

Gayle Bluebird has been in the consumer/survivor movement for over 30 years. Her awakening came when, after leaving her family because of overwhelming sadness and a wish to withdraw from life, she spent time in residential treatment that she found to be abusive.

Her work as a psychiatric nurse combined with her experience as a consumer gave her a unique perspective as an advocate.

In the 1990s she was hired by the Broward County, Florida, Department of Children and Families. There she created the Office of Consumer Affairs, leading a team of consumers in facilitating satisfaction focus groups in all of the community mental health agencies and inpatient facilities.

In 1998-1999 she worked as a Peer Advocate at South Florida State Hospital. She developed 'Comfort Rooms' which she continues to replicate in hospitals throughout the country.

In 2000–2003, she worked for the Florida Advocacy Center for Persons with Disabilities. She wrote two SAMHSA funded guidebooks, "Reaching Across with the Arts" and "Participatory Dialogues."

In 2004, Bluebird became a consultant to the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors where she created the Office of Technical Assistance for Peer Networking, and wrote "Paving New Ground" also producing the accompanying DVD.

She currently works as a consultant to Delaware Psychiatric Center where she provides training for peer specialists who are beginning their inpatient work. She continues to work nationally to promote networks for talented consumer artists and creating peer roles in inpatient settings.

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