



UMass Mind Network

Newsletter

January 2025

The UMass Mind Network, developed by the UMass Mind Clinical and Research Program, aims to create a community space to share knowledge and resources regarding psychosis, schizophrenia, and serious mental illnesses. We hope the network will serve as a catalyst to promote recovery for community members living with such mental health conditions.

Community-Based, Device-Assisted Exercise Program for Individuals with Serious Mental Illnesses



The UMass Mind team, led by Danielle Li and Sedona Lockhart, recently completed a pilot program assessing exercise as a feasible intervention for individuals with serious mental illnesses (SMI). Participants from Granite Street Group Home at Community Healthlink volunteered to attend 45-minute walking group sessions 3 times a week for 8 weeks. Each participant was given a FitBit to wear around their wrist at all times, except when they were sleeping or charging the devices. The purpose of the device was to record their daily step count, levels of activity, and calories burned.

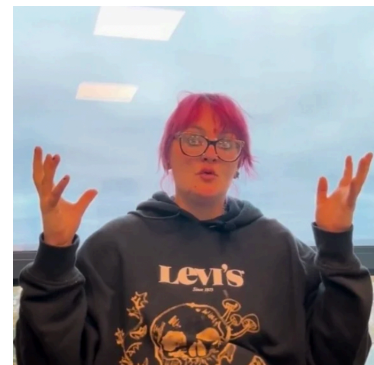
Weekly interactive educational sessions were held to help participants better understand the mental and physical benefits of exercising. Once a week, prior to a walking session, the UMass Mind team would share weekly FitBit measures with the participants to celebrate their achievements and encourage them to exercise more. Participants reported positive experiences, noting the long-term physical and mental health benefits of exercising. They described the walking sessions as a new, refreshing experience that motivated them to exercise regularly.

Check out the trailer for our exercise program below!



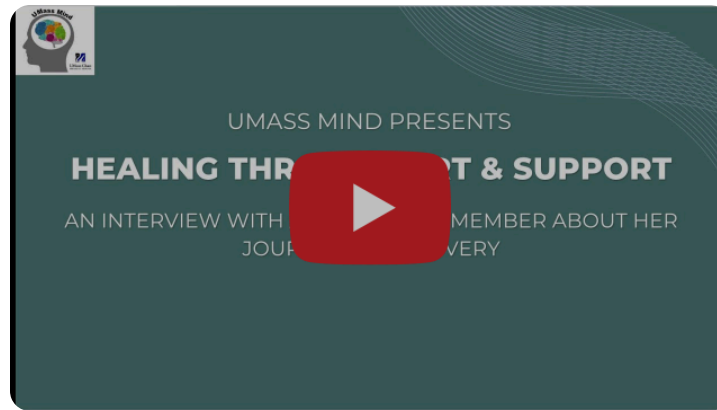
Leveraging Creativity and Art in Resilience and Recovery: Interview with FH

In the fall of 2024, UMass Mind team members, Katie Lambert and Rosalee Young, conducted an interview with community member FH to discuss their journey to mental health recovery. FH shared their story of life before their diagnosis and how receiving a correct diagnosis and appropriate treatment became a pivotal moment in their recovery journey. They recounted how a challenging life situation contributed to the onset of schizophrenia.



FH recounted how a challenging life situation contributed to the onset of schizophrenia. From an early age, they discovered their creative abilities and used art as a powerful coping mechanism to navigate the challenges of living with mental illness. Today, FH is the proud owner of Fox Dancer Studios, where they channel their passion and talent to create inspiring work in wood-burning, drawings, shell, glass, and gem work, doll-making, and blacksmithing, all while studying tattooing and video game design. FH's story highlights the transformative power of family and community support and self-expression in fostering resilience and recovery.

[Click here for the full interview with FH!](#)



UMass Mind's Presence at Upcoming National Meetings

The UMass Mind team will be presenting our recent work at several upcoming national meetings. Follow our social media for more updates!

- **GLP-1 Receptor Agonist Exenatide May Improve Hippocampal Volume and Negative Symptoms in Schizophrenia**
Lead author: Taylor Young
American Neuropsychiatric Association (ANPA) 34th Annual Meeting
March 2025, Montreal, Canada
- **Step by Step: A Digital Path to Better Health for People with Serious Mental Illness**
Lead author: Sedona Lockhart
American Psychiatric Association (APA) 2025 Annual Meeting
May 2025, Los Angeles, CA
- **Recovery Through Performance: A Virtual Pilot Study Using the Co-active Therapeutic Theater Model for People with Serious Mental Illness**
Lead author: Victoria Loosigian
American Psychiatric Association (APA) 2025 Annual Meeting
May 2025, Los Angeles, CA
- **Out of the Hospital and into the Community: Empowering Medical Trainees to Promote Health Equity through Community-Partnered Lifestyle Nutrition Initiatives**
Lead author: Amy Cheung
Association of Directors of Medical Student Education in Psychiatry (ADMSEP) 2025 Annual Meeting
June 2025, Boston, MA



Ongoing Study Open to Patient Recruitment



Clozapine is associated with significant metabolic side effects such as weight gain, obesity, diabetes, and elevated levels of bad cholesterol. The goal of this study is to determine if taking lumateperone (Caplyta®) might improve physical health in individuals treated with clozapine (Clozaril®).

The study is currently **open to recruitment** and is looking for patients who are on clozapine treatment and diagnosed with schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder.

Click below for our study brochure!

[Study Brochure](#)

For more information about this study, please contact us at 508-856-Mind (6463) or mind@umassmed.edu.



UMass Mind Clinical and Research Program

UMass Chan Medical School / UMass Memorial Health

55 Lake Avenue North, Worcester, MA 01655

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