



The Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force is the voice of the community on issues related to the quality and responsiveness of mental health and substance abuse disorder services.

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**Shel Gross to Receive the
Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force *Karen Avery Award*
September 12th at IndependenceFirst**

The Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force (MHTF) is delighted to announce that Shel Gross will be the fourth recipient of the *Karen Avery Award*. The award was established to honor Karen's tremendous legacy as an advocate, mentor, peer, and leader in advancing the rights of people with disabilities, and supporting independence and power for people with disabilities. Karen was a leader in the Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force and a mentor to so many.

Shel Gross has been the Director of Public Policy for Mental Health America of Wisconsin (MHA) since April 2000. He has been a valued leader in advancing the expansion of community based mental health services that support recovery and independence. Shel serves as Project Manager for MHA's statewide Prevention/Early Intervention Initiative in Mental Health which has most recently focused on improving quality assurance within behavioral healthcare settings to reduce suicides in Wisconsin. Among his many contributions, Shel was a member and Chair of the Legislative and Policy Committee of the Wisconsin Council on Mental Health, a board member of the Wisconsin Prevention Network and a former co-chair of the Survival Coalition of Wisconsin Disability Organizations.

Shel and Karen Avery were founding Board Members of the Grassroots Empowerment Project (GEP), and worked closely with Molly Cisco and others to establish GEP. As a trainer, speaker, and mentor, Shel has helped to elevate the voices of many Wisconsin peers in public policy advocacy. He holds a Master's Degree in Public Policy from the LaFollette Institute for Public Affairs at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and has over 40 years of experience in the mental health field. Prior to his job with MHA he worked for ten years in the Wisconsin Medicaid program.

The *Karen Avery Award* will be presented to Shel, Tuesday, September 12th, at the Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force 2017 Forum *Building Bridges Towards Authentic Inclusion -Structural Racism & Implicit Bias, Microaggressions: meaning and next steps*. The forum supports the MHTF's commitment to advance inclusion, and engage participants in addressing issues of race and racism. Speakers include Marth Barry, PhD, Racial Justice Director of the YWCA Southeast Wisconsin; Jamaal E. Smith, MPA, Racial Justice Community Engagement Manager YWCA Southeast Wisconsin; and Patricia Taylor McManus, PhD, RN, GCNPM, Co-Founder & President, Black Health Coalition of Wisconsin.

Congratulations to Shel Gross and we thank him for his dedicated advocacy.

Additional information about the September 12th Forum including online registration is available at:
<http://www.milwaukeeemhtf.org/2017/08/07/building-bridges-towards-authentic-inclusion-2017-forum.html>
For additional information, contact Disability Rights Wisconsin Milwaukee office at 414-773-4646.

Note: Certified Peer Specialists may register to receive 3.0 Continuing Education Hours.