

Chartiers Training and Social Rehabilitation

“My Story” using Poetry

We celebrate as many holidays as possible here at T&SR. March 14 was ‘Write Your Story Day.’ In conjunction with “World Poetry Day” on March 21, we wrote a story about ourselves in the form of poetry.

Strange parents, strange house and yard
Made my life so very hard.
Off to the right a ‘haunted’ house
Enough to scare a little

mouse.
Nightmares at night
Gave me a terrible fright.
Bullies rule school
I did not like such a rule.
Peculiar friends, such an oddity
Makes me wish I had another body.
Ten years to get through school
Made me feel like a hopeless fool.
A pharmacist at last.
Forgot that past.
Burned out leads to sorrow

Depression filled my morrows.
Suicide led to many hospitals
Conquered at last
It is now a thing of the past.
No more should be seen
It is a victory, if you know what I mean.
Still, I got depression
Nevertheless, my expression
I am usually fine
Enough to celebrate with a glass of wine.

~Anonymous

“My Story,” continued

I was born in the June morning
In time for the sunshine.
One summer day,
I was basking in the warmth.
My first trip to the swimming pool.
Oh! How the water felt so fun!
My mother slathered the lotion on my skin.
It felt so good.
Summer is my favorite time of year.
When I was 13,
My mother bought me a bicycle for my birthday.
~Elaine

Summer, the feeling of warmth
Was oh so very warm.
The sand between my toes
As the ocean waves go over my feet.
As I lay me down to rest at the beach,
Like a full immersion of salty water.
The sun in my eyes when my eyes are closed
I see orange and black at the same time.
Summer, summer, when you get here, please include me in.
I love it when summer makes the year fantastic.

As I am lying down on the beach,
The air is still warm and the smell of the ocean...
When I go in my tent to have a siesta,
In my dreams, I have a fiesta!

~Marlie

“My Story,” continued

My mental illness has
changed
Every aspect of the life I
knew prior.
My mental illness I have
denied
And avoided for years of my
life.
My mental illness I began to
accept
Causing every emotion for
myself to endure for years.
My mental illness forced me
to grow
Changing me for the rest of

my life.
My mental illness I accept
and embrace
Looking forward to the rest of
the years.
~Tara

I say goodbye to so many
And I say hello to many too.
All seasons are great
But the feeling of spring is
the greatest.
The freshness in the air
And a brightness on my face.
With the blue sky looking

down on me
I feel love,
But I also feel sadness.
I can feel her with me
Especially this time of the
year.
The feeling of new and
growth
The brightness in our colors
And the smell of fresh cut
grass.
My mind wanders.
Then, to my left, I look at him
And smile.
~Anonymous

“

“My Story,” continued.

Staff will never make participants do anything that staff is not willing to do also. So here is the last story.

I walk in the pouring rain
And watch the glisten on the
concrete pad.
I am making headlines in my
heart
Thinking of where I've been
and what I have become.
The enigma of me.
Dancing, singing, hearing,
crying.

The irony of how my past
Has led to my present
And will mold my future.
I've become
In the now
All that I can
Until I can become more.
I learn
And leave
And arrive again.
Hoping to see
The reality of me
Climbing the never-ending
Wall of vines
And sliding down

Only to try again.
The water drowns me
With each step,
Slick and slippery
I slide and fall and sink below
Until I rise above the twine
To soar above
The pool of doubt.

~Amy

Letters to my illness

After discussing how a mental illness can affect participants, the T&SR folks wrote a letter to their illness. Many participants found this cathartic and empowering.

Dear depression,
Sometimes you make me

sad. You also frustrate me at
times and make me feel bad
about myself. But I'm going
to start being positive about
the situation. I'm going to
start feeling good about
myself and tell myself that
I'm not a bad person. And
when you make me feel sad

and lonely, I'm going to
choose to try
my best to be happy and
smile. And instead of
isolating, I'm going to
socialize with friends.

Sincerely,
Kai

Letters to my illness, continued

“These are my symptoms and how it is dealt with in my mind.” ~Carl
Dear schizophrenia, I do not want these symptoms to be in my mind. It is hard to live with this. It makes me feel unique in spite of knowing many have this problem. I do not want to have such a thing in my mind anymore.

Dear bipolar disorder, Although mania makes me feel happy, there are better ways to feel happy. My desire is to have the thoughts banished from my mind.

Dear depression,
Do not drive my unhappiness away. Why does this happen? I do not care. Just stop.

Dear anxiety,
This is one of the symptoms I do not like the most. I want to be brave and strong-minded. Leave my mind forever.
(All letters by Carl)

“To whom it may concern.
The following is a self-developed letter done at T&SR. It basically

confronts my illness. It devices a solution to my problems. I hope you enjoy it. I know I did.”
~Tony

Dear anxiety and OCD,
You make me feel worried/nervous and a little panicky. The loneliness, however, I feel is not always bad loneliness. “I am the only one who....”
It is what makes me an individual. I also have self-esteem as well as a good sense of humor. It can get you through life.
~Tony

“...I want to be brave and strong-minded...”

