SELF-HELP AND NONPROFIT CHARACTERISTICS IN MENTAL HEALTH CONSUMER-RUN ORGANIZATIONS

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DEDICATION

To Richard and to my parents, thanks for your love and support.

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ABSTRACT

Mental health consumer-run organizations (CROs) are organizations that incorporate the characteristics of self-help groups and nonprofit organizations. As self-help behavior settings, CROs impact the members and members influence CROs as members occupy all leadership and staff roles. At the same time, CROs are typically formal 501c3 nonprofits so they can receive funding. This research explored the self-help and nonprofit characteristics that exist in these settings through qualitative interviews with CRO leaders and members at eight CROs in Kansas. Overall, CROs demonstrated many self-help characteristics, such as a focus on recovery, empowerment, member control, and peer support. CROs also demonstrated sustainability characteristics such as high member participation. Nonprofit characteristics for CROs showed evidence of positive characteristics in some areas, including encouraging participation from members, assessing satisfaction of members, and maintaining adequate facilities. CROs also had some typical challenges the majority of traditional nonprofit settings face, such as diversity of funding and fundraising. Overall, CROs faced a remarkable balance between being a recovery-driven peer support behavior setting while also maintaining a formal nonprofit organization with reporting and operating requirements, a balance that is a rarity in both the nonprofit and self-help worlds.

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CRO Consumer-Run Organization

SRS Social and Rehabilitation Services

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Mental health consumer-run organizations (CROs) have a unique organizational structure. They operate as 501c3 nonprofit organizations with the common features of community-based nonprofit organizations. However, they are also self-help organizations in that they provide a setting of mutual support and empowerment that is totally staffed and governed by mental health consumers. CROs provide self-help services such as warm lines, peer support, and self-help groups while also providing "nonprofit" services such as transportation, education, and training.

This research focused on better understanding the unique self-help and nonprofit characteristics of CROs. These characteristics were examined using behavior and activity setting theory as a framework. A contextualized examination of CROs as both self-help organizations and nonprofit organizations allowed for a richer and more accurate picture of these unique behavior settings.

Setting Theory

Barker's Behavior Setting Theory

Behavior setting theory, originally developed by Roger Barker (1968), stated that the ecological environment of human behavior and its inhabitants are not independent, but rather the environment is composed of humans, nonhuman components, and patterns of behavior which are measurable and predictable. There are expected social behaviors that people maintain in different settings. If a person is not performing the expected, or “standing patterns of behavior” in the environment, they receive countering or vetoing actions that are roughly proportional in strength to the degree of deviancy. For example, if a person is too loud in a library others will stare, hush, or ask that person to be quiet.

Barker (1968) described several factors that can influence a person’s behavior to conform to the setting. One of these is physical forces, such as physical arrangements in the environment, and another

is social forces, which includes expectations of certain roles and the actions of others in that setting. Other factors that can influence a person's behavior include physiological factors such as temperature and noise, and physiognomic perception, or the person's reaction to stimuli in the environment (i.e. open spaces, crowded areas). Of course, learning also influences a person's behavior. Learning includes the acceptable behaviors a person acquires in particular environments, such as being quiet in a library.

A person's behavior may also affect the behavior of future people in the setting. This can be intentional or unintentional. An example of an intentional effect would be an architect designing a building to maximize social interaction which impacts other behaviors. An example of an unintentional effect would be enough people walking through the grass that the beginning of a path forms which "invites" others to walk the same path and ultimately forms a well-defined and regularly used footpath.

Decisions about whether or not to enter a setting are also influenced by setting factors. For example, people may elect to participate in a setting because they are interested in what the setting offers (i.e., library has books and is a quiet place), or they may choose to avoid a certain setting because it makes them uncomfortable or has nothing to offer. Sometimes, behavior settings have rules that dictate who can participate. For instance, one must be a mental health consumer to be a member of a CRO.

CROs are organizations that provide a place for mental health consumers to meet and socialize with other people, and include participation in informal and formal structured activities, giving and receiving peer support, and participating in the leadership of the organization. If the concepts of behavior settings were applied to a CRO, the social forces could include socializing with others at the organization, participating in activities, volunteering to help organize activities, or becoming a leader. To influence physical forces and create a welcoming environment that encourages participation, CROs provide adequate space to meet, a welcoming environment that is comfortable to members (i.e. couches rather than desks), and a place that provides useful information and a nondiscriminatory

environment for people with mental illness. People may elect to join CROs because of the connection they feel with others because of their experience with mental illness. In CROs there are few requirements to join, with the most important one being that a person have a mental illness.

Genotypes and Phenotypes

Behavior setting theory was expanded by Luke, Rappaport, and Seidman (1991) when they defined genotypes and phenotypes in their application of behavior setting theory to self-help groups. Genotypes are settings whose components are similar enough so that they can be exchanged without greatly disturbing the sequence of behavior in any of the settings. For example, a chain of restaurants that have the same menu, prices, and building layout are similar enough that one manager could transfer from one store to another without having to learn a substantial amount of new material. This chain of restaurants would constitute a genotype. The second concept, a phenotype, is defined by settings that share the same genotype, but differ meaningfully and consistently in the behavior episodes within particular settings. This is not dependent on the actors or physical components of the setting, but on meaningful and consistent behavioral patterns. Phenotypes refer to the actual patterns of observed behavior, such as the relationships between the manager and employees.

Luke, et al. (1991) examined several different GROW groups which are peer-run mutual support groups for people with mental illness. GROW groups are based on the same structure and philosophy, and therefore GROW groups were considered a genotype, even though each group was a distinct behavior setting. For example, it took little time for a GROW leader of one group to adjust to another GROW group, which suggested these groups were one genotype. In examining the groups, they found four distinct phenotypes, or patterns of behavior, across groups using cluster analysis which were personal, impersonal, advising, and small talk. They compared these different phenotypes to facets of the behavior settings, including level of psychological functioning, meeting size, communication density,

level of participation, and number of self-help contacts. When comparing the four phenotypes to facets of the behavior setting, they found that the setting facets determined the behavioral differences between the phenotypes more so than individual personalities of GROW members, which suggests that setting characteristics in this situation had more of an impact on the phenotype of the group than did individual personalities.

Luke et al. (1991) developed several conclusions based on their research with GROW groups. First, they were not surprised that differences were found between groups because groups met in different places, had unique histories, and had different levels of organization. They discussed how even though GROW was a structured program, the different phenotypes (standing patterns of behavior) resulted in different outcomes for members of different groups. For instance, groups characterized as highly personal had the highest positive member outcomes and were the most likely to be underpopulated, so keeping groups small seemed to be an effective practice for GROW groups. A related finding was that impersonal groups were the least helpful to members and were also the newest groups, so it took time for groups to develop and produce higher member outcomes.

There were several implications to the concept of phenotypes developed by Luke et al. (1991). Phenotypes emphasize the importance of behavioral variability among settings. They allow behavior setting theory to be applied to smaller, more homogenous settings, and more attention should be paid to the behavioral patterns that consistently occur in various settings. To clarify, genotype categories were developed for questions dealing with comparisons across many different types of settings, whereas phenotypes are used when one is interested in a more fine-grained analysis of the behavioral functioning within a smaller set of more similar settings.

CROs, like GROW groups, are based on a similar structure and philosophy. CROs are organizations that are staffed and governed by consumers of mental health services, and CROs embrace many of the same basic principles, such as advocating for consumer rights, belief in peer support, and

focusing on recovery from mental illness. However, CROs also differ from one location to another in terms of hours of operation, size, number of staff, activities held, location, and other variables. The culture of each organization also differs from one to another. Some CROs have small memberships with less structured activities, while other CROs may have large memberships and multiple structured activities. CROS also have a life-cycle. Organizations develop at different rates and have access to different resources depending on where the organization is in its life-cycle. Related to context, the communities in which these organizations exist differ as well. Specific contextual differences might include other services and agencies available in the community, the size of the consumer population, or the support of the community for each CRO. Therefore, CROs are the same genotype, but consist of multiple phenotypes and diverse setting facets that differ between locations. Since CROs consist of different phenotypes, based on the theory developed by Luke et al. (1991), CROs are likely to produce different outcomes.

Activity Setting Theory

O'Donnell, Tharp, and Wilson (1993) developed activity setting theory which expanded on Barker's behavior setting theory by focusing on the internal patterns of activities and their use of resources. This theory integrates the internal and external resources of a setting and their subjective features (i.e. individual experience, behavior). Activity settings are those in which people share a common goal, referred to as the product of the setting. Activity settings in which participants do not share a common goal are likely to be short lived.

Activity settings have been described as "areas in the physical environment that influence social transactions" (Lippman, 2004, p. 5). According to O'Donnell et al. (1993), while behavior setting theory posits that settings can occur randomly, a major distinguishing feature of activity settings is that they are deliberate. The people involved in activity settings do not enter by accident; nor are activities

implemented without a reason. This theory suggests that characteristics such as physical resources, program operations, and norms influence behaviors and outcomes in settings. These characteristics differentiate one activity setting from another, and they provide a purpose for behavior.

O'Donnell et al. (1993) discussed important characteristics in activity settings, including: people, positions, physical environment, time, funds and symbols. People represent the most important aspect of the activity setting, and include a person's beliefs, values, and motives. Positions represent the individual roles to meet the demands of the activity setting. In a CRO, roles can be formal, such as director, staff, or volunteer. Many members also take on informal roles, such as "good listener" or source of information about local helping resources.

The physical environment includes the resources in the setting, such as location, materials and tools used to reach the goals of the setting (O'Donnell et al. 1993). Time is used to refer to the amount of time a CRO is open and allocated to activities, such as meeting times, time of day the activity occurs, and the duration and frequency of the activities in the setting. Funds refer to the amount of money available to complete the activity. Symbols refer to the cultural beliefs, norms and values of the setting in which the activity takes place. However, as described by O'Donnell et al. interaction is the heart of activity settings. "The foundational process by which cognitions are developed, skills acquired, relationships formed, goals set, and activities carried out is interaction" (O'Donnell et al., 1993, pg. 505).

While surface-level setting characteristics are important in understanding a setting, analyzing the subjective experiences of individuals involved in the setting is essential. In activity settings, social interaction helps individuals assign personal meaning to their experiences. Tharp and Gallimore (1988) developed five social processes that help explain social relationships in activity settings.

1) Mutual Respect and Trust represents an open and honest sharing of ideas and respect for one another in the setting.

2) Intersubjectivity represents the level of agreement and shared values of members in an activity setting.

3) Responsiveness is being sensitive to the needs of those in the setting, and using feedback from those members to adjust the setting as necessary.

4) Joint productive activity refers to the ability of the members in the setting to work together productively to accomplish the goals of the setting.

5) Reciprocity posits that those who receive assistance in the setting will provide assistance to others, having a reciprocal effect.

O'Donnell et al. (1993) suggested collecting data on these subjective measures, as they are interdependent with the other setting assets, such as the physical environment, time, positions, symbols, and funds, and can be used to enhance social processes in a setting.

Behavior setting theory and activity setting theory can both be applied to CROs. CROs are behavior settings in that they consist of settings that can modify the behavior of people nested within the setting, and members' behavior also modifies the setting itself (Brown, Shepherd, Wituk & Meissen, 2007[a]). Activity setting theory specifically addresses the activities that occur within CROs, and includes social processes that occur within these settings. These social processes help explain the relationships and behaviors of individuals in the setting, and were addressed in part by the self-help characteristics examined in this study. This research explored CROs as both nonprofit and self-help behavior activity settings.

Consumer-Run Organizations

Consumer-Run Organizations (CROs) have their roots in the consumer/survivor initiatives that began after deinstitutionalization in the late 1960s and have become an increasingly common component in the community mental health system (Hardiman & Segal, 2003; Nelson, Lord, & Ochocka,

2001; New Freedom Commission on Mental Health, 2003). CROs are based in a self-help/mutual-help approach (Silverman, Blank, & Taylor, 1997) with a focus on the strengths of persons with psychiatric disabilities (Zinman, 1986). CROs allow peers to help each other in a non-hierarchical context based on shared experiential expertise with psychiatric disability (Kauffman, Ward-Colasante, & Farmer, 1993; Borkman, 1999). CROs also have been referred to as self-help mental health agencies (Segal & Silverman, 2002), consumer-run drop-in centers (Mowbray, Robinson, & Holter, 2002), and consumer/survivor organizations (Nelson, Lord, & Ochocka, 2001). CROs take many forms, most commonly "drop-in centers," but few are only drop-in centers, as they also engage in advocacy, peer counseling, for-profit businesses, crisis alternatives to hospitalization, and self-help groups (Mowbray, Moxley, Jasper, & Howell, 1997; Segal, Silverman, & Temkin, 1995[a]; Silverman, Blank, & Taylor, 1997).

