

**Testimony before the Mental Health Subcommittee**  
**January 29, 2013**  
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My name is Julianne Marinelli and I live in Shelton, CT.

My hell started where I lost my husband of 26 years. I had a nervous breakdown and ended up in the hospital. I was in and out of the hospital for years. I was sent to Day Hospital, where I remained in the program for 2 years. I was in and out of that as well however. My life was destroyed and I could not get on my feet. I was so bad they told me I would be hospitalized for the rest of my life!

So they tried one more attempt at helping me stay out of the hospital. I was referred to Valley Mental Health Center which is now Hare in Ansonia and Branford. At first, I could never make an appointment on time or at all. I was always forgetting when they were. I felt so messed up!

My Case manager then helped get me on track. Then I started seeing my therapist on time and my psychiatrist, which I have had many of both! They then told me about the Valley Social Club. I reluctantly tried it. I then went more frequently. I went so much I decided to become President and for the past 20 years on and off I have been President. We started with staff help an Executive Board that did things more on our own. I was asked to be on a new kind of Peer to Peer Line called the "Warm Line". I am the oldest Warm Line worker in Connecticut. I am the Coordinator of the Line and have worked it since 1995. I love what I do. I even am a Peer Driver and that as well has been for many years now. I am 70 so I don't know how long I will keep this all up! With Vocational Help I have held many jobs in the community such as a lunch lady and baby sitter.

My last thought on my journey to this point makes me wonder what would have happened to me if I didn't have the services I have. Where would I be and would I still be able to live in the community. Would I have enjoyed my daughters and seen my grandchildren and great grandchildren grow up? I do not really know. This is where I want be, I know that!

Thank you for listening to my story!