

**Independent Perspective #1896 with Cathie Campbell**  
**Topic: Mental Health Support Groups**

## Transcript

00:00:00 Speaker 1

Welcome to Independent Perspective, a public affairs presentation of Western New York Independent Living.

00:00:06 Speaker 1

Mental Health Peer Connection is an organization run for and by people with behavioral health disabilities.

00:00:13 Speaker 1

As part of Western New York Independent Living, MHPC focuses on finding ways to meet consumers where they are at.

00:00:21 Speaker 1

That's why MHPC offers support groups geared toward improving and sustaining your mental health.

00:00:29 Speaker 1

Joining us today to talk about the different mental health support groups they offer is MHPC's Assistant Director, Cathie Campbell.

00:00:37 Speaker 1

Welcome to the program, Cathie.

00:00:39 Speaker 2

Ernie, thank you for having me.

00:00:42 Speaker 1

It's our pleasure.

00:00:44 Speaker 1

To give people an appreciation for the breadth of what all you do, can you provide us with an overview of the topic areas that are covered in MHPC's support groups, just what kind of groups are offered?

00:00:58 Speaker 2

Well, the topics span from mental health, life skills, creative expression, and practical problem solving.

00:01:05 Speaker 2

And we have Hoarding to Healing, Overcoming Life's Challenges.

00:01:11 Speaker 2

It's a positive support group for positive thinking.

00:01:16 Speaker 2

We have our Elevate peer support where they work on coping skills, LGBT and mental health supports.

00:01:24 Speaker 2

Breaking the Ice, which works on socialization, confidence, owning our space for healthy boundaries.

00:01:32 Speaker 2

We have one on breaking and barriers to employment and another on housing barriers.

00:01:40 Speaker 2

And we also have two that are creative, which is our virtual open mic night and our wellness through the arts.

00:01:49 Speaker 1

Well, you really cover quite the breadth of

00:01:53 Speaker 1

topics, don't you?

00:01:55 Speaker 1

I've noticed that there's a number of new support groups which don't sound familiar to me.

00:02:00 Speaker 1

Can you tell us how you determine what support groups to offer?

00:02:05 Speaker 2

Well, one, we talk to the participants personally, and they tell us what they are most struggling with.

00:02:11 Speaker 2

And then we also look towards the goals that they create with our staff, and we decide which groups to develop from those two forms of information that we compile.

00:02:25 Speaker 1

I would imagine that attending a support group for the very first time can be daunting for some participants.

00:02:32 Speaker 1

Can you tell us about the format and what takes place during a support group?

00:02:37 Speaker 2

Well, there's a check-in opening question just to make sure everybody's okay.

00:02:42 Speaker 2

There is a theme for each and every group, and there's a discussion on that theme.

00:02:49 Speaker 2

And they might go over different aspects of ways to cope or set boundaries or come up with strategies.

00:02:59 Speaker 2

Then there's the peer-to-peer support where they can share their experiences and ask for feedback.

00:03:07 Speaker 2

Then we do some skill building and reflective exercises, followed by an open, safe space for questions, personal insights, and resource sharing.

00:03:18 Speaker 2

And for those who aren't ready to share yet, they don't have to.

00:03:23 Speaker 1

Well, it's good to know that they have the flexibility.

00:03:26 Speaker 1

If our listeners want more information on the types of support groups offered through MHPC,

00:03:32 Speaker 1

what are some contact numbers?

00:03:34 Speaker 1

So, you can get more information.

00:03:36 Speaker 2

They can call me at 716-836-0822, extension, 139

00:03:43 Speaker 2

and I can arrange for them to get our flyer, or they can e-mail me at [ccampbell@wnyil.org](mailto:ccampbell@wnyil.org), and I can e-mail them our calendar and support group flyer.

00:04:03 Speaker 1

Wonderful.

00:04:04 Speaker 1

Well, it sounds as though if people want just about anything in the mental health arena,

00:04:11 Speaker 1

that you can find an avenue for them to get in.

00:04:15 Speaker 1

I thank you so much for being with us.

00:04:18 Speaker 2

Thank you for having me.

00:04:21 Speaker 1

It's our pleasure.

00:04:23 Speaker 1

You've been listening to Independent Perspective, a public affairs presentation of Western New York Independent Living.

00:04:30 Speaker 1

Our guest today was MHPC Assistant Director Cathie Campbell.

00:04:40 Speaker 1

And we appreciate her sharing her expertise with our listeners.

00:04:44 Speaker 1

And thank you so much for joining us.

00:04:48 Speaker 2

Thank you and have a great day.

00:04:51 Speaker 1

You too.

00:04:51 Speaker 1

Thank you.