



# National Coalition for Mental Health Recovery

*Formerly known as the National Coalition of Mental Health Consumer/Survivor Organizations*

## **Building Bridges: Law Enforcement and the Mental Health Advocacy Community An Introduction to the June 2010 IACP Report**

In May 2009, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), in partnership with the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the JEHT Foundation, the National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, and the National Coalition for Mental Health Recovery (NCMHR, formerly the National Coalition of Mental Health Consumer/Survivor Organizations) designed and sponsored "Building Safer Communities: Improving Police Response to Persons with Mental Illness," a two-day summit bringing together over 100 leaders from mental health advocacy and law enforcement communities across the U.S.

Keynote presentations at the summit were given by Sam Cochran, developer of Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) for law enforcement, and NCMHR Steering Committee member Daniel B. Fisher, who spoke about [Emotional CPR \(eCPR\)](#), a public health education program developed by NCMHR and designed to teach people to assist others through emotional crisis. Both Cochran and Fisher discussed the critical importance of heart-to-heart communication, especially when interacting with someone in emotional crisis. NCMHR Director Lauren Spiro helped to plan the summit and participated in a panel discussion about the challenges and opportunities associated with collaboration.

The summit report highlights the importance of focusing on recovery rather than symptom management. Key recommendations include: avoiding the use of restraint and other control mechanisms unless absolutely necessary for public safety; emphasizing involvement of consumers, family members, and other advocates in Crisis Intervention Training and related training; and promoting interagency collaboration to ensure community integration of persons with mental health issues. The report describes "grass-roots, peer-run programs led by and for people in recovery" as "an important part of the continuum of services that should be offered to persons with mental illness who come into contact with law enforcement." Examples of consumer-run organizations are provided. [To read the summit report, click here.](#)

Said Spiro, "Working with the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) has resulted in enhanced mutual understanding and respect across the mental health advocacy and law enforcement communities. It is our wish and our vision that these communities continue to build relationships based on our shared values, principles, and desire to strengthen the bonds of healthy and hopeful communities. Working together, we can weave a safety net across all communities and eliminate the trauma, injury, and loss of life stakeholders can experience when interactions go tragically wrong."

At Alternatives, a national consumer-run conference taking place from September 30 – October 3, 2010 in Anaheim, California, NCMHR will co-facilitate a workshop with law enforcement personnel to discuss past and present collaborations between law enforcement and mental health advocacy communities, and suggest ways to further build relationships between these communities.

The “Building Safer Communities” report recommends eCPR as a way to enrich CIT curricula. NCMHR has developed an eCPR guide adapted for law enforcement, and has issued [a fact sheet about eCPR for the law enforcement community](#) as well as a [list of law enforcement contacts for national statewide consumer organizations](#). For more information, visit [www.emotional-cpr.org](http://www.emotional-cpr.org), email [info@emotional-cpr.org](mailto:info@emotional-cpr.org) or call 877-246-9058.