Research on CROs

CROs are increasingly becoming an important component of the mental health system and the recovery movement in a number of cities, regions, and states (Goldstrom et al, 2006; Holter & Mowbray, 2005). CROs are part of the larger movement toward consumer-operated services, which is a term used more broadly to define programs and services where consumers help other consumers, including support services, advocacy groups, respite, and peer-to-peer mentoring (Mowbray, Holter, Mowbray & Bybee, 2005).

CROs are consumer-operated in that they are controlled organizationally, administratively, and programmatically by people with psychiatric disabilities, providing multiple roles for people with psychiatric disabilities to become involved, including that of director, staff, board president, board member, volunteer, and CRO member (Nelson et al. 2001). CROs are widely dispersed, and are located in both rural and urban settings (Goldstrom et al, 2006).

The President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health, Achieving the Promise: Transforming Mental Health Care in America (2003), recognized that consumer operated services which include CROs are an "emerging best practice." Goldstrom et al (2006) reported from a national survey conducted in 2002 that the number of consumer-operated organizations in the U.S., which included CROs and peer led self-help mental health groups (n = 7,467), outnumbered traditional mental health organizations (n = 4,546). In addition, there has been growing emphasis on the need for collaboration between CROs and community supports that include the traditional mental health system (Hodges & Hardiman, 2006; Lawson, 2004). Despite this attention, there is little understanding about the unique characteristics of CROs as community-based nonprofit self-help organizations.

Some initial research found benefits to people with psychiatric disabilities who participated in CROs. Yanos, Primavera, and Knight (2001) found that those who participated in CROs had better social functioning than those only utilizing traditional services. Research by Trainor et al. (1997) documented a 91% decline in the use of inpatient services after participation in a CRO began. The Trainor et al. study additionally found that members, who used a wide range of services, considered their CRO the single most helpful component of the mental health system. People with psychiatric disabilities at CROs gained meaningful work, served as role models, and enhanced system sensitivity to the needs of persons with mental disabilities (Fisher, 1994; Salzer & Shear, 2002).

CRO members frequently attend CROs, on average four days a week (Holter & Mowbray, 2005) with 68% of members attending "several times a week" (Segal & Silverman, 2002). CRO members also utilize services beyond those provided by membership to their CRO (Nelson, Ochocka, Janzen, Trainor, Goering, & Lomotey, 2007). For instance, 49% (Nelson, Ochocka, Janzen, & Trainor, 2006[b]) to 80% (Holter & Mowbray, 2005) of CRO members use other mental health services such as case management or therapy (Nelson et al., 2006[b]). However, psychiatric hospitalization trends for CRO members seem to be different than for consumers attending only traditional mental health services. In one recent

longitudinal study, Nelson et al. (2007) reported that only 3.6% of active CRO members were hospitalized for psychiatric reasons during a 36-month period.

CRO members have fewer psychiatric symptoms subsequent to extensive CRO involvement. Long-time CRO members reported greater confidence and increased levels of hopefulness in comparison to what they reported prior to CRO involvement (Ochocka, Nelson, Janzen, & Trainor, 2006). In one of the few studies that used random assignment, Greenfield, Stoneking, Humphreys, Sundby, and Bond (2008) found that consumers assigned to consumer-managed crisis residential programs reported significantly greater levels of treatment satisfaction than consumers assigned to locked, inpatient psychiatric facilities.

CROs provide opportunities for social interactions that have a positive relationship with recovery (Brown et al., 2008; Nelson et al., 2006[b]; Solomon, 2004). One of the most important strengths of CROs is their ability to promote the creation and maintenance of social networks (Brown et al., 2008; Nelson et al., 2006[a]). Many members attend CROs for the social interactions the setting provides (Mowbray & Tan, 1993). These social interactions within CROs cultivate a sense of community (Maton & Salem, 1995) and promote community involvement (Mowbray & Tan, 1993), which helps to reduce isolation, loneliness and stigma (Gulcur, Tsemberis, Stefancic, & Greenwood, 2007). Hansson and Borkman (2007) found that social networks had a greater influence over perceived quality of life than did symptoms related to mental illness. Therefore, it is not surprising that members who are more active in their CROs gain greater benefit from being involved in the CRO than do those who are less active (Brown et al., 2008). Other research has also supported the benefits associated with CRO membership, including higher quality of life (Weaver, Randall, Salem, & Reischl, 2001), improvement in managing psychiatric symptoms (Houston et al., 2002), and managing mental illness (Powell et al., 2002).

Generally CROs are developed to provide services that run in parallel and compliment traditional mental health services (Brown, Shepherd, Merkle, Wituk, & Meissen, 2008). Some, such as the Michigan

based drop-in centers (Holter & Mowbray, 2005), partner more closely with the local mental health centers, while others such as CROs in Kansas or Consumer/Survivor Initiatives in Ontario (Nelson, et al., 2006[b]) work more independently from local mental health centers. These organizations provide a variety of services and activities, including increasing awareness about mental illness, advocacy, outreach, social support, and opportunities for leadership within the CRO (Brown et al., 2007[a]; Mowbray, Moxley, Jasper, & Howell, 1997; Silverman et al., 1997). CROs are also beneficial for the mental health system in that they do not cost very much. Holter & Mowbray (2005) found CROs in Michigan operated for about $8 daily per person, and Brown, Shepherd, Wituk and Meissen (2007[b]) found that they operate for $12 daily per person in Kansas.

Behavior and Activity Setting Theory Applied to CROs

Behavior settings and the members within those settings affect each other reciprocally (Brown et al., 2007[a]). The positive ethos, empowerment, and other self-help characteristics that one may experience within a CRO setting can instill hope in members and provide a setting in which members can focus on improving their quality of life. Members also contribute to nonprofit characteristics because they participate in the staffing and governing of the CRO.

In addition to the reciprocal relationship between individuals and settings, Maton (1994) also examined self-help settings from an ecological perspective, examining factors at the individual, group and community levels. He noted that these three ecological domains were interrelated in diverse ways and outlined four areas for research, including:

1) group-level variations and member well-being
2) member-group fit and member well-being
3) influence of group, member, and community characteristics on group viability and stability
4) group influence on the professional and lay community

The research areas of “group-level variations and member well-being” supported the idea that a mutual-help group was an activity setting. Maton noted that an underlying assumption of his research was that group characteristics differed between groups, and therefore member well-being also varied. Luke et al. (1991) also reported in their study of GROW support groups that different groups yielded different member outcomes. Activity setting theory contends that the group and activities affect the individual and the individual affects the group. Both behavior setting theory and activity setting theory address this reciprocal relationship between individuals and groups.

Specifically focusing on the "influence of group, member and community characteristics on group viability and stability" Maton (1994) found that "internal characteristics of groups, the characteristics of members, and the external environments in which groups function were assumed to together influence the organizational life cycle, viability, stability over time, and population ecology of groups" (pg. 144). As in behavior setting theory, where individuals have an effect on their environment, so too do member, group, and community characteristics affect one another. For instance, groups with more support from national or local organizations, are more likely to be viable than organizations without that type of community level support. Community characteristics that affect self-help groups can include: positive lay and professional attitudes, number of human service outreach activities, accessibility of professional help, level of neighborhood problems, population age, socio-economic status, and the types of focal and social problems prevalent in the community.

Shared leadership, another characteristic described by Maton (1994), was more likely to sustain the group over time because more members were involved in the leadership of the group, an example of a group characteristic affecting the group. Other group characteristics that can affect group viability and stability include: group ideology, group climate, group structure, helping mechanisms present in the group, and professional involvement in the group. Individual characteristics that affect groups include: member personality, psychosocial resources, well-being, and perceived legitimacy of the group. A group

leader's personality or severity of the focal problem can also affect a group's climate and viability, an example of an individual member's effect on the group.

Preliminary research has linked some CRO characteristics to changes in member outcomes, using behavior setting theory as a framework. Reinhart, Meissen, Wituk, and Shepherd (2008) examined setting level characteristics associated with CROs to determine which were related to positive outcomes among 250 participants in 20 CROs. Interviews were conducted with participants to gage their perception of setting level characteristics and personal outcomes of services. The results indicated the setting level characteristics of organizational climate, including leadership, participation, learning opportunities, and sense of community, were related to improved outcomes of services.

Brown et al. (2007[a]) applied behavior setting theory to CROs, specifically with regard to the overpopulated and underpopulated components of the theory. Overpopulated CROs have the advantage of selecting the most qualified individuals to fill leadership roles. Having a strong leadership base has been identified as a critical factor in operating an effective CRO (Kaufmann, Ward-Colassante, & Farmer, 1993), so overpopulated CROs would seem to have an advantage over underpopulated CROs.

Despite this thinking, an important facet of CROs is providing the opportunity for all members to participate in the organization. Brown et al. (2007[a]) examined how this applied to CROs and found that smaller organizations have a larger percentage of their members involved than do large CROs. Therefore, as the number of members in a CRO increased (overpopulated settings), the percentage of members contributing to organizational management decreased. However, in overpopulated settings the total number of members contributing to the management of the CRO increased as there were more roles to fill. What Brown, et al. found was that even though larger CROs have an overall lower percentage of members participating in organizational management, it does not appear to negatively impact positive outcomes from member participation.

While Brown et al. (2007[a]) explored the setting characteristics of organizational size and member participation; Reinhart et al. (2008) explored organizational setting characteristics such as organizational climate and perceived sense of community. The current study expanded on these two studies by examining other setting factors in CROs, specifically related to nonprofit and self-help characteristics. Similar to the Brown, et al. study, organizational size was included as a nonprofit characteristic and member participation was included as a self-help sustainability characteristic. However, the current study included other factors related to nonprofit characteristics and organizational functioning that might also affect the behavior of individuals in the setting. The current study also examined self-help characteristics that can help illustrate the CRO's effect on the member's behavior based on the values and focus on recovery in the organization.

Self-Help Characteristics

CROs are self-help/mutual support organizations. CROs are theorized to be helpful to members in that they provide a place for mental health consumers to gather and provide formal and informal peer support and also provide opportunities to participate in the leadership and functioning of the organization. Consequently, it is important to consider the characteristics of self-help when examining CROs.

Self-Help Group Characteristics

Riessman and Carroll (1995) discussed specific features of self-help groups that people find helpful and also increased peoples' likelihood of using groups and maintaining their participation over time. The first feature was "transformation of needs into assets" which means that people in self-help settings are able to transform their needs or problems into assets to help other people, through their "experiential knowledge." When someone has a mental illness they are experientially qualified to help

others with a mental illness because they know what it is like and can provide a collection of different experiences potentially helpful to that new member.

Riessman and Carroll (1995) also stated that in self-help groups and organizations there was an "interchangeability of roles" which means that people in self-help settings can change their role from helpee to helper at appropriate times, unlike the hierarchy and power that exist in professional helping relationships. A person may seek help one day, but give help the next. Seeking help and being able to give back is normalizing and can make members feel adequate, less stigmatized, and empowered as self-help settings mediate these and related feelings.

A third feature discussed by Riessman and Carroll (1995) was "positive ethos." Self-help mental health groups in particular are more positive, hopeful settings in that they focus on recovery, problem-solving, and view problems as real yet manageable. The atmosphere in self-help groups is cooperative, noncompetitive, anti-pressure, and anti-bureaucratic. Often groups focus on a "one day at a time" motto that gives people hope that they can change things for the better. In addition, a group gives people a sense of belonging, rather than feeling alone or that they are the only one suffering from a particular problem.

"Self-help from inside experience" was another feature of self-help groups discussed by Riessman and Carroll (1995), and means that self-help groups are self-sustaining (groups are dependent on their own members for growth and sustainability). These features help reinforce members' sense of independence and control within the group. Self-help groups generally do not have any political affiliations, do not charge members, do not rely on other organizations to provide funding, and are dependent upon the resources within the group.

The fifth feature discussed by Riessman and Carroll (1995) was "accent on empowerment." Self-help groups are focused on doing something to address the issue, rather than nothing; taking an active

stance rather than a passive one. Self-help groups encourage people to solve their own problems, rather than just accept them, with success and improvement celebrated within the group.

"Being helped by helping" was the sixth feature, and represents what many know as the Helper Therapy Principle (Riessman, 1965), which is the concept that helping others is therapeutic for the person providing help. Research has demonstrated that the act of helping others can improve one's self-concept, increase energy levels, and improve physical health (Luks, 1991). In a CRO setting, members may provide help to others in several ways, including getting involved in social roles, volunteering for the organization, providing emotional support to other members, and creating friendships with others. According to Skovholt (1974) there are four benefits that individuals receive when helping others, including an increased sense of competence, a sense of equality with others, learning new personally-relevant skills while helping someone, and social approval. Overall, helping others can provide many benefits for individuals.

