

Focus 2.0

A Publication of The CAFÉ TA Center

Issue 18

What is the Focus 2.0?

The *Focus 2.0* newsletter highlights important issues in mental health, providing timely information on recovery, peer support, and the value of including people with lived experience in the mental health system of care.

Have a suggestion for a topic? Let us know!



**Connect with
The CAFÉ TA Center!**

CAFETACENTER.net

[@CAFETAC](https://www.facebook.com/CAFETAC)

[www.facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/CAFETAC)

[CAFETAC](https://www.facebook.com/CAFETAC)

Mike Veny Brings Rhythms of Recovery to The 27th Annual Family Café

Did you know that The Family Café, the nonprofit organization that houses The CAFÉ TA Center, hosts the largest statewide cross-disability event in the nation? It's called The Annual Family Café, and it attracts thousands of people representing all aspects of the disability experience to Orlando for three days of information, training, and networking each June. (You can learn more about it at familycafe.net/annual-family-cafe/.)

Over the years, The Family Café has made a concerted effort to include mental health in the agenda for The Annual Family Café, with the inclusion of a "Mental Health track" with multiple presentations mental health conditions, recovery, peer support, and accessing mental health services on the agenda. As an organization that serves people representing all types of disability experiences, The Family Café believes it's essential to include mental health in the broader disability conversation. It's important to address the unique experiences of people that have "dual diagnoses" across both mental/behavioral health conditions and developmental disabilities, and to open up conversations about how autism,





ADHD, and other neurodivergent experiences cross lines between mental health and developmental disability, which are often thought of separately.

At the same time, the organization also recognizes the value of bringing peer support and recovery concepts to families, caregivers, and self-advocates regardless of diagnosis or disability identity, as resiliency and mental wellness are essential components of a fulfilling life in the community for everyone.

At The 27th Annual Family Café this June, The Family Café put mental health recovery front and center with a keynote address from musician, mental health advocate, and author Mike Veny. As a child, Mike was expelled from several schools, attempted suicide, and spent time in psychiatric hospitals for extended periods. His path to becoming a motivational speaker became evident early when he learned how to convince the staff to discharge him. In the fifth grade, Mike was placed in a special education class. In addition to getting more individualized attention from the teacher, he learned that pencil erasers make great sounds

when tapped on a desk. He had no idea that drumming would become his path to mental wellness.

In his keynote at The Annual Family Café, “Becoming a Mental Wellness Superhero,” which can be viewed at https://youtu.be/PzBv9BqbK_M, Mike talks about his wellness journey, shares how his djembe drum helps him manage depression, anxiety, and obsessive compulsive thinking, and helps listeners to become more attuned to their own emotional wellness. The presentation centers on finding “rhythms to build resilience,” with tips on simplifying self-care, practical advice on supporting others and making connections, and insight into dealing with anger by bringing awareness to your own feelings and finding positive outlets to build your power.

We hope you’re able to take a few minutes to view the recording of Mike Veny’s presentation, and that it resonates with your lived experience. In the meantime, we will keep working to build bridges between mental health and the broader disability community. If you have suggestions on how we can do that, we’d love to hear them!



We're Back!

Last time we shared the *Focus 2.0* newsletter, we thanked you for five great years, and let you know that CAFÉ TAC's five-year grant cycle was coming to an end. Now we're happy to let you know that our grant program has been extended for an additional year, through March of 2026!

We're currently working on plans to bring you new resources on mental health, recovery, peer support, and life in the community for people with mental health conditions. If there are topics you'd like to see us address, we'd love to hear about it! Reach out to us at cafetacenter@gmail.com, or visit us on Facebook at facebook.com/CAFETAC.

And don't forget, you can find all of our resources on our website at cafetacenter.net!

New Report Offers Insight into Reducing Arrests and Incarceration for People with Mental Health Conditions

It's well documented that people with mental health conditions are overrepresented in the nation's jails and prisons, and that law enforcement involvement in mental health crises too often leads to tragic outcomes. A new resource from the Safety and Justice Challenge, "Reducing Arrest and Jailing of People with Mental Health Disabilities, Including Those with Intersectional Identities," offers solutions. It includes person-based approaches that can mitigate problematic dynamics where mental health and the justice system intersect, including initiatives from communities throughout the country that are effective, humane, and afford people with mental health disabilities the same access to rights and protections as typically-abled citizens.

Check it out at <https://safetyandjusticechallenge.org/resources/reducing-arrest-and-jailing-of-people-with-mental-health-disabilities-including-those-with-intersectional-identities/>.

Reducing the Arrest and Jailing of People with Mental Health Disabilities, Including Those with Intersectional Identities

Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
June 23, 2025

 SAFETY+JUSTICE
CHALLENGE
Supported by the John D. and Catherine T.
MacArthur Foundation

 JUDGE DAVID L.
BAZELON
CENTER
FOR MENTAL HEALTH LAW

Capacity Corner: A Column about Capacity-Building for Your Peer-Run Organization

CAFÉ TAC is pleased to share this feature, a column from CAFÉ TAC Training Coordinator John Ferrone on leadership challenges within peer-run organizations, where many advocates with lived experience direct their efforts to promote recovery and inspire change.

*This column's topic is **Planning a Fundraiser Event for Your Peer Organization: A Formula for Success.***

"We could do a bake sale!"

