



Carol A. Kivler

Mental Health Advocate, Author, Trainer and Speaker



Speaking Topics Include:

- Demystifying ECT: What You Don't See in the Movies
- The Other Side of Psychosis
- Putting the Face of Hope on Depression
- Don't Tell Anyone I've Had ECT - It's My Secret

Suggested Audiences:

medical staff
medical and nursing schools
mental health facilities and professionals
addiction treatment centers and associations
family support groups

Carol is a sought after motivational speaker, presenter and Founder of Courageous Recovery. Through Courageous Recovery, she shares her personal story and advocates for those suffering with depression. She speaks to medical and mental health professionals, associations, patients, and families and friends of those diagnosed with a mental illness diagnosis. Carol's high-energy and compelling keynote presentations change thinking and inspire participants to reach beyond the myths and stigma surrounding mental illness.

First diagnosed with mental illness herself in 1990, Carol suffers from periodic acute bouts of medication-resistant depression, responsive only to ECT (electro-convulsive therapy). Since 1990, she has experienced both long periods of recovery, and four acute episodes of depression each time requiring hospitalization and additional ECT treatments.

Presently, Carol has been in recovery for eight years. During past recovery periods, she has received a master's degree in Human Resource Education and started Kivler Communications, a company that provides customized corporate training, development and executive coaching. Through Kivler Communications she has conducted more than 2,500 workshops. She also recently earned her CSP (Certified Speaking Professional) from the National Speakers Association.

Carol started speaking to the mental health field several years ago, after being approached by National Alliance on Mental Illness Conference (NAMI). She was asked to present and share her story of recovery and was certified by NAMI to deliver their national program, In Our Own Voice. She is currently a Board Member of NAMI-Mercer and was recently honored as a 2008 NJ Magazine Seeds of Hope Honoree.

Carol has been interviewed on television, radio, and in print and is highly sought after to speak about mental health issues during National Mental Health Month. She is the author of *Blessings: Your Journal of Gratitude* and is presently working on her next book, *Will I Ever Be the Same Again? A Survivor Guide Reclaiming Your Life after Depression*.

"I am a daughter, sister, mother, grandmother, friend, educator, speaker, author, and business owner. I am also a woman living courageously and successfully with a mental illness diagnosis. I view my diagnosis as a gift that allows me to share my own experience so that those who treat or live with this disease can see that recovery is possible. Through education and communication, we can reduce stigma by changing the face of mental illness." -Carol Kivler

25% of speaker fees are donated to NAMI MERCER NEW JERSEY a nonprofit organization of families and individuals dedicated to improving the quality of life of people affected by mental illness.



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Previous Speaking Engagements Include

- Princeton House Behavioral Health
(Patients and health care professionals - six facilities)
- Abington Hospital
(Grand Round presentation)
- The Robert Wood Johnson Wellness Center
(class)
- Seton Hall Nursing School
(nursing students)
- The College of New Jersey
(pre-med students)
- Wyeth Research & Development
(pharmaceutical scientists and researchers)
- Healing Hearts & Minds
(consumers and family)
- Eagleville Hospital
(Spring Retreat for Healthcare Professionals)

"My students were riveted to their seats. Your presentation has changed not only their professional lives but their personal lives as well."

Donna A. Gaffney, RN, DNSc, FAAN
(Seton Hall University)

"I came away inspired, knowing that the medicines we are striving to develop truly make a difference in real peoples' lives. I've always believed that, but real experiences and faces mean much more."

Albert Uveges
(Scientist, Wyeth Research)

Carol Kivler's Presentation Topics

Demystifying ECT: What You Don't See in the Movies

Electro-Convulsive Therapy (ECT) is a potent therapeutic tool that has treated severe cases of mental illness for many years. Originally known as "shock therapy", the practice once associated with films like "One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest" has evolved and is resurfacing as an effective treatment for those suffering with medication-resistant depression. According to the American Psychiatric Association, its success rate is 80 percent; almost double that of treatment with medication alone. Carol has received more than 50 ECT treatments over an 18 year period to treat bouts of intense depression. Carol discusses her own experiences as a patient including her initial reaction to the recommendation as well as her preparation, treatment, side effects and recovery from ECT and depression.

Don't Tell Anyone I've Had ECT - It's My Secret

The stigma surrounding ECT (Electro- Convulsive Therapy) is often worse than the therapy itself. Why should a life-saving therapy that has proven effectiveness, remain cloaked in stigma? The media continues to portray ECT in the relatively brutal way it was first done, i.e. without anesthesia. Today, ECT is used in a much gentler and more humane way but, unfortunately, there is very little information available to the health care community and the general public as to how ECT is used. Carol shares her own story and first-hand experience with ECT. She also speaks about "hiding" her diagnosis because of stigma and her decision to "come out" in order to combat the stereotypical image of ECT and advocate for its acceptance as a viable option for treating severe depression.

The Other Side of Psychosis

For many health care professionals, their frame of reference of individuals with depression is formed when these individuals are in crisis. However, many individuals with a mental illness diagnosis have extended periods of time when they are active, focused and able to manage day-to-day living successfully while contributing significantly to the world around them (like Winston Churchill, Ernest Hemingway, Mike Wallace, Patty Duke, and Jane Pauley). Carol presents an honest look at how mental illness is currently viewed and what changes can take place to help those diagnosed reach their full potential. She focuses on dispelling the myths around mental illness, helping patients to live with their diagnosis and disease and creating a supportive healthcare professional/patient partnership.

Presentations are available as a 30 – 90 minute keynote or as a 3 hour workshop
Contact Carol Kivler at (609) 882-8988 or email carol@courageousrecovery.com