Sustainability of Self-Help Groups

In a study by Wituk, Shepherd, Warren, and Meissen (2002), interviews were conducted with self-help group leaders to determine which factors contributed to the survival of the groups and which factors were related to groups disbanding, including external or community factors as well as group factors. Resources and services from external or community sources that were examined included: affiliation with national self-help organizations, relationships with local agencies, and having a professional involved in the group. Group characteristics that were examined included: leadership diversification, outreach to potential group members, attendance at group meetings, and length of existence. Disbanded groups that were contacted and interviewed were also asked the reason(s) for their group disbanding. They found that the most powerful variable was the number of new people to attend a meeting in the past 12 months. This was followed by five other significant variables, including:

average attendance at group meetings; number of months the group had been in operation; number of people contributing to leadership responsibilities; membership recruitment and maintenance techniques; and support received from national and local organizations. Professional involvement was not significant.

In addition to these factors, Wituk et al. (2002) found that the most frequent reason for disbanding was attendance problems. Group leaders reported that members would not come to group meetings or they would drop out over time but new members weren't joining to replace them. Leadership problems were the second most common reason. Group leaders often reported that no one in the group was willing to help, and the group disbanded when the leader left, often moving on with their lives after finding some level of resolution to their issues. Other results indicated that groups disbanded because they were no longer needed; there were problems between members, or other logistical problems such as finding a meeting place.

King, Stewart, King, and Law (2000) also examined sustainability with their study of self-help groups for parents of children with special needs. This study used qualitative interviews with participants and field observations to address perceptions of group style and function, personal involvement in the group, satisfaction with the group, and suggestions for change. Analysis of themes revealed several different areas that related to group sustainability, including having a positive focus and balancing group activities to meet the needs of parents. For instance, results found that emotional support, information/education, and advocacy were important.

The focal points changed based on the needs of current members in each group, according to King et al. (2000). Funding and fundraising were found as a major focus of groups. Some groups needed more funding than others, and fundraising was adjusted based on these needs. A change in philosophy and activities over time was another identified theme, which reflected shifts in the purpose of the group. Cohesion and empowerment were themes representing the initial excitement of starting a

group; the growth in sense of belonging over time and the growth in a sense of empowerment over time for members were longer-term mechanisms related to sustainability.

King et al. (2000) reported that leadership was also important, and included three separate themes. The first was the importance of leadership generally to the group. Leaders often performed several vital functions, including organizing meetings, contacting members, finding speakers, maintaining documents, and planning activities. The second focused on having members that were reluctant to become leaders which was important to the livelihood of the group. Third, attracting new members was found to be another difficult, but vital focus of groups.

King et al. (2000) discussed several insights gained from the study, including the idea that "self-help groups evolve through dealing with issues and coming up with solutions" (pg. 235), and, like all organizations, they need to be adaptive to change to meet the needs of those they serve. King et al. discussed three sustaining factors that were important for groups, including 1) having a committed and effective leadership; 2) community connections (i.e. referrals to groups); and 3) the willingness to meet changing needs.

Self-Help Characteristics Examined in Current Study

Based on the literature described above, several self-help group characteristics were identified for use in the current research. The capacities identified by the literature review were separated into two categories: essential components of self-help groups and sustainability characteristics. Essential components used in the current study can be seen in Table 1 and self-help sustainability characteristics can be seen in Table 2.

TABLE 1

ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF SELF-HELP GROUPS

1. Transformation of needs into assets
2. Interchangeability of roles
3. Positive ethos
4. Self-help from inside experience
5. Accent on empowerment
6. Being helped by helping

TABLE 2

SELF-HELP SUSTAINABILITY CHARACTERISTICS

1. The number of new people to attend a meeting
2. Average attendance at meetings
3. Length of existence
4. Leadership diversification
5. Outreach to potential group members
6. Committed and effective leadership
7. Community connections that help provide needed funds or practical assistance
8. Willingness of group members to change activities to meet changing needs

Nonprofit Characteristics

CROs viewed as behavior settings suggests these organizations can be studied with the goal of discovering characteristics and practices that can help sustain them. However, because CROs are not simply self-help groups, nonprofit organizational characteristics were also explored. Many authors have suggested that nonprofit organizational effectiveness research has reached little consensus (Sowa, Coleman-Selden, & Sandfort, 2004), has been a subject of controversy and confusion (Forbes, 1998), and that it continues to challenge both practitioners and scholars (Herman & Renz, 1998). In spite of the difficulties surrounding characteristics of nonprofits linked to success, several theories have emerged that have increased understanding in this area.

Theses on Organizational Effectiveness

Herman and Renz (1999) presented several different theses on nonprofit organizational characteristics that apply to theories of organizational effectiveness. First, organizational effectiveness is a matter of comparison, in other words, researchers compare nonprofits with one another. Second, organizational effectiveness is multidimensional and cannot be reduced to a single measure. Third, some believe that program outcome indicators would make good effectiveness measures; however, Herman and Renz caution about using these measures for effectiveness research as nonprofits are not merely the sum of their parts; multiple programs exist in nonprofit organizations, each with different outcomes. Furthermore, nonprofit organizations, in an attempt to show positive program outcomes, may unknowingly use flawed causal inferences, fail to effectively exclude confounding variables from their results, or may use convenient data because of conducting research on program outcomes is expensive and time-consuming.

Previous Approaches to the Study of Nonprofit Effectiveness

Forbes (1998) examined several studies of nonprofit organizational effectiveness over a 20-year period. Based on this review, he described three stages that organizational effectiveness research has moved through, including: effectiveness assessment studies, studies of correlates of effectiveness, and studies of the process of effectiveness assessment. Effectiveness assessment studies were studies that tried to address how to measure effectiveness in a methodological way, often attempting to develop some type of framework that could be statistically measured. Studies of correlates of effectiveness approached measurement differently and sought to examine the organizational phenomenon that were associated or correlated with effectiveness, often including governance practices as organizational characteristics. The third stage included studies examining the process of effectiveness measurement, and during this stage researchers focused more on how effectiveness was measured rather than attempting to develop a way to measure effectiveness. By this time, it had become widely accepted that there was no single, uniform way to measure effectiveness across all organizations.

Forbes (1998) also described some of the major approaches to nonprofit effectiveness research. He identified three major approaches to understanding characteristics linked to success: the goal-attainment approach, the system resource approach, and the reputational approach. The goal-attainment approach examined the amount of goals an organization achieved on a yearly basis to measure effectiveness, and the system resource approach examined organizational resource procurement to measure effectiveness. The reputational approach examined the reported opinions of key persons, such as clients, service providers, and funders. The goal attainment and system resource approaches have been used in the past to study nonprofit organizational effectiveness. However, these approaches were difficult to measure and varied from one organization to the next. Multidimensional approaches became more popular in later years with the development of the reputational approach, but

this approach also had some difficulties, including identifying appropriate people to interview and generalizability across studies.

Forbes (1998) also described a new emergent approach, called the social constructionist approach. The social constructionist approach emphasized understanding the interactions within and among organizations that lead to the development of criteria for evaluating that organization. The social constructionist approach also looked at the roles that information and communication play in shaping judgments of nonprofits, and believed that the meaning of "effectiveness" was created by individuals and was specific to the context in which they were created. These definitions and assessments were also capable of evolving and changing over time as the people who created them continued to interact with one another. This new approach looked at organizational characteristics as less of something to be measured and more as a subject area that needs exploration.

Herman and Renz (1997) applied the social constructionist approach to examine nonprofits with multiple stakeholders. The multiple constituencies model developed by Herman and Renz recognized that nonprofit organizations have multiple stakeholders that differ in what they believe constitutes organizational effectiveness. Herman and Renz described the social constructionist model as multiple stakeholders having different judgments over time, formed in "an ongoing process of sense-making and implicit negotiation" (pg.188).

Nonprofit Organizational Capacity Model

The Nonprofit Organizational Capacity Model (Connolly, 2006) includes multiple capacities of effective nonprofit organizations that include not only physical resources but relationships, organizational culture, and services/activities provided by the organization, which combines many of the factors mentioned previously into one model. The Nonprofit Organizational Capacity Model describes several capacities that organizations should possess to be effective in four different capacity areas,

including adaptive, leadership, technical and management. The Nonprofit Organizational Capacity Model was developed under the social constructionist approach which assumes that effectiveness is something to be explored for individual agencies, and it does not attempt to apply a uniform measure to nonprofit organizations that vary in size, complexity, and context.

The Nonprofit Organizational Capacity Model (Connolly, 2006) acknowledges a nonprofit organizational lifecycle that includes five stages: start-up, adolescent, mature, stagnant, and defunct. Organizations move through these various lifecycles as they mature, but organizations can also move backwards or forwards through the lifecycles. For instance, an organization might move directly from start-up to defunct, dissolving after a short time. Other organizations may move more quickly from start-up to mature if there is a great need for their services and they begin with a lot of resources, such as an endowment. There are also transitions between each lifecycle stage, such as beginning a stage, moving to a new stage because of growth, declining out of a stage over time, revisiting a previous stage, and dissolving the organization. These transitions include the process of sustaining the organization in the mature stage, which is critical to a maintaining a successful organization. The organization's capacities help move the organization through the lifecycles and also enable the organization to manage transitions. Nonprofit organizations need to be able to adapt their capacities, making sure they are using the right mix of capacities needed at specific times, in order to move through the lifecycles and maintain the organization.

According to Connolly (2006), nonprofit capacity "describes a wide range of capabilities, knowledge, and resources that nonprofits need in order to be vital and effective in staying true to their mission." The Nonprofit Organizational Capacity model has four different types of capacities, 1) adaptive, 2) leadership, 3) management, and 4) technical. These four capacities are multi-faceted and continually evolving.

Adaptive Capacity. Adaptive capacity is, "the ability to monitor, assess, respond to, and stimulate internal and external changes" (Connolly, 2006; pg. 6). This capacity allows the organization to be flexible, seek new opportunities, and generate new ideas. It also entails modifying current strategies or programs to fit the needs of the external environment.

Leadership Capacity. Leadership capacity is described by Connolly (2006) as the ability of the organization's leaders to inspire others, provide direction, and be innovative in order to achieve the organization's mission. Leadership capacity is important because leaders make decisions that affect the strategic operation of the organization, including incorporating what they learn from adaptive capacity generating activities. Leadership and adaptive capacity are interrelated in that, leaders need information from the external environment and the organization to make decisions about the organization's programs and service delivery. In addition, leaders are often responsible for implementing activities that increase the organization's adaptive capacity.

Management Capacity. Management capacity is the ability of the organization to use human and financial resources efficiently (Connolly, 2006). Management capacity includes: hiring, training, and assessing staff; facilitating clear communication between staff; creating an organizational structure; solving internal problems; using financial information to make decisions; and managing resources with accountability. Management capacity and leadership capacity are also interrelated because the leadership's efficiency and decisions affect the management and staff of the organization.

Technical Capacity. Technical capacity involves performing key operational functions and delivering programs and services. Technical capacity is, in essence, the capacity of staff to perform the work of the organization. Technical capacity can be increased by increasing the skills of staff to perform

service delivery effectively, including marketing communications, fundraising, improving accounting, legal skills, facilities management and technology in the organization. Technical capacity is more independent than the other three capacities. Organizations may know what they need to accomplish goals, but without technical capacity they will not be able to successfully implement the steps to complete their goals. Furthermore, if an organization has technical capacity but is weak in other areas, they might implement programs well, but they may be the wrong programs to achieve the organization's mission.

Based on this model, Connolly (2006) presents capacities for each area that can be seen in Table 3. Capacities for each area were used in the current study, with the exception of management capacities. Management capacities were not used because CROs do not use a traditional management structure. While there is typically an executive director, in CROs the executive director does not always work full-time. Some CROs have staff and others do not but most CROs have fewer staff than other nonprofits, but more "member volunteers." CROs have a board of directors typically made up of 100% CRO members and other mental health consumers, so organizational charts for CROs show that some members are also the leaders of the organization. Furthermore, leadership in CROs is often shared, which disperses the leadership of the organization across several people. These factors are not in line with the management capacities described by Connolly (2006) and were therefore not included.

TABLE 3

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITIES MODEL

Adaptive Capacities	
Environmental Learning	How well an organization collaborates and networks with constituents, community leaders, and funders to learn about what's going on in the community and field.