Letters to my illness, continued

Dear Schizophrenia,
Regretfulness. I hate you. You make me feel “coulda, woulda, shoulda.” I wish I did it all. You make me feel good too. It makes me feel that I am growing.
Sincerely,
Elaine

Dear Mental Health,
I don't like seeing letters and numbers, thinking it is crazy. And

panicking is no fun either—that you are thinking like something attacked you. And I will not panic or see things no more, which I have. And like caring, which I won't.
Sincerely,
Me

“...It makes me feel that I am growing...”

Participant Interviews

Learn about our participants!

Name: Perkie
 Astrological sign: Taurus
 Do you believe in astrology? No
 Where in Pittsburgh do you live?
 Castle Shannon
 Do you have siblings? Yes
 Where did you grow up?
 Jeanette
 Where is your ideal vacation?
 Georgia
 What famous person, past or

present, would you invite to
 dinner? Martin Luther King, Jr
 If you could have lunch with
 anyone, who would it be? Prince
 If you were a tree, what kind of
 tree would you be? Apple
 Where do you see yourself in
 five years? Living on my own in
 McKees Rocks
 Describe the color yellow to
 someone who is blind: bright,
 the color of the sun

If you could throw a parade at
 T&SR, what type would it be? It
 would have different floats and
 different animals.
 What would your last meal be if
 you were on death row? Fried
 chicken, mashed potatoes, green
 beans, chocolate cake.
Continued...

Participant Interviews, continued

Perkie, continued

Which animal would make the
 best type of president? The
 monkey
 Describe your life using a film or
 TV title: As the World Turns
 What would your autobiography
 be called? Dreams
 What would be the name of your
 debut album? I Like It
 If you had \$40,000 to start a

business, what kind would you
 start? Designing clothes
 If you could choose one song to
 play every time you walked into a
 room for the rest of your life,
 what would it be? My
 Prerogative by Bobby Brown
 What's your passion? Pop
 What are your strengths? I am a
 good listener and friend
 What are your weaknesses?

Baking pies
 Tell me something you've lied
 about: My weight
 What do you want out of life? To
 be happy
 What was the worst mistake of
 your life? Not going to college
 If you were ice cream, what
 flavor would you be? Strawberry

Participant Interviews, continued

Name: Alana
 Astrological sign: Aquarius
 Do you believe in astrology?
 Yes, as I believe in the alignment
 of the stars.
 Where in Pittsburgh do you live?
 Scott Township
 Do you have siblings? Two step-
 brothers
 Where did you grow up?
 Connecticut
 Where is your ideal vacation?
 The beach
 What famous person, present or
 past, would you invite to dinner?

Abe Lincoln
 If you could have lunch with
 anyone, who would it be? My
 dad
 If you were a tree, what kind of
 tree would you be? A white birch
 because they are pretty.
 Where do you see yourself in
 five years? Working a full-time
 job
 Describe the color yellow to
 someone who is blind: Bright
 If you could throw a parade at
 T&SR, what type would it be?
 One with lots of marching bands

and color guards
 If you were on death row, what
 would your last meal be?
 Barbeque ribs
 Which animal would make the
 best president? A lion
 Describe your life using a film
 title: Girl Interrupted
 What would your autobiography
 be called? Alana's Life
 What would be the name of your
 debut album? Alana (*con't...*)

Participant Interviews, continued

Name: Phil	Describe the color yellow to someone who is blind: the sun.
Astrological sign: Cancer	If you could throw a parade at T&SR, what type would it be? A Humanity parade—a celebration
Do you believe in astrology? No, as I don't believe it's a real science.	You're on death row. What would your last meal be?
Where in Pittsburgh do you live? Castle Shannon	Kentucky Fried Chicken
Do you have siblings? Yes	What animal would make the best type of president? The owl
Where did you grow up? North Side	Describe your life using film titles: A Hero Ain't Nothing but a Sandwich
Where is your ideal vacation? Sea World	What would your autobiography be called? Plain and simple
What famous person past or present would you invite to dinner? Stevie Wonder	What would the name of your debut album be? The Real Deal
If you could have lunch with anyone, who would it be? George W. Bush	If you had \$40,000 to start your own business, what would you make? Can openers
If you could be a tree, what kind of tree would you be? Oak, because it's strong	<i>Continued on page 6</i>
Where do you see yourself in five years? In my own apartment	

Phil would be an oak tree, because they are strong.....

Contact Us!!!

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About Training and Social Rehab

T&SR provides social rehabilitation to adults with mental health diagnoses. Clients participate in a shared community setting that builds self-esteem and confidence. It also fosters independence through group activities and community activities and events.

For more information, call Amy Randal, Social Rehabilitation Coordinator.

Participant Interviews, continued

Phil, continued

If you could choose one song to play every time you walked into the room, what would it be?

Higher Ground

What's your passion? Music

What are your strengths? I'm smart, funny and kind

What are your weakness'? I get

angry easily and give up too easily.

Tell me something you've lied about? My past

What do you want out of life? To be content

What was the worst mistake of your life? Dropping out of college.

If you were ice cream, what flavor would you be? Vanilla

, Participant Interviews, continued

Alana, continued

If you had \$40,000 to start your own business, what would it be?

Public Relations

If you could choose only one song to play every time you walked into the room: Wild

Thing

What's your passion? Helping people

Strengths: Organization, outgoing, helpful

Weakness': putting other's first, over-spending

Lied about? Weight

What do you want out of life? Happiness

Worst mistake: stopping meds

Ice cream: Rocky Road