Chances are, the moment the topic of fundraising comes up among your Board and/or staff, someone shouts that out. It's a fun idea, but it returns a limited amount of funding, and it typically requires that a lot of people volunteer to bake and then deliver the baked goods at their own cost.

Let's talk about a more complex fundraiser and how to plan and deliver an event that can grow into an annual branded experience in your community. As an example, we'll plan a dinner event. As with all of the "Capacity Corner" articles, we're going to take a backwards planning approach, meaning that we want to start with a description of the end we are trying to achieve, and then plan backwards.



For our dinner event, we want to appeal to the entire community. We want attendees to have an enjoyable meal in a comfortable setting, to be seen and to network, to enjoy the entertainment and feel like it was "worth it" to attend, to be impacted by our organization's program message and call to action, to make a donation, to consider volunteering, and to look forward to next year's event.

All we need to do is take each of those items and break them down, as such:

We want attendees to have an enjoyable meal in a comfortable setting . . .

This component is the most complex because it has to do with all of the logistics. You'll need to target a number of attendees. Let's use 96 as our target number—12 round tables of 8 people each. What reception hall can host this size? How can it be decorated? What type of signage is needed? Think about events you've been to—what details helped you have a great experience? Who caters the meal and what's the fee? Who will bartend if you have a cocktail hour and bar for guests? (You'll need to put together a list of needs and figure the total cost, and then figure out your break-even—how many attendees paying how much per ticket will break even? And, will the venue and caterer offer a discount? Can you find corporate sponsors?)

. . . to be seen and to network . . .

Attendees are there for your organization. But let's be honest: they want to be seen, and to see others in

their community. The cocktail hour helps get people in the mood for the evening, and creates that opportunity to be seen. By the way, is this a formal or semi-formal event? Will the ladies want to show off their fancy dresses? Or is this business casual? Keep in mind that the perception of fanciness will create an air of sophistication that you'll need to match, and that typically leads to greater financial success, although it can also entail higher costs.

. . . to enjoy the entertainment and feel like it was “worth it” to attend . . .



Is there a jazz trio playing during the cocktail hour? Or perhaps a pianist? Maybe some appropriate music over the sound system? Or, are you going to go all out and have a speaker with some status come and deliver a keynote? Or go a different direction and make it fun with dueling pianos? It just takes an idea, and follow through. You can do it! The goal is to avoid being bland and forgettable.

. . . to be impacted by our organization’s program message and call to action . . .

The heart of the evening is the program about your organization. There’s a welcome and brief remarks prior to dinner, but later there is an official short program: This is who we are, and what we do, and here is John or Jane Doe to provide a testimony. The person delivering the testimony about the positive impact of your services will address the audience and deliver a compelling story. (Preparation and coaching are key.) The message is not just about outcomes, but about donations. This is a fundraiser, and people are expecting to be asked to donate, and the testimony is the call to action.

. . . to make a donation . . .

Is there something specific for which you are asking for funding? “In general, we need your generous donations to support our operations, and we are also asking for special donations to buy 4 computers for our training lab.” Be sure to have amounts you are trying to raise: “Our goal is to raise \$45,000 for our general operating expenses, and \$10,000 for computers for our training lab.” Are you prepared to receive donations? Are there pledge cards on the tables? Can people give you cash on the spot, or write a check, or scan a QR Code and pay with a credit card? Will they receive a receipt for tax purposes?

. . . to consider volunteering . . .

Don’t forget that while some people may not be able to contribute financially, there are other ways for them to support your organization. Share of list of the various ways that people can participate as volunteers. Put that list on the tables for each guest, and invite them to contact you.

. . . and to look forward to next year’s event.

Most organizations forget to do this: Have next year’s event already identified, with a date and time so that people can immediately look forward to it. Make this announcement. Have a brochure on the table for each guest encouraging them to learn more about the organization and to look forward to next year.

It's a scary proposition to plan an event and take on expenses in the hope that you'll at least break even. That's why the number one rule is to NOT spend any money until you have an idea of the total cost, and you've found a handful of sponsors to pay for it as their donation. That's the golden nugget. If you have sponsors paying for the venue, meal, open bar (and they are acknowledged, for example, "This year's open bar is sponsored by XYZ Company"), then all ticket sales and other donations are all profit. Once you have commitments to help cover your costs, you need to do successful marketing far enough in advance. That will be the topic of the next article!

The above example is relatively complex. You might not want to start with something of this scale unless you have some people on your team who have either done it before, or who have enough time to see it through to success. First impressions are important! Regardless, the components are the same no matter the size of the fundraiser. Even if you're doing something like a bake sale, you can account for each of the above components and make it the best bake sale ever.

Good luck, and don't hesitate to get in touch to ask questions about any or all of the components. Happy fundraising!



Is there a leadership challenge you're facing in your peer-run organization or advocacy efforts? We want to hear about it! Reach out to us at cafetacenter@gmail.com with your question or comment. We will be happy to help, and your challenge might just be the subject of our next Capacity Corner column! (Anonymously and with your consent, of course!)

This newsletter was developed under grant number SM082668 from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The views, opinions, and content expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views, opinions, or policies of the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).



The CAFÉ TA Center
713 E Park Ave.
Tallahassee, FL 32301
855-CAFÉ-TAC (223-3822)
CAFETACENTER.net