TABLE 3 (continued)

Organizational Learning and Planning	How well an organization assesses itself and uses assessment findings to conduct strategic planning and follow through on strategic plans.
Programmatic Learning	How well an organization assesses the needs of its clients and conducts and uses program evaluation as a learning tool.
Decision-Making Tools	How well an organization uses tools and resources to make decisions, such as staff and client input, outside management assistance, and/or a written strategic plan.
New Resources Acquisition	How well an organization partners with funders, other nonprofit organizations, and community leaders to secure resources that best serve the mission.
Organizational Sustainability	The extent to which an organization has diverse and stable revenue streams and is not overly reliant on a few funders.
Leadership Capacities	
Executive Leadership	How well staff leaders communicate and engender the organizational mission and vision with other staff
Leader Influence	How well organizational leaders can persuade other board and staff, as well as community leaders and decision makers, to take action.
Community Leadership and Credibility	How well an organization is perceived by the community to be a respected leader that represents and communicates well with the community.
Leadership Sustainability	The degree to which an organization is not too reliant on one leader and has a succession plan.

TABLE 3 (continued)

Technical Capacities	
Service Delivery Skills	To ensure efficient and quality services.
Evaluation Skills	To conduct research to effectively evaluate program delivery and client outcomes.
Outreach and Advocacy Skills	Skills for outreach, organizing, and advocacy.
Marketing and Communication Skills	To effectively market to and communicate with internal and external stakeholders.
Fundraising Skills	To develop the necessary contributed resources for efficient and effective operations.
Accounting Skills	Skills to ensure efficient and sound operations.
Facilities Management Skills	Skills to ensure efficient and effective operations.
Technology Skills	To ensure efficient and effective operations.

Current Study

The current study examined CROs in order to identify and better understand important nonprofit characteristics and self-help characteristics. The self-help characteristics examined were based on research by Riessman et al. (1995), Wituk et al. (2002), King et al. (2000), and others which addressed the essential components of self-help groups and sustainability characteristics (see tables 1 and 2). The nonprofit characteristics were based on the Nonprofit Organizational Capacity Model across the dimensions of adaptive capacity, leadership capacity, and technical capacity (see table 3). These characteristics were examined using both quantitative and qualitative data.

More specifically, the following research questions were addressed:

1a) To what extent do essential components of self-help groups exist in consumer-run organizations?

1b) To what extent do self-help sustainability characteristics exist in consumer-run organizations?

2a) To what extent do nonprofit adaptive capacities exist in consumer-run organizations?

2b) To what extent do nonprofit leadership capacities exist in consumer-run organizations?

2c) To what extent do nonprofit technical capacities exist in consumer-run organizations?

CHAPTER 2

METHODS

Multiple methods were used in the following study to address the research questions and to examine CROs from an organizational level. Data collection methods included interviews with 132 CRO leaders and CRO members, as well as quarterly and budget report forms from eight CROs. Interviews with CRO leaders included executive directors, board members and staff members. Quarterly and budget report forms were used to supplement the information provided by CRO leaders, such as membership numbers and funding totals over time. Separate interviews were conducted with CRO members to gain a member's perspective on the existence of self-help characteristics in CROs. Below is a description of both the CROs and the CRO members that were included in the current study, followed by a detailed discussion of the instruments used.

CROs

The data collected was part of a larger study of CROs in Kansas. The sample of eight CROs chosen was based on their size and location in an attempt to represent the population of 21 CROs statewide. The eight CROs had been in existence for more than one year, with a mean of 10.75 years in operation. Annual budgets for these organizations ranged from $45,423 to $143,000, with a mean of $83,344. These CROs served an average of 15 people per day with total memberships averaging 80 people (see Table 4). CROs had between one and six staff members, with an average of 3 staff members per organization. Executive directors had been in their positions, on average, seven years.

The eight CROs served a diverse geographic population of 40 counties including 2 frontier counties; 13 rural counties; 12 densely settled rural counties; 8 semi-urban counties and 5 urban counties. Table 4 shows their location, average daily attendance, average membership size, the

population of the geographic location in which the CRO exists, and the classification of that location based on a combination of the counties the organization served.

TABLE 4

CRO ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Location	Average Daily Attendance	Average Membership Size	Population of City	Population Density of Home County
Wichita	24	81	354,617[b]	Urban
Topeka	26	171	122,008[b]	Urban
Kansas City	15	131	145,757[b]	Urban
Hays	7	38	20,013[a]	Densely Settled Rural
Wellington	10	40	8,674[a]	Densely Settled Rural
Manhattan	14	57	44,733[b]	Semi-Urban
Arkansas City	13	31	11,963[a]	Densely Settled Rural
Osawatomie	9	45	4,645[a]	Semi-Urban

[a] From 2000 United States Census
[b] From 2003 United States Census Population Update

Since each of the organizations in this study represented unique communities and populations, a brief description of each CRO is provided below. These descriptions help to illustrate the contrasting differences between the sizes of these organizations and communities, as well as some contextual differences based on their locations.

CRO 1

The first CRO was a large organization located in one of the largest cities in Kansas. CRO 1 had a budget of $143,000 which was the largest budget of the CROs in this study, and the state. CRO 1 had an average total membership of 81, which was the third largest membership in the current study, and it had been in existence for 14 years. CRO 1 had many of the advantages of being in a large city, including the ability to work with other mental health and social service agencies in the community. There were also two other CROs within 40 miles. This CRO's executive director had been in that role for 5 years, since the founding director passed away, which was a tragic event for the CRO.

CRO 1 leased its own building located close to the downtown area, which had several rooms, including a room with pool tables, a kitchen, a store for members to buy various items, and other rooms that provided adequate meeting, activity, and social space. CRO 1's members regularly used the public transportation system; however, this transportation was limited to mostly daytime hours so the CRO provided transportation in the evenings.

CRO 2

CRO 2 was also a large CRO located in an urban setting in northeastern Kansas, and had the second largest budget ($142,077) of the CROs in the current study and the state. It had the largest membership of 171 members. CRO 2 was also a long-running CRO; they had been in existence for 11 years. This CRO was located in a residential neighborhood in the basement of a local church, and the church donated the space to the CRO. This location provided adequate meeting space, a kitchen, and a dining area. CRO 2 had relationships with other mental health and social service agencies in the community, and offered transportation to its members. CRO 2 was well connected to their community, and received many donations and charitable gifts. The nearest CRO was only 25 miles away. The founding director of CRO 2 was recognized by many in the community, as this person had been the CRO's leader for 11 years.

CRO 3

CRO 3 was in the downtown area of a large, inner city in northeastern Kansas. CRO 3 shared space with the local mental health center, and they alternated days and times that the space was used. This CRO did not have a kitchen, but had a game room, an art room, a television room, and a large meeting space. There were three other CROs located within 40 miles. CRO 3 had the third largest budget and the second largest membership size in the current study and the state. CRO 3 had 131 members, with the most diverse membership in the state, and a budget of $112,111. CRO 3 had been in existence for ten years.

Members of CRO 3 worked with other mental health and social service agencies in the community, and provided transportation because of the cost and limited schedules of public transportation. CRO 3's executive director had been in this position for 10 years, and was involved in other consumer advocacy activities at the state and national level, including the Consumer Advisory Council and the Governor's Mental Health Services Planning Council.

CRO 4

CRO 4 was in a unique community in western Kansas that had a population of only 20,000, but this city was a health, education, and business hub as it was surrounded by miles of rural and frontier counties. This community also had a moderately-sized state university with 8500 students. While CRO 4 had a small membership (n = 38), it had the fourth largest budget of $67,500, in part due to the large geographic area it served and transportation costs. CRO 4 had a large travel budget because it served several surrounding counties with no public transportation, so it provided transportation for its members. CRO 4 was located in an area with no other CROs within 65 miles, which was similar to other mental health and social service organizations and businesses in the community which also served a 50-100 mile radius. CRO 4 was the longest running CRO in this study, having been in operation for 15 years.

For years, CRO 4 was located at the edge of town, and then moved across the street from the mental health center before moving again into a larger, warehouse-like space which afforded the organization more room and an up-to-date meeting place. CRO 4's executive director had been in this position for five years, and had close ties with many of the members of the CRO and the community.

CRO 5

CRO 5 was located in a rural area in southern Kansas about one hour from a large metropolitan area, and within 40 miles of two other CROs. This CRO had a small membership size (n =40), but a larger budget than some other CROs the same size ($56,205). CRO 5 was located in a residential area in a small one-story house, but it provided enough space for meetings and also had a kitchen and dining area. This location was close to the downtown area of this community of 8,674.

CRO 5 had been in operation for 13 years, which was the third longest running CRO in this study. CRO 5 provided transportation to members as public transportation did not exist in this rural community. The CRO's executive director had been in this position for 15 years, longer than any other director in this study, and was well-recognized by the consumers in the community and the state.

CRO 6

CRO 6 was located in a moderately sized city near other urban areas in northeastern Kansas and was also the home of a large state university, which provided a diverse population including high levels of education and income. At the same time, there was a poor strata of the population, including a substantial homeless population. The nearest CRO was 60 miles away. CRO 6 was operated out of a small building on a main downtown street. This CRO's facility was small with only two rooms, but it had some kitchen equipment (i.e. refrigerator, microwave), a pool table, and computers available to members. It also had room for small meetings. It provided parking for members, but it was the only

CRO in this study that did not provide transportation, as public transportation was quite good within the city limits.

CRO 6 had the fourth largest membership in this study (n = 57), and the sixth largest budget ($51,439). CRO 6 had been in existence for nine years. The executive director was relatively new having held this position for two years, but had participated in educational and training opportunities, such as the Leadership Academy and the Consumers as Providers program.

CRO 7

CRO 7 was located in a rural community of 12,000 in southern Kansas, which was located within one hour of a major city. The nearest CRO was located in another small community 40 miles away. The community in which this CRO resided was home to a popular community college, which provided this area with a younger and more diverse population. CRO 7 was relatively small in that it had the second smallest budget ($49,000) and the smallest membership (n = 31).

CRO 7 was located in a residential area in a one-story house not far from the downtown area. CRO 7 provided computers for members to use, had a television room, and a full kitchen for members. This organization also provided transportation, which was lacking in this rural area. CRO 7 had been in existence for 10 years, and was a long-running organization. This organization's executive director had been in this position for six years, and was well liked and respected by members and other consumer leaders statewide.

CRO 8

CRO 8 was a unique CRO in that it was located on the grounds of one of the two state psychiatric hospitals, which also included the local mental health center. This CRO was located in a large two-story home that was once the home of a prominent doctor at the psychiatric hospital. In addition to the large

brick home, the CRO had eight to ten acres of surrounding land that it used for activities. CRO 8 was relatively small in that it had the smallest budget ($45,432) and a small membership (n = 45) in this study. CRO 8 was also the youngest CRO in this study, having been in existence for only four years. CRO 8 also had the newest executive director in this study, having held the position for only six months. CRO 8 was closed briefly after the former director left, but was reopened when the new director stepped forward from the membership and offered to lead the organization. The new director was involved in many activities around the state, and was a recognized consumer leader. The director was previously the manager of a local business, and provided a good fit for the organization.

CRO 8 had formed relationships with the psychiatric hospital and the local mental health center and started a transition program for people leaving the state hospital. This program allowed the CRO to introduce themselves and educate people leaving the hospital about the available services in their home community, including how to become a CRO member. CRO 8 was located in rural northeastern Kansas in a community of 4,500 residents, but it was within one hour of a major metropolitan area. The nearest CRO was 30 miles away. CRO 8 asked members to provide transportation for other members, and then reimbursed those members for their travel expenses. This provided a somewhat unique arrangement that served the needs of the members while also providing an efficient way for the CRO to provide transportation that would otherwise be unavailable.

Participants

The participants of this study were 132 members of 8 CROs, and consisted of 66 males, 65 females, and one person for which gender was not determined. Ethnicity was slightly more diverse than the state of Kansas and included 72% Caucasians (n = 96); 14% African Americans (n = 19); 5% American Indian/Alaskan Native (n = 6); 4% Spanish/Hispanic (n = 5); .07% Asian American/Pacific Islander (n = 1); and 4% who identified as “other” (n = 5). Eleven percent of participants (n = 15) indicated that they

were married, 49% were single (n = 64), 39% were separated or divorced (n = 46), 2% were widowed (n = 3), and 3% indicated that they were living with a "boyfriend or girlfriend" (n = 4).

The participants in this study were asked about their current employment status. Forty-nine percent (n = 47) of participants indicated that they had worked for pay over the past 60 days, with an average rate of pay of $5.24/hour, and an average of 29 hours per week.

