

## Getting Creative with Recovery Programs

*Compiled from a Report by Jennifer Brown*

*Ms. Brown is director of Training and Communications of On Our Own of Maryland, Inc., a non-profit group funded by state and federal dollars as well as private donations. The actual “Reel to Real” series is funded by the state of Maryland.*

On Our Own of Maryland, Inc., has gone Hollywood in its efforts to instill consumers with the belief in recovery. The group, a statewide mental health consumer advocacy and education organization, has created “Reel to Real,” an interactive workshop series that incorporates skills, tools, and action planning in an educational environment.

Using the analogy of filmmaking, the program teaches consumers to develop “creative control”—that is, being the guiding force and decision maker regarding one’s own recovery—and combine this with the paradigm of “creative collaboration” with the other experts they choose to work with.

The first workshop, “Lights: Illuminate the Possibilities,” explores the concepts, belief, and faith that recovery is possible, and indeed achievable. The second workshop, “Camera: Focus on the Possibilities,” looks at seeing the larger picture, bringing the vision of what consumers want for their recovery into focus, and realizing that the control over the process lies with them. The third workshop, “Action: Creating the Possibilities,” focuses on collaborating with others for success.

In the moviemaking community, that may be the lighting designer, the acting coach, or set decorator. In the recovery journey, that may include a therapist, peer support group, psychosocial rehabilitation program, landlord, or family member.

On Our Own developed the effort in response to feedback from focus groups the organization conducted with consumers throughout Maryland in 2003.

Comment cards from the workshops have shown a very positive response from the participants. “[Two things that I learned about myself in today’s workshop are] that I’m the author of my fate and I’m the hero in my life,” a participant wrote. “[The information in this workshop that was most helpful to me is] that I can help myself more than I think I can,” wrote another participant.

*For more information about On Our Own of Maryland, Inc., visit [www.onourownmd.org](http://www.onourownmd.org)*