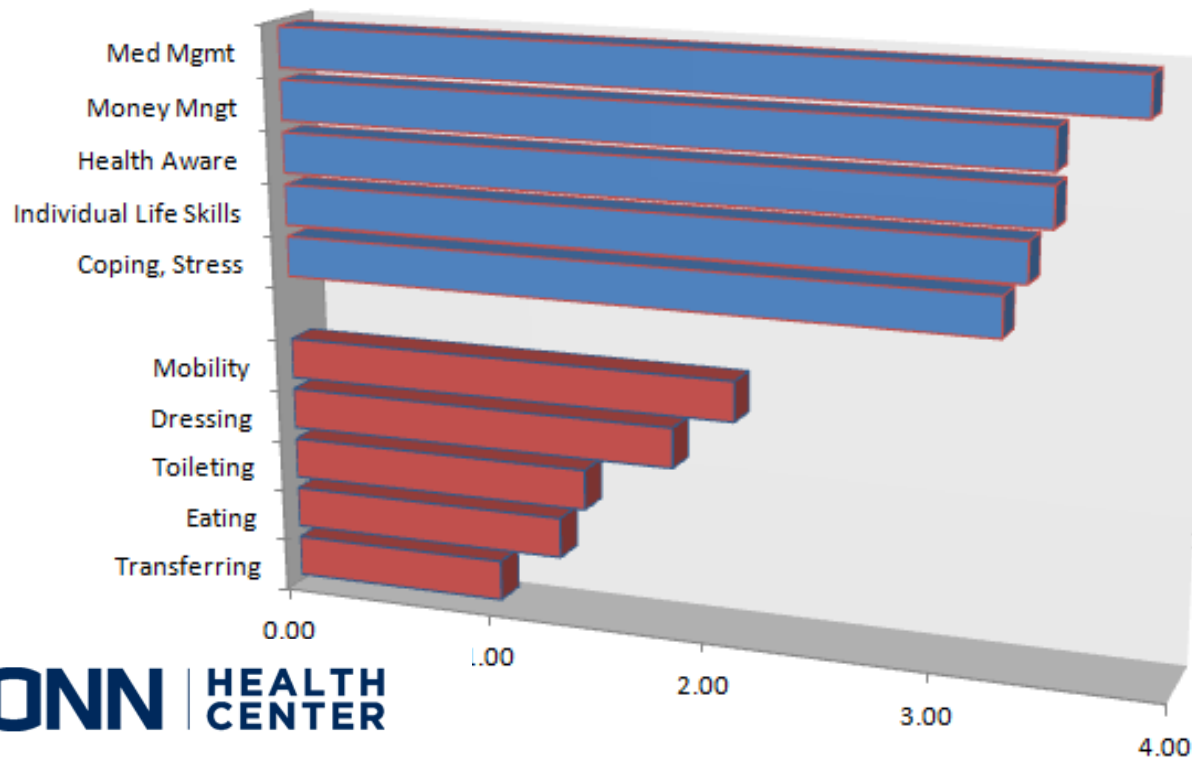
- CT DMHAS contracted with UCONN Health Center researchers to evaluate the MH Waiver
- CT Dept. of Social Services (DSS) contracted with UCONN Health Center to evaluate Money Follows the Person (MFP)
  - Note: Clients on MFP transition to the MHW after 365 days