When examining employment over a longer period of 12 months, it was slightly higher, with 12% of participants reporting that they had worked full-time (n = 15) and 49% reporting that they had worked part-time (n = 65). Of those participants who were not employed, 62% were disabled (n = 82), 5% were unemployed (n = 7), 2% were students (n = 2), 2% were retired (n = 2), 2% were homemakers (n = 2), 1% was in the military (n = 1), and 1% was in a controlled environment (n = 1). When asked "how long was your longest full-time job," participants responded between one month and 30 years, with an average length of 4.2 years.

The participants in this study had been attending their CRO between a few weeks and 15 years, with an average membership length of 3.6 years. Seventy-nine percent (n = 104) of participants had been members for more than one year. Participants were asked if they were currently receiving mental health services, and 81% (n = 107) indicated they were receiving services. Half of participants (49.5%) indicated they had been on the board of directors at their CRO (n = 65), and 25.8% had been a paid staff member of their CRO (n = 34).

Instruments

Self-Help Characteristics

Self-help characteristics were measured across two categories, essential self-help components and self-help sustainability characteristics.

Essential Self-Help Components. Questions for essential components were asked to both leaders and members. Table 5 shows which questions were used to assess each of the six essential self-help components, as well as which questions were asked of leaders and which questions were asked of members. Essential self-help components questions are numbered EC1, EC2, and so forth.

The essential self-help components questions (see Appendix A, page 139) consisted of five CRO leader questions, including open-ended questions about the values of the CRO (EC1) and member involvement in overall leadership at the CRO (EC2). Whether or not organizations provided support groups (EC3), warm lines (EC4), and peer counselors (EC5) was asked in a yes/no format.

To complement the information provided by CRO leaders, CRO members were also asked questions related to essential self-help components. CRO members were asked, "To what extent is leadership shared at this organization?" (EC6) and "To what extent do members have control over decisions that are made here" (EC7) on four-point Likert scale (1 = "None;" 2 = "A Little;" 3 = "Some;" and 4 = "A Lot"). The mean response from CRO members was computed for each CRO.

CRO members were also asked to complete the Organizationally Mediated Empowerment scale (EC8-EC28), which consisted of 21-items designed to measure the involvement of members in various activities at the organization. This included questions such as "Have you voted in an election for board members" and "have you helped organize a party or fun event" (see Table 6 for a complete list of questions). Participants answered “yes” or “no” to each item, and the total number of “yes” responses for an individual served as a measure of that individual’s level of participation in the CRO. The original scale was developed by Segal, Silverman and Temkin (1995[a]), and a high degree of internal reliability (alpha = .87 at baseline, .90 at 6 months) was reported. A revised version of the scale, adapted for use with CROs (Reinhart, Meissen, Wituk, & Shepherd, 2008), was used in the current study, and internal reliability remained high for this version (Cronbach's Alpha = .91).

TABLE 5

QUESTIONS ADDRESSING ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF SELF-HELP GROUPS

Questions	Essential Self-Help Components
CRO Leader Questions	
EC1. We would like to talk about the values centered around recovery, personal growth, and development.	Positive ethos Accent on empowerment
EC2. What can you tell us about member involvement in overall leadership at the CRO?	Accent on empowerment
EC3. Does your CRO currently have any support group meetings?	Transformation of needs into assets Being helped by helping
EC4. Does your CRO offer a warm line?	Transformation of needs into assets Being helped by helping
EC5. Does your CRO have designated peer counselors?	Transformation of needs into assets Being helped by helping
CRO Member Questions	
EC6. To what extent is leadership shared at this organization?	Interchangeability of roles Self-help from inside experience
EC7. To what extent do members have control over decision made here?	Self-help from inside experience Accent on empowerment
EC8-EC28. The Organizationally Mediated Empowerment Scale	Self-help from inside experience Accent on empowerment

TABLE 6

ORGANIZATIONALLY MEDIATED EMPOWERMENT SCALE QUESTIONS

EC8. Have you voted in an election for Board members?
EC9. Have you served on the Board of Directors here?
EC10. Have you helped set up any meetings here?
EC11. Have you been responsible for preparing meals or bringing refreshments here?
EC12. Are you a volunteer on a regular basis here?
EC13. Have you been a paid staff member here?
EC14. Have you helped lead a discussion or support group here?
EC15. Have you taken part in deciding what activities will be held here?
EC16. Have you taken part in deciding whether to add a new program or service here?
EC17. Have you taken part in deciding whether to hire someone?
EC18. Have you taken part in deciding what rules people need to follow here?
EC19. Have you taken part in deciding what to do if someone breaks the rules here?
EC20. Have you suggested to the Board or director what you think might be changed or improved here?
EC21. Have you taken part in writing the yearly grant here?
EC22. Have you taken part in writing the quarterly reports here?
EC23. Have you helped with cleaning or building maintenance here?
EC24. Have you helped organize a fun activity or party here?
EC25. Have you taught a class here?
EC26. Have you designed or helped collect survey information (e.g. satisfaction survey, KU survey)?
EC27. Have you attended an external meeting or conference for this organization?

TABLE 6 (continued)

EC28. Have you made a presentation at an external meeting or conference for this organization?

Self-Help Sustainability Characteristics. The self-help sustainability characteristics questions included both leader and member questions to address the eight self-help sustainability characteristics (See Appendix A, page 142). Table 7 shows which questions were used to address each characteristic and which questions were asked of leaders and which questions were asked of members. Sustainability questions are labeled S1, S2, S3, etc.

The CRO leader questions for sustainability consisted of the number of people to participate in activities during the past fiscal year (S1), the number of new members that joined the organization over the past year (S2), and how long the organization had been in existence (S3). CRO leaders were also asked if the organization had a variety of meaningful tasks (S4), which was asked in an open-ended format. In addition, CRO leaders were asked "What are some of the things your CRO does to reach out to new members?" (S5) and "Does your CRO have relationships with other helpful agencies/services?" (S6) in an open-ended format.

CRO members were asked in a yes/no format "Have you served on the board of directors at this organization?" (S7) and "Have you been a paid staff member at this organization?" (S8). The collective number of “Yes” responses to these questions were tabulated for each organization.

In addition to these questions, CRO members were also asked, in a yes/no format, if they had "suggested to the board or director what you think might be changed or improved here" (S9). The percent responding "yes" to this question was computed for each CRO. To examine member perceptions about how CROs use member suggestions, CRO members were asked to respond to the statement, "this organization makes changes based on member input" (S10) using a one to five scale,

ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). The mean response from CRO members was computed for each CRO.

TABLE 7

QUESTIONS ADDRESSING SELF-HELP SUSTAINABILITY CHARACTERISTICS

Questions	Self-Help Sustainability Characteristics
CRO Leader Questions	
S1. How many people participated in activities offered at the CRO?	Average attendance at meetings
S2. How many new members did you have join the organization over the past year?	The number of new people to attend a meeting
S3. How long has your CRO been in existence?	Length of existence
S4. Is there an appropriate level of meaningful work at the center that considers individuals' needs and abilities, or is all work aimed at one particular skill set and level?	Committed and effective leadership
S5. What are some of the things your CRO does to reach out to new members?	Outreach to potential group members
S6. Does the CRO have relationships with other helpful agencies/services?	Community connections that help provide needed funds or practical assistance
CRO Member Questions	
S7. Number of members responding "yes" to "Have you served on the board of directors at this CRO?"	Leadership diversification

TABLE 7 (continued)

Questions	Self-Help Sustainability Characteristics
S8. Number of members responding "yes" to "Have you been a paid staff member at this CRO?"	Leadership diversification
S9. Percent of members responding "yes" to "Have you suggested to the board or director what might be changed or improved here?	Willingness of group members to change activities to meet changing needs
S10. Number of members responding "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" to the statement "This organization makes changes based on member input and satisfaction."	Willingness of group members to change activities to meet changing needs

Nonprofit Characteristics

Nonprofit characteristics were measured across the organizational domains of adaptive capacity, leadership capacity, and technical capacity. These capacities were addressed by the questions in Table 8. All nonprofit characteristics were assessed through leader questions, as these questions specifically addressed organizational functioning.

TABLE 8

QUESTIONS ASSESSING NONPROFIT CAPACITIES

Adaptive Capacities	
A1. Does your organization have any external consultants?	Decision-Making Tools

TABLE 8 (continued)

Adaptive Capacities	
A2. Does your CRO conduct a member satisfaction survey?	Organizational Learning and Planning Programmatic Learning
A3. Beyond your yearly SRS state grant, how many funding sources does your CRO have?	Organizational Sustainability New Resources Acquisition
A4. Does your organization have relationships with other helpful agencies/services?	Environmental Learning New Resources Acquisition
A5. How knowledgeable is your staff about the necessary services available in the community?	Environmental Learning
A6. Do staff encourage members to participate in tasks integral to running the CRO?	Environmental Learning Decision-Making Tools
Leadership Capacities	
L1. How difficult is it for you to ask people to help you with tasks?	Executive Leadership
L2. How difficult is it for you to interact with others at the CRO?	Executive Leadership
L3. How difficult is it for you to delegate responsibility?	Executive Leadership
L4. How difficult is it for you to motivate others to increase their involvement in the organization?	Leader Influence Leadership Sustainability
L5. How difficult is it for you to resolve conflicts?	Executive Leadership

TABLE 8 (continued)

Leadership Capacities	
L6. How difficult is it for you to raise public awareness of mental illness?	Leader Influence
L7. Are you currently working to increase public awareness of your CRO?	Community Leadership and Credibility
L8. Does your organization currently have a leadership succession plan in place?	Leadership Sustainability
Technical Capacities	
T1. Does your CRO currently have any support group meetings?	Service Delivery Skills
T2. Does your CRO have designated peer counselors?	Service Delivery Skills
T3. Does your CRO offer a warm line?	Service Delivery Skills
T4. Does your CRO provide transportation?	Service Delivery Skills
T5. How many rides do you provide a week?	Service Delivery Skills
T6. What direct assistance does your CRO provide to consumers for daily needs?	Service Delivery Skills
T7. How much fundraising did your organization do over the past year?	Fundraising Skills
T8. Did your CRO hire an accountant?	Accounting Skills
T9. Do you have at least one computer at your organization?	Technology Skills

TABLE 8 (continued)

Technical Capacities	
T10. Are you currently working to increase public awareness of your organization?	Outreach and Advocacy Skills Marketing and Communication Skills
T11. Did your CRO assess member outcomes?	Evaluation Skills

Adaptive Capacity. Adaptive capacity represents an organization's capacity to monitor, assess, respond to, and stimulate internal and external changes (Connolly, 2006) and included items that assessed organizational evaluations, organizational decision-making, and partnerships/collaborations with other organizations and funders.

CRO leaders were asked in a yes/no format if the organization had external consultants (A1) or had conducted a member satisfaction survey (A2). Goals related to a satisfaction survey were also examined, including whether the organization had set a goal to conduct surveys, if they had set a goal to reach a certain percentage of satisfied members, and if they had set a goal regarding how many total surveys they wanted to collect. CRO leaders were asked how many funding sources (A3) the organization had beyond the SRS state grant that every CRO in Kansas received. They were also asked in an open-ended format about their organization's relationships with other agencies (A4), the staff's knowledge of services in the community (A5), and whether or not staff encouraged members to participate in operating the center (A6) (see Appendix A, page 144).

Leadership Capacity. Leadership capacity represents the ability of an organization's leaders to inspire others, provide direction, and be innovative in order to achieve the organization's mission (Connolly, 2006). CRO leaders were asked "How difficult is it for you to: L1) ask people to help you with tasks; L2) interact with others at the CRO; L3) delegate responsibility; L4) motivate others to increase

their involvement in the organization; L5) resolve conflicts; and L6) raise public awareness of mental illness." CRO leaders were asked to rate each item on a five-point Likert scale (1 = "Very Easy;" 2 = "Easy;" 3 = "Neutral;" 4 = "Difficult;" and 5 = "Very Difficult"). CRO leaders were also asked if they were currently working to increase public awareness of their CRO (L7) and if their organization currently had a leadership succession plan in place (L8) in a yes/no answer format. Leadership capacity questions can be seen in Appendix A, page 146.

Technical Capacity. Technical capacity represents the key operational functions and the delivery of programs and services by an organization. Technical capacity is the ability of the staff of the organization to perform the work of the organization (Connolly, 2006). CRO leaders were asked if the organization provided support groups (T1), peer counselors (T2), a warm line (T3), or transportation (T4) to members in a yes/no answer format. They were asked the number of rides provided each week (T5) if transportation was provided. In addition, CRO leaders were asked "what direct assistance does your CRO provide to consumers for daily needs" (T6) in an open-ended format, with probes around housing, education, jobs and job training, and providing transportation to consumers for daily needs.

