

Journey of Hope: An Evidence Based Practice

The Journey of Hope (JOH) is an 8-week course that teaches families about the causes and treatment of mental illness, provides problem-solving and communication skills training, teaches families how to work with service providers, and offers emotional support. JOH is unique in that all instructors are family members of persons with mental illness. Evidence from a 4-year controlled study of the Journey of Hope shows that:

- Participation in the Journey of Hope:
 - Increase families' knowledge of the causes and treatment of mental illness
 - Increases families' knowledge of problem-solving and coping strategies
 - Improves families' relationships with their adult relatives with mental illness
 - Increases families' satisfaction with their role in their relatives' mental health treatment
 - Improves families' emotional well-being
- Journey of Hope meets families needs for information about mental illness, mental health services, treatment regimens, and coping strategies.
- Families value the peer support they receive from the Journey of Hope teachers who, like themselves, have relatives with mental illness. Participants report that the teachers are excellent role models.
- Participants report that, as a result of the class, they feel less alone in their struggles to cope with their relatives' illness.
- Journey of Hope is a resource for all family members, including parents, siblings, adult children, spouses, other relatives, and friends of adults with mental illness.



Participant Comments:

- *"It's been a lifesaver—best 8 weeks of my life!"*
- *"I can now see a future for my consumer relative."*
- *"I don't feel alone in this world anymore."*
- *"All mental health professionals should be aware of this program and make referrals to it."*
- *"Instructors were sensitive and compassionate."*
- *"I feel empowered in dealing with my relative because I'm more educated."*

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For more information about this study contact Dr. Susan Pickett-Schenk at 312-422-8180 x17 or at pickett@psych.uic.edu