

**WCMHN – Waterbury Area, Family Group Information provided by Simie Whalen, Clinical Director, WCMHN-Waterbury**

- Energetic and committed Family Steering Committee with representation from across the agency – at least 10 people participate
  - The committee meets every other week most of the time and weekly when a Family Night is coming up.
  - Families/consumers are not on the committee currently, but they are planning to do this.
  - All clients receive a letter upon intake from the Family Committee and all members of the Committee sign these letters.
  - Conduct a family needs assessment each year
- Family Night every quarter
  - Advertised by fliers and multiple phone calls to clients/families
  - Topics have included Depression, Schizophrenia, Residential Programs, Mobile Crisis and Forensic Services, Commissioner Rehmer, Larry Davidson
  - Participation usually includes anywhere from 15 – 55 clients/families
  - Have it in the drop-in center; comfortable
  - Greet everyone at the front door
  - Staff in the parking lot to greet/direct
  - Introduce committee members to the group
  - 4-5 other staff come on their own time
  - Eat first and committee members are at the meeting and eat too
  - Rolling resource cart with MH/SA literature
  - A lot of children come, so have glitter, markers, stickers available
  - Provide transportation home
  - It's not family treatment
  - Families are very thankful
  - Follow up individually with families/clients as needed with individual sessions
- After the first year of Family Nights, started twice a month Multifamily Groups
  - Recruit people from the Family Nights; put reminder cards on the tables; get phone numbers at Family Night and make follow-up calls
  - 3-4 families in each group
  - Started with two groups (3:30-5 and 5:30-7) and currently running one of these groups at 3:30-5
  - Added a Mother as a co-facilitator of the multi-family group and that has worked really well; the co-facilitator is Tom Summerfield who has a Ph.D. is Family Studies.
  - There is a separate Latino Family Group
    - Last group had 19 people with 3 interpreters