CRO leaders were also asked how much fundraising the organization did over the past year (T7). In a yes/no format, CRO leaders were asked if the organization hired an accountant (T8), if the organization had at least one computer (T9), and if they were currently working to increase public awareness of their organization (T10). CROs were asked if they assessed member outcomes from participation as well (T11). Several CROs indicated that they used member outcome surveys. In addition to the yes/no response on this question, organizational goals around conducting these member surveys were also examined. This provided a more in-depth picture about the effectiveness of conducting these surveys (i.e. if they set a goal to conduct 10 surveys, did they reach that goal?) and the outcomes discovered through the surveys. For instance, if the CRO set a goal to measure a knowledge

increase in 10 members, whether they achieved or did not achieved this goal was reported in their organizational goals for each quarter. See Appendix A, page 147 for technical capacity questions.

To further assess technical capacity, building conditions were assessed by two independent raters. If raters differed on their initial assessment of building conditions, ratings were discussed until consensus was reached using the following five-point scale:

5 = Excellent/satisfactory: The CRO is clean, comfortable, attractive, furniture in good condition, well laid out, and large enough to accommodate some growth in membership. Bathrooms are clean and contain necessary supplies. It has a functional kitchen and enough space to handle meal preparation for large celebrations. Interior is fully wheelchair accessible.

4 = Good/above average: The physical environment at the CRO is satisfactory, not uncomfortable, perhaps not pleasing in its general upkeep, design or amenities. It may be slightly dingy, poorly lit, or barely large enough to accommodate the current membership. The CRO has a functional kitchen and enough space to handle meal preparation for members of the center, if not larger celebrations. Perhaps there are some barriers for consumers using wheelchairs, though they can access the areas of the center where most activity happens.

3 = Adequate: The physical environment at the center is somewhat unpleasant and may be somewhat smoky, too hot/cold, may lack comfortable furniture, be crowded, and/or may have minor maintenance problems. The kitchen may not be large enough of have the necessary equipment to handle much meal preparation. Perhaps there are some barriers for consumers using wheelchairs- though they can access the areas of the center where most activity happens.

2 = Fair/below average: The physical environment does not necessarily pose a health risk, but is definitely uncomfortable; too dark, too hot/cold, may lack comfortable furniture, crowded, bathrooms may not be clean, smoky, limited kitchen space or kitchen is difficult to use. Perhaps

there are barriers for consumers using wheelchairs- they may not be able to access areas of the center where most activity happens.

1 = Poor: The physical environment at the center is potentially unhealthy or very unpleasant and may include the following: heavily smoke-filled, filthy, foul odors, furniture in disrepair or uncomfortable, bathrooms dirty and/or not supplied with toilet paper/soap/paper towels, extreme heat/cold, leaking roof, cramped and crowded, non-working appliances or toilets. Perhaps there are barriers for consumers using wheelchairs- they may not be able to access areas of the center where most activity happens.

Procedure

Researchers scheduled times with each CRO to conduct interviews when a large number of members were anticipated to be present. Upon arrival, a sign-up sheet was distributed throughout the CRO to collect the names of members interested in participating. All members in attendance were invited to participate; however, no member was required to participate. All participants completed an Informed Consent form and were informed that they could discontinue their participation at any time (see Informed Consent in Appendix B).

One-on-one personal interviews were conducted at the CRO in an area that provided privacy. However, a few proctored sessions were conducted at CROs if the number was too large to conduct one-on-one interviews. In the one-on-one interviews, the researcher read the interview aloud to the participant and filled in his or her answers. Participants were also provided a paper copy of the instrument as a reference during the interview. In the proctored sessions, the researcher read the instrument aloud while participants filled in the answers. A second researcher was always available to answer questions during these proctored sessions, and groups remained relatively small (no more than five). Following each session, researchers reviewed the interviews for errors, missing information, and

information that required clarification. Interviews with the director, staff and board of directors were audiotaped and transcribed for accuracy.

Interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes, and participants received five dollars as compensation for their time. Depending on the number available at the CRO on the pre-arranged visit, researchers returned to collect additional interviews. Some CROs required multiple visits to collect the desired number of interviews.

The number of members from each of the eight CROs interviewed was based on the average daily attendance of the CRO. For instance, if the CRO had an average daily attendance of 20 people, then the goal was to collect 20 interviews from that CRO. Therefore, a CRO with a smaller average attendance would have fewer interviews than a CRO with larger attendance. This was done to have generally proportionate representation from CROs. From the total average membership size of 594 for all eight CROs, 132 interviews were collected, which represented approximately 22% of the total members attending the CRO on a daily basis. See Table 9 for a breakdown of interviews from each CRO.

TABLE 9

NUMBER OF ALL MEMBER SURVEYS COLLECTED PER CRO

Name of CRO	Average Daily Attendance	Number of Interviews	Average Membership Size	Percent of Membership Interviewed	Percent of Total Interviews
CRO 1	24	23	81	24.21%	17.42%
CRO 2	26	28	171	16.97%	21.21%
CRO 3	15	23	131	12.78%	17.42%
CRO 4	7	7	38	21.88%	5.30%
CRO 5	10	11	40	30.56%	8.33%

TABLE 9 (continued)

Name of CRO	Average Daily Attendance	Number of Interviews	Average Membership Size	Percent of Membership Interviewed	Percent of Total Interviews
CRO 6	14	15	57	25.42%	11.36%
CRO 7	13	12	31	30.77%	9.09%
CRO 8	9	13	45	38.24%	9.85%
Total	118	132	594	20.63%	100.00%

Quarterly reports and monthly budget forms were completed by each CRO and sent to the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitative Services (SRS) as part of their grant agreement. Information was collected from both of these forms from the same time period during which interview data was collected. These forms were provided to researchers by CRO leaders, and used in conjunction with interview data to assess the organization's nonprofit and self-help characteristics. More specifically, the following data was obtained from quarterly reports: if the organization conducted an organizational assessment and the goals related to conducting an assessment; if the organization conducted a member outcomes survey and the goals related to conducting outcomes surveys; the number of new people to join the organization; and the number of members that participated in activities. From the monthly budget forms the following data was obtained: the number of funding sources; if the organization fundraised; the amount fundraised; and if the organization hired an accountant.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

The results for this study are presented below for each of the capacity areas. Essential components of self-help group responses are presented first, followed by self-help sustainability and the nonprofit capacity areas of adaptive, leadership and technical capacity.

Essential Components of Self-Help

Self-Help Activities

Self-help activities such as support groups, warm lines, and peer support were examined to determine what self-help components were present in each organization. Of the eight CROs in this study, CRO 3, CRO 4, and CRO 5 had self-help groups that met at the CRO, CRO 3 also provided a warm line, and CRO 1, CRO 2, CRO 6, and CRO 7 had formal peer support programs. CRO 3 provided both a support group and a warm line, seven CROs provided one of the three activities, and only CRO 8 did not provide any of these activities. Table 10 shows the distribution of responses for the eight CROs regarding these three self-help activities.

TABLE 10

SELF-HELP GROUPS, WARM LINES, AND PEER COUNSELORS PROVIDED

	CRO 1	CRO 2	CRO 3	CRO 4	CRO 5	CRO 6	CRO 7	CRO 8
Self-help group?	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Warm line?	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Peer Support?	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No

Member Involvement

Which CROs engaged non-staff members in the operations of the organization were also examined as an essential component of self-help related to empowerment. When CRO leaders were asked in an open-ended format if "non-staff consumers help run the organization" three themes emerged, including 1) consumer involvement in operations (n = 3); 2) consumer-driven activities (n = 3); and 3) inconsistent involvement from consumers (n = 2). For CRO 2, CRO 3, and CRO 7, members were highly involved in activities directly related to running the organization. Some of these activities included monitoring attendance records, revising by-laws of the organization, and answering the phone. CRO 1, CRO 4, and CRO 6 also indicated that members were more involved in consumer-driven CRO activities, such as involvement in groups, volunteering for activities, and offering suggestions about future activities. The third theme indicated inconsistent involvement from members in CRO 5 and CRO 8. Some members never participated in the CROs operations, but participated in some social activities. Some individuals' member participation also fluctuated over time from being active for a period of time to having no involvement. Table 11 shows how the themes were distributed across the eight CROs.

TABLE 11

NON-STAFF CONSUMERS HELPING TO OPERATE THE CRO

	CRO 1	CRO 2	CRO 3	CRO 4	CRO 5	CRO 6	CRO 7	CRO 8
Consumer Involvement in Operations	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No
Consumer-Driven Activities	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Inconsistent Involvement from Consumers	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes

Self-Help Values and Recovery

Guiding values are considered important for most self-help groups and organizations, especially a focus on recovery. Recovery for mental health consumers includes a belief that one can and will recover based on hope, empowerment, improvement in symptoms, improvement in daily life, improvement in relationships, and a focus on strengths (Ralph, 2000). When CRO leaders were asked in an open-ended format about "the values centered around recovery, personal growth and development," four themes emerged from the data, including: 1) staff and members of the CRO are knowledgeable about recovery (n = 6); 2) the CRO promotes recovery internally and externally (n = 5); 3) the CRO focuses on individual strengths (n = 3); and 4) the staff and members of the CRO did not respond with principles related to recovery (n = 2).

The six CRO leaders (CRO 1, CRO 2, CRO 3, CRO 4, CRO 5, and CRO 8) who considered members and staff knowledgeable about the principles of recovery from mental illness provided further insights about recovery in their communities. One leader from CRO 4 remarked:

> "The mental health center talks more about maintenance and how to keep you well, but they don't really talk about recovery. They stress getting by while we stress that you have mental illness, but you can always recover. You may not recover fully, right away, but recovery is something that you have to work at and everyone here works on their recovery and I think that if there were not for the CRO, there would be a lot more hospitalizations because I think that this gives them a place to come and see there is a lot of people doing well and I think that it is very conducive to recovery."

A leader from CRO 3 noted, "There is hope in recovery. Everybody that goes down that recovery journey recovers in their own way. There is no right or wrong answer." Based on responses such as these, it appears that for six of the eight CROs, the principles of recovery were a dominant organizational and individual approach.

Five of the eight CRO leaders (CRO 1, CRO 2, CRO 3, CRO 5, and CRO 8) also talked about promoting recovery to both members and others outside of the organization. These responses indicated that the CRO engaged in advocacy and education around the subject of recovery. Some examples included posting flyers, handing out brochures, or printing members' stories and poems about recovery in their newsletter. For instance, one leader at CRO 5 stated, "the newsletter has a section for members to talk about their recovery." It was hoped that information about the concepts of recovery in their newsletters would also inform the public about recovery. CRO newsletters are often distributed to service providers, community supporters, donors, friends of the CRO, and past and present members. Some of the CROs posted flyers with information about recovery in the community or at the mental health center.

Other CROs talked about posting information about recovery at the CRO, to educate members about the concepts of recovery. For example a leader from CRO 1 stated, "We have postings and artwork about recovery here and LEAP (Leadership, Empowerment and Advocacy Project) is encouraged because recovery is discussed in that class. Most of the groups here are geared toward recovery (12-step mental health group), and recovery is mainly addressed in peer counseling. We have a lot of peer support here too, which is important for recovery." CROs also invited others to visit the CRO to speak about recovery, "we have speakers from the mental health center come and talk about the recovery process."

Another theme that emerged for CRO 1, CRO 5, and CRO 8 was a focus on individual strengths, including providing recognition or rewards for success. Having a focus on individual strengths is a principle of recovery. The Strengths Model (Rapp, 1998) is the dominant approach in the Kansas public mental health system. The Strengths Model focuses on the strengths of each individual in order to help them recover, instead of focusing on negatives and failures. A leader from CRO 8 stated,

"Any time that anybody makes any kind of improvement, there is always praise and recognition and I think that goes a long way. Not only goes a long way by complementing the individual for doing something new or different, it also encourages other members to do the same, there again, it is getting back into the positive and stressing positive things and that too increases the level of excitement for the CRO."

Finally, CRO 6 and CRO 7's responses were not in line with the principles of recovery. These responses did not include principles such as the Strengths Model, empowerment, hope, or improvement for mental health consumers. For example, this theme included responses such as, "it happens all the time to anybody with any sort of problem, you are always going to have that problem more than likely, you are never really going to get over it." This response, for example, did not indicate a focus on strengths, and did not seem especially hopeful for the possibility of recovery. Table 12 shows how these themes were distributed across the eight CROs.