# UConn Research

- UCONN validated that MHW clients failed in the past due to lack of life skills

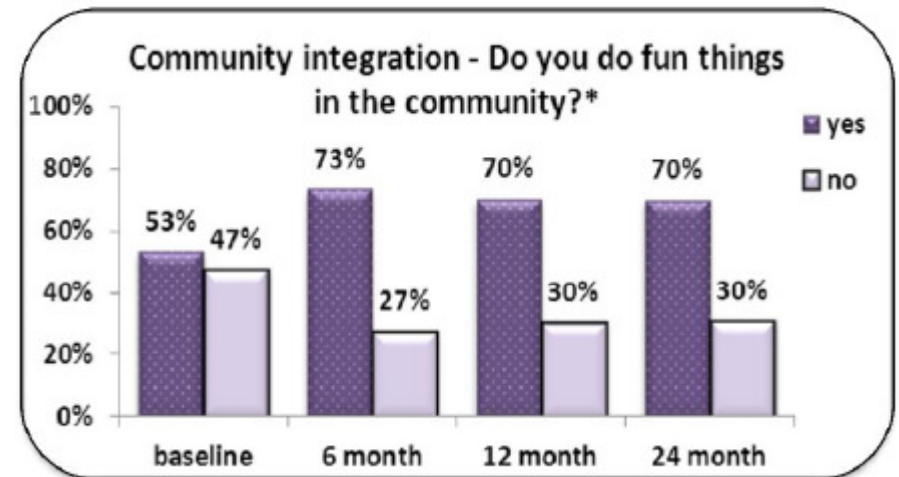
**Levels of Assistance (LOA)**



# MFP Research

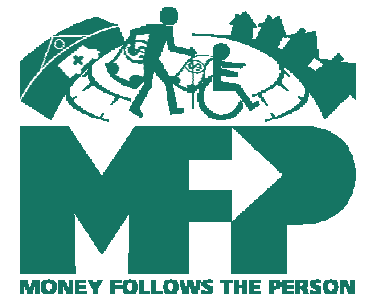


**57%** increase after SNF discharge



Note: Baseline assessments were conducted while client was still in SNF

Source: MFP Quality of Life (QOL) Dashboard, UCONN Center on Aging

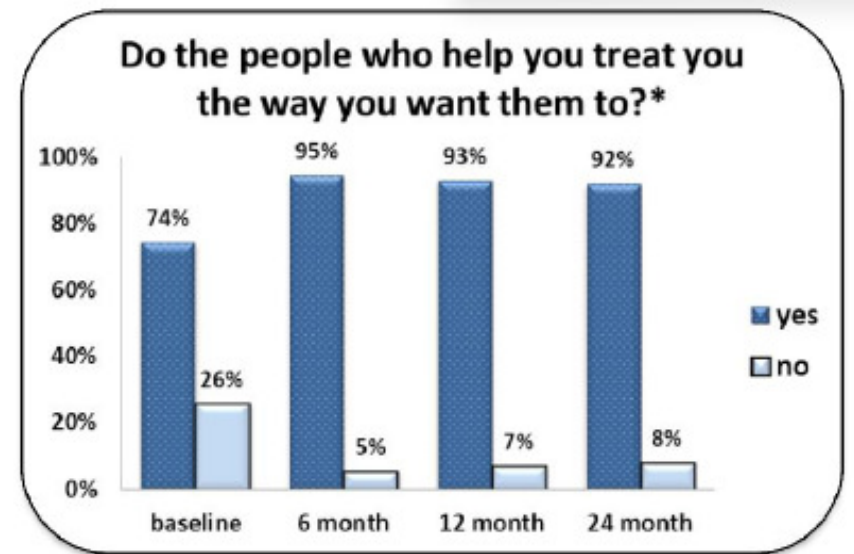




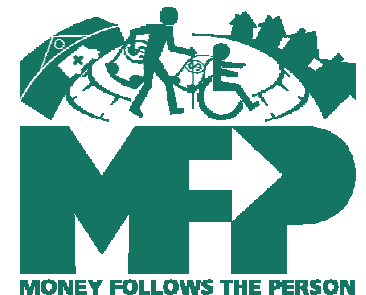
# MFP Research (cont.)



**23% increase**



Source: MFP Quality of Life (QOL) Dashboard, UCONN Center on Aging



# Actual client receiving RA services

DMHAS MII Waiver  
Working for Integration Support and Empowerment

Date of Status Reviews: 6/18/13 8/19/13

To :  
FRO:  
Client:  
EMS:  
Disco:

**Comments:**  
**MIKE HAS DONE GREAT WITH WAIVER SUPPORT SERVICES! HE IS NOW INDEPENDENT W/ ALL ADL'S & NO LONGER MEETS NURSING HOME LOC.**

Date of the event resulting in the discontinuance recommendation:

Death:  Admission to LTC:  Nursing Facility

Other: 8/21/13

Date of Status Reviews: 6/18/13 8/19/13

Comments:  
MIKE HAS DONE GREAT WITH WAIVER SUPPORT SERVICES! HE IS NOW INDEPENDENT W/ ALL ADL'S & NO LONGER MEETS NURSING HOME LOC.

FOR DSS USE ONLY	REASON CODES
Discontinuance Date:	1. Died
Comments:	2. Hospital stay > 90 days
	3. Became financially ineligible
	4. Became ineligible for level of care
	5. Care plan exceeds Social Services cost limit

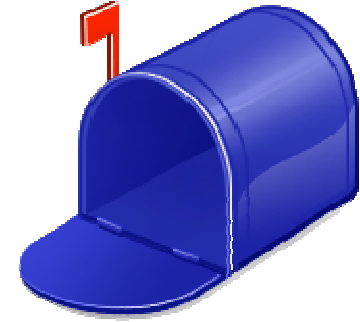
**Recovery!!!**

# Waiver Data

January 2018

- 1,046 Served to date
- 593 Currently Active
- 569 (~96%) currently receiving RA service
- *Clients receive ~20-25 hours per week of RA service*

# Take Home



- People can recover
- Recovery means having a meaningful life
- Use psychiatric rehab principles
- Recovery Assistants teach skills and abilities

**Use Recovery Assistants!**

# For more information...

## MH Waiver homepage (DMHAS)

<http://www.ct.gov/dmhas/cwp/view.asp?a=2902&Q=425724&PM=1>

## MH Waiver Referral Form

<http://www.ct.gov/dmhas/lib/dmhas/MHWaiver/MHWrequestform.pdf>

## Fiscal Intermediary (ABH)

[http://www.abhct.com/Programs\\_Services/WISE/Forms\\_and\\_Resources/](http://www.abhct.com/Programs_Services/WISE/Forms_and_Resources/)