



## Montana Warm Line and Virtual Drop-In Center A Program of the Montana Mental Health Association

Eighty percent of Montana communities have less than 3000 residents. Mental health problems don't only affect those living within 10 or 20 miles of a mental health clinic or provider, but many of the people who live in these rural communities, too. The Montana Warm Line is designed to offer support to people with mental illness without the need to travel long distances. It also offers anonymity, which can greatly ease any fear of stigma associated with mental illness. In addition to rural and frontier residents, MMHA believes those with physical disabilities, who lack transportation, who are uncomfortable going to a physical drop-in center, and seniors with limited mobility will also benefit.

There are three main components, all of which are free to users:

- **A telephone-based Warm Line.** *The warm line will enable people with a mental illness to talk to a peer (that is, a person who themselves are in recovery from his or her mental illness) about issues they are facing in their lives or with their treatment, and provide a friendly and understanding person for those who just need someone to talk to. Peer services are an evidence-based practice that is approved by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA). The Warm Line will not be a crisis line; operators of the Warm Line will refer people who are considering suicide or are otherwise in crisis to appropriate services, and through three-way calling get emergency or crisis services on the call immediately. The Warm Line will operate weekday evenings and Saturday afternoons, and will be staffed by a primary mental health consumer who has been trained as a peer advocate, peer specialist, or counselor.*
- **A second telephone line that will rotate between multiple uses, including a weekly support group, an open talk-line, and "FYI", a program that will feature a variety of educational topics.** *The support group will be co-facilitated by a consumer and a professional, giving individuals in rural and frontier Montana possibly their first chance to participate in this type of program. The open talk line will provide a safe environment for individuals with a mental illness to socialize with peers and acquire information. FYI will include programs such self-managing your illness, accessing resources, life skills for community living, and how to apply for Social Security.*
- **An informational website.** *The website will have resources links and a blog.*

All of our programs will utilize trained primary mental health consumers from across the state, which will help those who have been disabled by their illness to re-enter the workforce.



# Montana Warm Line/Virtual Drop-In Center FAQ's

## **1. What is the Warm Line?**

The Warm Line is a non-crisis peer support line for people dealing with mental illness. It is accompanied by an informational website, open chat line, call in support groups, and call in FYI Info sessions. It is designed to reach people living in rural areas where there are no mental health services available, as well as to allow for anyone to anonymously reach out and network with other Montanans living with mental illness. In addition to rural and frontier residents, MMHA believes those with physical disabilities, who lack transportation, who are uncomfortable going to a physical drop-in center, and seniors with limited mobility will also benefit.

## **2. What other types of services are available?**

In addition to a call-in support line, one night per week there will be an "open chat" session during which multiple people can call in from all over the state to talk and network with other consumers. Open chat access information and dates will be posted on the Montana Warm Line website: [www.montanawarmline.com](http://www.montanawarmline.com). This is full of information on mental illness. In addition, it contains links to many resources throughout the state, a peer-moderated blog, a calendar of MMHA and Warm Line events, and much more! This is also where the weekly FYI topics will be posted, and where suggestions for the sessions can be submitted. FYI sessions are informational call-in groups where a variety of relevant topics will be discussed.

## **3. What type of call-in support groups are available?**

At this time, we will be offering a call-in bipolar support group. It does have limited capacity and lasts six weeks per rotation. See the website or contact [programs@montanamentalhealth.org](mailto:programs@montanamentalhealth.org) to find out the times and space availability for support groups.

## **4. When does the Warm Line operate?**

The Warm Line is open Monday through Friday from 5:30PM-9:30PM, and on Saturdays from 1PM to 5PM. The website is available 24 hrs a day, and will post days and times of Open Chat and FYI sessions, which occur once per week.

## **5. Who answers the line?**

All our programs will utilize trained primary mental health consumers from all over Montana who are in recovery and have been through multiple peer support trainings.

## **6. Does it matter where I live if I want to work on the Warm Line?**

No. Because the line is phone based, employment is open to consumers in every part of the state.

## **7. Is there pay involved?**

Yes. Consumers who work on the line are paid \$8 an hour.

## **8. What type of qualifications are required to answer the warm line?**

To be a Montana Warm Line Peer Support Responder, you need to have taken WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) training and have a working WRAP plan, be well into your own recovery and be actively working on recovery, and be willing to help others start and continue to work through recovery. It is preferred that you have had some type of peer-to-peer training.

## **9. What if I haven't taken WRAP or peer-to-peer training, can I still participate as a Warm Line Responder?**

Yes, after going through these types of trainings, which MMHA will coordinate, you can be hired. Any interested persons should see the full Warm Line Responder job description on the website, and contact Jana at [jana@montanamentalhealth.org](mailto:jana@montanamentalhealth.org) to sign up for trainings and for more information.



## Montana Warm Line Peer Support Responder

### Pre-requisites for Peer Support Warm Line Responder (WLR):

- Have taken WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) with working WRAP Plan\*
- Be well into and actively working on own recovery
- Willingness to help others continue/start to work through recovery
- Preferred: some type of peer-to-peer training or experience

*\*If you have not yet completed WRAP training, MMHA can help coordinate this prior to employment.*

### Job Description

- Provide phone-based peer support services to callers dealing with mental illness
- WLRs will be responsible for answering calls on the Montana Warm Line from their home during 4 hour weekday evening or Saturday afternoon shifts (generally 1-2 shifts per 2 weeks)
- Location of residence in Montana does not disqualify any potential responder

### Specific WLR Responsibilities:

1. Actively listen and encourage callers to talk about lives, struggles, and goals
2. Promote caller self-determination and decision-making
3. Refer callers to appropriate resources
4. Offer encouragement, hope, and reassurance to callers who are developing skills for integration into community
5. Maintain own recovery and ongoing wellness in order to be an example for callers
6. Respond to emergencies appropriately as trained
7. Be in contact with Peer Manager, MMHA Staff, and other Warm Line Responders about callers, shifts, difficulties, praise, and other relevant topics
8. Maintain and submit completed call log sheets on time
9. Answer all calls during assigned shift; find appropriate substitute when incapable of taking shift; notify Peer Manager prior to doing so
10. Participate in Warm Line meetings, ongoing trainings, and other Warm Line events
11. Comply with relevant legislation, regulations, and mandatory guidelines (i.e., no medical advice will be supplied by responders)