TABLE 12

VALUES OF THE ORGANIZATION

	CRO 1	CRO 2	CRO 3	CRO 4	CRO 5	CRO 6	CRO 7	CRO 8
Staff are knowledgeable about recovery	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
The CRO promotes recovery internally and externally	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
The CRO focuses on individual strengths	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes

TABLE 12 (continued)

	CRO 1	CRO 2	CRO 3	CRO 4	CRO 5	CRO 6	CRO 7	CRO 8
The staff and members did not respond with principles of recovery	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No

Overall, six CROs emphasized recovery and three of these additionally reported taking a strengths perspective in their organizations. They focused not only on educating members about recovery and modeling the principles of recovery through their own lives, but also tried to spread the word about recovery to service providers and the general public. Furthermore, they encouraged progress in members by rewarding or recognizing successes, and focusing on the strengths of the individuals in the CRO. Recovery is an important component of CROs. As with self-help groups, CROs focus on overcoming and recovering from difficulties, and do so by having a positive ethos and accent on empowerment.

Leadership and Participation

To complement the rich information provided by CRO leaders, members were asked a series of questions about the essential components of self-help groups. These included questions about shared leadership, member decision-making, and level of participation in the organization. These three components also illustrated the extent to which the organization focused on empowerment of members and the level at which they were encouraged to participate in the organization. Members of CROs were asked to rate the shared leadership of the organization and the decision-making power of members on a four-point scale including none (1), a little (2), some (3), and a lot (4). CRO members were also asked to

complete the Organizationally Mediated Empowerment Scale, which is composed of 21 yes/no questions about their participation in the organization.

Overall, CRO members had relatively positive responses to the Shared Leadership (Grand Mean = 3.39) and Member Decision-Making questions (Grand Mean = 3.27) (see table 13). All shared leadership means across the eight CROs exceeded three, and ranged from 3.17 to 3.69, indicating that most members responded either "Some" or "A lot" to the question "To what extent is leadership shared at this organization?" Member decision-making in CROs yielded similar results. Seven of the CROs exceeded three on the member decision-making means that ranged from 2.93 to 3.77, indicating that the majority of CRO members responded "Some" or "A Lot" to the question "To what extent do members have control over making decisions here?" Overall, these responses show that members believed CROs provided a setting in which shared leadership and member decision-making were valued. Shared leadership and member decision-making are important concepts in a self-help organization, as it encourages empowerment and future participation of members.

TABLE 13

ESSENTIAL SELF-HELP COMPONENTS: LEADERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION

	CRO 1	CRO 2	CRO 3	CRO 4	CRO 5	CRO 6	CRO 7	CRO 8	Grand Mean
Shared Leadership Mean	3.17	3.29	3.52	3.43	3.36	3.20	3.42	3.69	3.39
Member Decision-Making Mean	3.00	2.93	3.35	3.14	3.27	3.33	3.33	3.77	3.27

The Organizationally Mediated Empowerment scale showed that out of 21 possible activities, participation of members ranged from 35% to 73% of activities across CROs. CRO 4 had the highest

participation rate, with an average of 73% of members reporting that they had participated in the activities listed. CRO 7 (55%) and CRO 3 (54%) had the second and third highest participation rates with just over half of members reporting participation in the activities listed. CRO 5 and CRO 6 had the lowest reported participation from members, with an average of 35% of members reporting that they had participated in the activities listed. The percent of members responding "yes" to each question for each CRO can been seen in Table 14.

TABLE 14

ORGANIZATIONALLY MEDIATED EMPOWERMENT SCALE RESULTS

	CRO 1	CRO 2	CRO 3	CRO 4	CRO 5	CRO 6	CRO 7	CRO 8	Grand Mean
1. Have you voted in an election for Board members?	57%	54%	65%	86%	64%	33%	67%	62%	61%
2. Have you served on the Board of Directors here?	43%	43%	52%	71%	73%	27%	67%	46%	53%
3. Have you helped set up any meetings here?	39%	36%	48%	71%	36%	27%	17%	46%	40%
4. Have you been responsible for preparing meals or bringing refreshments here?	35%	54%	78%	43%	36%	27%	92%	77%	55%

TABLE 14 (continued)

	CRO 1	CRO 2	CRO 3	CRO 4	CRO 5	CRO 6	CRO 7	CRO 8	Grand Mean
5. Are you a volunteer on a regular basis here?	39%	71%	74%	86%	45%	27%	67%	62%	59%
6. Have you been a paid staff member here?	39%	14%	22%	43%	36%	20%	25%	23%	28%
7. Have you helped lead a discussion or support group here?	35%	21%	43%	71%	36%	27%	58%	46%	42%
8. Have you taken part in deciding what activities will be held here?	57%	61%	57%	100%	91%	47%	100%	62%	72%
9. Have you taken part in deciding whether to add a new program or service here?	30%	32%	48%	86%	18%	53%	50%	62%	47%

TABLE 14 (continued)

	CRO 1	CRO 2	CRO 3	CRO 4	CRO 5	CRO 6	CRO 7	CRO 8	Grand Mean
10. Have you taken part in deciding whether to hire someone?	48%	25%	26%	14%	9%	40%	50%	54%	33%
11. Have you taken part in deciding what rules people need to follow here?	43%	39%	70%	100%	27%	27%	83%	38%	53%
12. Have you taken part in deciding what to do if someone breaks the rules here?	52%	43%	74%	86%	36%	27%	83%	54%	57%
13. Have you suggested to the Board or director what you think might be changed or improved here?	52%	61%	78%	100%	73%	67%	67%	62%	70%

TABLE 14 (continued)

	CRO 1	CRO 2	CRO 3	CRO 4	CRO 5	CRO 6	CRO 7	CRO 8	Grand Mean
14. Have you taken part in writing the yearly grant here?	26%	18%	39%	86%	9%	33%	33%	62%	38%
15. Have you taken part in writing the quarterly reports here?	13%	11%	17%	43%	0%	33%	17%	15%	19%
16. Have you helped with cleaning or building maintenance here?	83%	75%	87%	100%	45%	47%	83%	77%	75%
17. Have you helped organize a fun activity or party here?	35%	50%	74%	100%	36%	53%	67%	62%	60%
18. Have you taught a class here?	22%	7%	35%	71%	9%	27%	33%	31%	29%

TABLE 14 (continued)

	CRO 1	CRO 2	CRO 3	CRO 4	CRO 5	CRO 6	CRO 7	CRO 8	Grand Mean
19. Have you designed or helped collect survey information (e.g. satisfaction survey, KU survey)?	30%	29%	48%	71%	18%	40%	17%	31%	36%
20. Have you attended an external meeting or conference for this organization?	39%	57%	70%	86%	27%	40%	50%	54%	53%
21. Have you made a presentation at an external meeting or conference for this organization?	13%	14%	35%	14%	18%	13%	25%	23%	19%
Grand Mean	40%	39%	54%	73%	35%	35%	55%	50%	48%

The most common activities that members participated in were helping with cleaning and building maintenance (75%), deciding what activities to hold at the CRO (72%), and providing suggestions to the board or director about what they thought could be changed or improved (70%).

More than half of all members reported voting in an election for board members (61%), organizing a fun activity or party (60%), and volunteering on a regular basis (59%). Regarding participation in the leadership of the CRO, over half (53%) had served on the board of directors in the past and 29% had been a paid staff member. CRO members also showed leadership through other activities, such as helping to decide whether to add a new program or service (47%), leading a discussion or support group (42%), and helping to set up a meeting at the CRO (40%). Some of the activities that had lower participation rates included taking part in writing the yearly grant (38%), helping to design and collect survey information (36%), and taking part in deciding whether to hire someone (33%). A small number of members reported helping to write quarterly reports (19%) or making a presentation at an external conference for the organization (19%). Some of these activities are also included as part of self-help sustainability and nonprofit capacity characteristics, as they relate to both sections.

Overall, the essential components of self-help groups section indicates that most CROs do have a focus on self-help and recovery principles in their organizations, as evidenced by the level of shared leadership and decision-making for members, and participation in the operations of the organization. CROs are behavior activity settings that promote members helping each other and encourage participation at multiple levels.

Self-Help Sustainability Characteristics

Self-help sustainability characteristics included factors that help determine the survival of self-help groups over time. Self-help sustainability characteristics were examined through five indicators, including the number of new members to join the CRO, the number of members participating in activities, what CROs do to recruit new members, relationships with other agencies, and the availability of meaningful activities at the CRO for members.

New Members

To determine the number of new members to join the CRO, the total average membership for the 2006 fiscal year was compared with the total average membership for the 2007 fiscal year. The results indicated that four CROs had new members, three CROs had the same membership size as the previous year, and one CRO had a smaller membership (see Table 15). The four CROs that had new members ranged from one new member to 46 new members over the past year, with a mean of 20 new members. The three CROs that had the same membership size saw some fluctuation in membership size over the year, but ultimately ended up with the same total membership size. The one CRO that lost members saw their membership decrease by 49 members over the year, though this large, urban CRO still had an average of 131 members each quarter in 2007.

Total Membership

The total number of members participating in activities at the organization was another self-help sustainability characteristic. CROs reported the number of members participating in activities at the organization quarterly and this number was reported as an unduplicated figure, meaning if the same member participated in five activities, they were only counted once. The responses for quarter four of 2007 ranged from 27 members to 160 members, with an average of 75 members. In addition, the percent of the total membership participating is presented in Table 15 below. Membership fluctuation over the year resulted in some CROs having more members participating in activities than was reported in the total membership size. Overall, most of the CROs reported the majority or all of their members participating in activities on a quarterly basis, which is a positive indicator of sustainability.

Length of Existence

Length of existence is also an important indicator of self-help sustainability. The length of existence for CROs in this study ranged from four years to 15 years, with an average of 10.75 years in existence. The length of existence for each organization can be seen in Table 15.

TABLE 15

NEW MEMBERS, MEMBER PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVITIES, AND LENGTH OF EXISTENCE

	CRO 1	CRO 2	CRO 3	CRO 4	CRO 5	CRO 6	CRO 7	CRO 8	Grand Mean
Average Membership in FY2006	81	125	180	37	32	57	31	19	70.38
Average Membership in FY2007	81	171	131	38	40	57	31	45	74.20
Number of New Members	0	46	-49	1	8	0	0	26	4
Number of Members Participating in Activities	84	160	155	28	41	58	27	48	75
Percent of Total Membership Participating	100%	94%	100%	75%	100%	100%	87%	100%	95%

TABLE 15 (continued)

	CRO 1	CRO 2	CRO 3	CRO 4	CRO 5	CRO 6	CRO 7	CRO 8	Grand Mean
Length of Existence	14	11	10	15	13	9	10	4	10.75

Outreach to New Members

Outreach to new members is important to sustainability, so CRO leaders were asked what they did to recruit new members in an open-ended format. Responses were coded into two themes consisting of: 1) distribute information to community (n = 5); and 2) keeping service providers informed about the CRO (n = 2). CRO 4 and CRO 5 did not report outreach activities. Distributing information to the community was done through flyers, handing out business cards, distributing newsletters and events calendars, and doing presentations at local organizations. For instance, CRO 3 talked about distributing information at multiple locations,

> "We post flyers and we have a newsletter. We also go to high rises, where consumers live near the CRO, and we hand out information at the hospital. We also go to the food kitchen and the president sends out postcards with information. We also approach new faces at the mental health center."

CRO 1 and CRO 6 reported that they kept local service providers informed about the CRO, including case managers and other mental health center employees. This was often done through regular communication with the organizations or by providing these organizations with information to distribute at the mental health center, such as an events calendar. By keeping service providers informed of ongoing activities, hours of operation, and other CRO news, CROs hoped to increase the likelihood that service providers would be able to provide information about the CRO to prospective new members. One CRO leader discussed how they kept service providers informed, "We pass out

business cards at family services and send our events calendar to the mental health center." Another said, "We try to keep case managers and everyone else (i.e. therapists, CSS Day Program staff) informed about the CRO so they can spread the word." Table 16 below shows the distribution of themes for each CRO.

TABLE 16

OUTREACH TO NEW MEMBERS

	CRO 1	CRO 2	CRO 3	CRO 4	CRO 5	CRO 6	CRO 7	CRO 8
Working on Recruiting New Members?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Distribute information to community	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Keep service providers informed	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No

Relationships with Other Community Organizations

Connections with and support from other organizations is another important self-help sustainability characteristic. Therefore, CRO leaders were asked about the relationships their CRO had with other helpful agencies and services in the community. Responses were coded into two themes, including: 1) multiple relationships had already been developed (n = 4); and 2) CRO was currently developing relationships (n = 4), though comments also indicated a lack of local organizations with whom to develop relationships, particularly in rural areas (see Table 17 for the distribution of themes). Several relationships between the CRO and other agencies in the community were reported for CRO 1, CRO 2, CRO 3, and CRO 5. Some of these relationships included the local food bank, local shelters, church social services, hospitals, respite services, nursing homes, veteran's services, and other agencies

providing services to physically or mentally disabled individuals. CRO 6, CRO 7, and CRO 8 identified relationships that they were currently developing with agencies in the community, but indicated that these relationships were just beginning to form and were not fully developed. For instance, a leader from CRO 8 noted, “Our push is to get professionals to come in to talk to the people on education night and we would like to do all of those things… but again, we just haven’t had time, that is something that will happen, but hasn’t." CROs maintaining and developing relationships with other organizations in the community not only provides opportunities for collaboration and resource sharing, but also helps improve the awareness of the CRO which can increase sustainability.

