

Alternatives to Suicide – Presenter bios

Caroline Mazel-Carlton



Caroline Mazel-Carlton first interfaced with psychiatry at the age of eight, and years later was able to find a path out of a world defined by diagnoses and medications through roller derby, social activism. Since moving out of a staffed group home eight years ago, she has worked tirelessly to create change in the mental health system, developing and re-defining peer roles and values in various organizations in North Carolina and Massachusetts.

Caroline currently serves as Director of Training for the Western Mass Recovery Learning Community, promoting an ethos of self-determination and mutual support in a number of settings across the globe. She has been privileged to be a facilitator/trainer for the "Alternatives to Suicide" approach for over five years, promoting conversation and connection over the current paradigm of "risk assessment". Caroline also works towards developing regional networks of support for voice-hearers in her role as

Training Coordinator for the national Hearing Voices Research and Development Project.

Sera Davidow

Sera Davidow received her first psychiatric diagnosis as a teenager, accumulating a handful more by her early twenties. That, along with a lengthy history of self-injury and emotional distress, led to her first hospitalization against her will at the age of 22, and an array of prescriptions for psychotropic drugs. However, it was her 'non-compliant' and rebellious nature that paved her way down another path.

Sera's journey first brought her to a position in a traditional role in the mental health system, but she soon found her way to peer-to-peer support communities, advocacy and social justice efforts. At present, Sera works as the Director of the Western Massachusetts Recovery Learning Community (RLC) where she focuses much of her time on grant writing, oversight and project development. Through this work, she has gained a range of experiences including starting up a peer respite, opening resource centers, and producing educational materials (including co-authoring handbooks on peer respites and developing peer roles). She has also found a passion for filmmaking, beginning with 'Beyond the Medical Model' in 2013. In addition to the RLC, Sera is a founding member of the Hearing Voices USA Board of Directors, and a regular blogger at Mad in America (www.madinamerica.com/author/sdavidow).



More about Sera's story and work can be found in a full-length interview featured in Sun Magazine's April, 2017 issue (<https://www.thesunmagazine.org/issues/496/an-open-mind>).