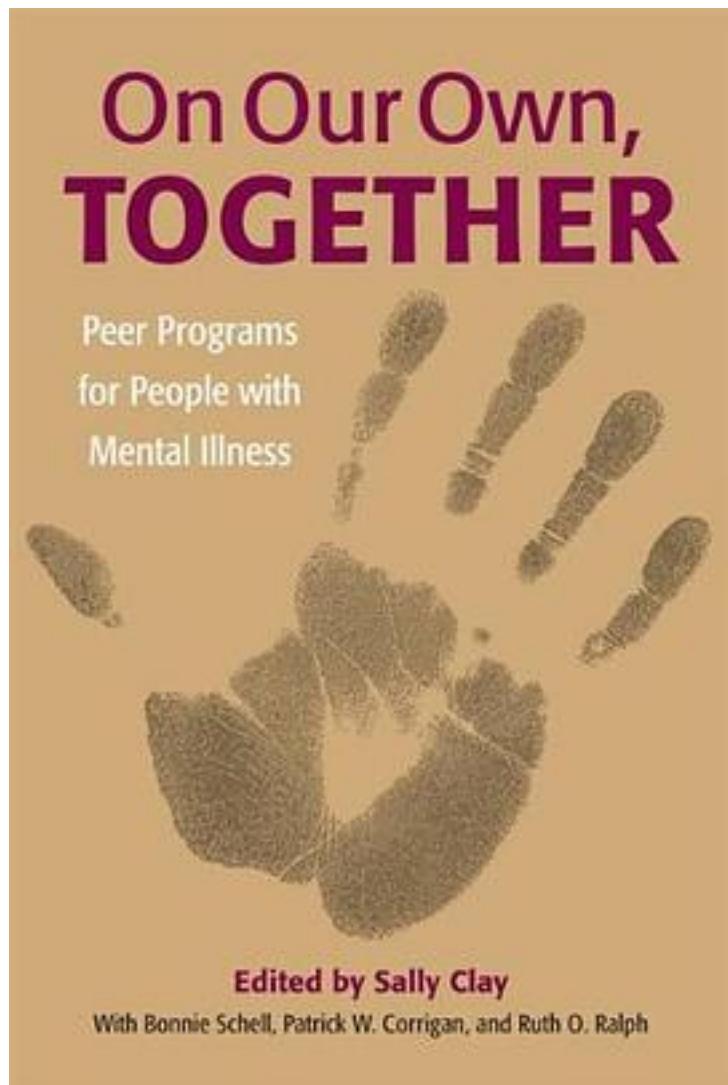


# On Our Own, Together



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"On Our Own, Together" describes the inner workings of eight successful peer-run services for mental health consumers, including drop-in centers, educational programs, and peer support/mentoring programs. Written by people who developed such programs, it reveals these services as a valuable resource within the mental health system and a precious necessity for many consumers. The book clusters the COSPs into three key types: drop-in centers, which provide varied services for their members, including meals, housing assistance, and stigma-free environments; educational programs, which train mental health consumers in recovery skills for themselves and for other consumers; and services based on peer support and mentoring. Despite their differences, the book shows, the programs share many essential characteristics. Most significantly, they demonstrate the benefits of allowing mental health consumers to operate and govern their own organizations. Also important is their emphasis on equality, mutuality, empowerment, recovery, belonging, and hope in administering services. Such core values, the book suggests, distinguish peer-run programs from the professional services that have long dominated the mental health system. In contrast to the dry, clinical reports that make up much of the current literature, this book is written "from the inside out" and, for the most part, by the people who developed the programs and who live them every day. It reveals peer-run programs as valuable resources within the mental health system and, indeed, a precious necessity for many consumers.

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