TABLE 17

RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER AGENCIES

	CRO 1	CRO 2	CRO 3	CRO 4	CRO 5	CRO 6	CRO 7	CRO 8
Multiple Relationships Developed	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No
Currently Developing Relationships	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

Meaningful Activities

The final open-ended question asked of CRO leaders to examine self-help sustainability was, "is there an appropriate level of meaningful activities at the center that considers individuals’ needs and abilities, or are all activities aimed at one particular skill set and level?" Responses to this question were coded into three themes: 1) members learn new skills from participating in groups (n = 6); 2) members create groups based on existing skills/knowledge (n = 4); and 3) CRO asks for member input (n = 2) (see Table 18 for the distribution of themes). Members from CRO 1, CRO 2, CRO 3, CRO 4, CRO 6 and CRO 7 learned new skills such as peer counseling skills, cooking skills, or art skills based on their participation in

groups that other CRO members had developed. For instance, from CRO 7 it was noted, "We have cooking classes on a regular basis. Living skills. We've seen a lot of improvement out of some of the members." A respondent from CRO 4 noted,

> "[member 1] does the peer counseling classes and we have people that sit in on those and gain skills and knowledge about that type of stuff. It is just like [member 2] before he became Chair President, he never led meetings and stuff like that, but he was able to learn and pick up on that and understand what his responsibilities are and how to lead meetings."

It appears that in all the CROs except for CRO 5 and CRO 8 that member-driven activities were available and in some CROs multiple opportunities for members to increase their skills were available.

Members also created and developed groups and activities based on their own knowledge or skills in CRO 2, CRO 3, CRO 4 and CRO 8. CRO members may participate in different groups to build their skills, and they may choose to lead a group or develop a new activity. As CRO 8 noted, "Maybe this person is really good at art or crafts, maybe this person over here is good at cooking, maybe this person is good at something else, it really focuses on their interests, they can participate, they can run that particular program." CROs 2, 3, and 4 all responded that multiple members find meaningful activities both by participating in groups and creating their own groups based on skills or interest.

Finally, asking for member input was a third theme related to meaningful activities, which occurred at CRO 5 and CRO 8. At CRO 8 it was reported, "one of the things that I think is the most important is the programming and every month, the whole membership sits down and plans out what we want to do."

TABLE 18

MEANINGFUL ACTIVITIES AT THE CRO

	CRO 1	CRO 2	CRO 3	CRO 4	CRO 5	CRO 6	CRO 7	CRO 8
Members participate in groups	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Members create groups	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
CRO asks for member input	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes

To further explore the involvement of members, CRO members were asked if they had served on the board of directors or been a paid staff member of the organization (see Table 19). The percent of members that had served on the board of directors ranged from 27% to 73%, with a mean of 53%, and the percent of members that had been a paid staff member ranged from 14% to 43%, with a mean of 28%. The percent of members serving on the board of directors and as staff is large. Obviously, larger CROs tend to have larger memberships with proportionately fewer leadership roles for members, but the high percent that had been in a leadership role positively reflects participation which is an indicator of self-help sustainability.

The percent of members indicating that they had made suggestions to the board or director was also examined. The percent of members making suggestions ranged from 52% to 100% with a mean of 70%. Again, these numbers show that CRO members were actively involved in the CRO. Finally, the mean responses to "this organization makes changes based on member input" ranged from 1.07 to 4.62 on a five-point scale with five being the most positive response. This second question is related to the prior question in an important way. While high numbers of members may be making suggestions and participating in activities at the organization, it does not mean that members feel their suggestions are making a difference, or that leaders are listening to their suggestions. However, this was not the case

with these CROs. The results showed that CRO members believed their suggestions were being acknowledged by leaders. CRO members were making suggestions and their suggestions were making a difference in the organization (see Table 19).

TABLE 19

MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

	CRO 1	CRO 2	CRO 3	CRO 4	CRO 5	CRO 6	CRO 7	CRO 8	Mean
Percent of People who had served on the Board of Directors	43%	43%	52%	71%	73%	27%	67%	46%	53%
Percent of people who had been a paid staff member	39%	14%	22%	43%	36%	20%	25%	23%	28%
Average Membership Size	36	165	180	32	95	59	39	34	80
Percent of members making suggestions	52%	61%	78%	100%	73%	67%	67%	62%	70%
Mean Response to "This organization makes changes based on member input."	3.96	4.32	4.43	3.86	4.27	1.07	4.08	4.62	3.83

Overall, the results indicated that CRO members are actively involved in their CRO ranging from making suggestions to being chair of the board of directors. This participation and investment by the membership is an important part of self-help sustainability, as a committed membership and leadership has been shown to be a characteristic of successful self-help groups (Wituk, Shepherd, Warren, & Meissen, 2002).

Nonprofit Characteristics

Adaptive Capacity

Adaptive capacity represents an organization's capacity to monitor, assess, respond to, and stimulate internal and external change (Connolly, 2006). Adaptive capacity included questions about conducting member satisfaction surveys, hiring external consultants, the number of funding sources the organization has, the knowledge of staff regarding other community agencies, relationships with other agencies, and how much staff encouraged member participation. All of these capacities represent the organization's ability to adapt to change both within and outside the organization.

Member Satisfaction. One internal characteristic of adaptive capacity is member satisfaction. All eight CROs reported setting goals in their yearly grants for conducting a member satisfaction survey, and seven of the eight CROs reported that they had conducted a member satisfaction survey. Only CRO 4 did not meet this goal. Of the seven CROs that did conduct member satisfaction surveys, all seven set goals regarding what percentage of those taking the survey would be satisfied with CRO services. For example, if a CRO was preparing to conduct a member satisfaction survey, they might set a goal that 80% of members would be satisfied with services ("Goal Percentage"). However, after conducting the survey, they might find that only 60% were satisfied ("Actual Percentage"). The goal percentage set by each CRO and the actual percentage recorded after the surveys were conducted are shown in Table 20,

along with the total number of surveys administered. CROs 1 and 7 did not report how many surveys they administered. All seven CROs exceeded the goal percentage reporting satisfaction with the CRO; three CROs reported 100% satisfaction from members surveyed. It appears that member satisfaction was quite high.

TABLE 20

MEMBER SATISFACTION SURVEYS

	CRO 1	CRO 2	CRO 3	CRO 4	CRO 5	CRO 6	CRO 7	CRO 8	Mean
Number of Surveys Administered	-	40	30	0	30	14	-	10	21
Goal percentage	80%	66%	80%	N/A	80%	100%	80%	75%	80%
Actual percentage	94.4%	75%	83%	N/A	98%	100%	100%	100%	93%

External Consultants. Regarding external components of adaptive capacity, seven CROs reported having hired external consultants. CRO 5 did not hire an external consultant. Consultants to CROs often include people who assist the CRO with finances, such as an accountant or a fundraising consultant, or people who assist CROs with grant writing. External consultants can be an important support to these organizations, as consultants can provide expertise on various issues that CROs and most small nonprofits do not have. Unique to CROs, external consultants help CROs organizationally without compromising their consumer-run nature, which includes 100% consumer staff and board.

Funding Sources. The number of funding sources an organization has can be an indicator which reflects organizational sustainability. The number of funding sources beyond the yearly SRS state grant ranged from 0 to five, with a mean of 1.75 funding sources per CRO. The yearly SRS state grant was not included in these results as all CROs in the state of Kansas receive an SRS grant. In the last decade, no

CRO in Kansas has developed without funding from SRS. Results for the number of funding sources for each organization, and whether the organization has an urban or rural classification, can be seen in Table 21. Urban/rural classification was also considered in light of these results because urban CROs tend to have larger budgets as they are accommodating larger memberships. Percent of non-SRS funding is also shown in Table 21. Two of the three urban CROs had substantial non-SRS funding (20% and 47%). CROs are heavily reliant on SRS funding, and only small percentages of their total budget are made up by non-SRS funding. Half of the CROs (CROs 4, 5, 6, and 7) are completely reliant on SRS funding in that outside sources make up less than 1% of their total budgets.

TABLE 21

NUMBER OF FUNDING SOURCES AND URBAN/RURAL STATUS

	CRO 1	CRO 2	CRO 3	CRO 4	CRO 5	CRO 6	CRO 7	CRO 8
SRS Grant	$82,000	$111,577	$112,111	$67,500	$56,205	$51,439	$49,000	$44,396
Fundraising	$180	$3,125	$0	$0	$0	$120	$261	$747
Contracted Services	$61,000	$12,000	$5,192	$0	$0	$0	$0	$837
Other Grants	$12,208	$3,500	$2,450	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Food Donations in Kind	$0	$6,450	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Other Donations in Kind	$0	$3,000	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0

TABLE 21 (continued)

	CRO 1	CRO 2	CRO 3	CRO 4	CRO 5	CRO 6	CRO 7	CRO 8
Percent of Non-SRS Funding	47.23%	20.10%	6.38%	0.00%	0.00%	0.23%	0.53%	3.45%
Urban/Rural Status	Urban	Urban	Urban	Densely Settled Rural	Densely Settled Rural	Semi-Urban	Densely Settled Rural	Semi-Urban

Knowledge of Community. Since knowledge of one's community is an important component of adaptive capacity, CRO leaders were asked in an open-ended format, "how knowledgeable is your organization about necessary services available to consumers." Responses were organized into four themes, including: 1) belief in/rely on staff and member knowledge (n = 8); 2) learn about and address needs as they arise (n = 3); 3) guest speakers present information about available services (n = 2); and 4) communities don't have a lot of resources (n = 3).

CRO staff and members used their experiential knowledge of being a person with a mental illness seeking services as the basis of their knowledge about available services. Someone from CRO 6 reported, "We get questions, but for the most part everyone knows the community. We are very knowledgeable considering the majority of us have had to use those resources ourselves." These findings indicate that CRO members and leaders are mutually reliant on each other for information, and that the CRO provides a network of peers willing to provide information on local services.

CROs use that same experiential knowledge and subsequent network to find the right services as needs arise. Based on their general knowledge of services in the community, they are able to find specific resources to address specific needs. For instance, a leader from CRO 7 reported, "they usually

call me and say they need something and I do what I can to help them out…sometimes its calling the Salvation Army and sometimes it's getting them transportation to get where they need to go." This theme reflected not only experiential knowledge, but the ability and confidence to reach out to community resources for specific member issues as those needs arose.

The third theme was CROs bringing in guest speakers from other community agencies to inform CRO members about their agency and to learn about the CRO. A leader from CRO 2 said, “They come here to talk to members [like] Area on Aging; they come and talk about retirement."

Other CROs indicated that the community did not offer a lot of resources for referral to members. These CROs indicated that they were knowledgeable about the services that existed, but there were not many services about which to be knowledgeable. CRO 5 provided some services for members if they were not available in the community. For instance, starting a food pantry where members would donate whatever food they could, and the food pantry would supply food to members in need. Table 22 shows which CROs responded to each of the four themes.

TABLE 22

KNOWLEDGE OF STAFF REGARDING OTHER SERVICES

	CRO 1	CRO 2	CRO 3	CRO 4	CRO 5	CRO 6	CRO 7	CRO 8
Belief in/rely on staff and member knowledge	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Learn about and address needs as they arise	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Guest speakers present information at CRO	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes

TABLE 22 (continued)

	CRO 1	CRO 2	CRO 3	CRO 4	CRO 5	CRO 6	CRO 7	CRO 8
Communities don't have a lot of resources	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No

Like those with other long-term illnesses, consumer knowledge and "referrals" are almost second nature, in that they are not only knowledgeable about services, but they have often used them. Furthermore, CROs, through their relationships with other agencies, brought in speakers to educate members about services and other issues they may be facing. Several CROs were in rural Kansas, areas which may not have had the variety and types of services that existed in more urban areas. So, to counteract this, activities and supports were provided at the CRO, an adaptive indicator.

Relationships with Other Community Agencies. CROs were asked about their relationships with other helpful agencies and services. This question was included in the self-help sustainability section, but was also included in this section as it relates to environmental learning, an adaptive capacity. According to Connolly (2006), environmental learning indicates, “how well an organization collaborates and networks with constituents, community leaders, and funders to learn about what’s going on in the community and field.” To review, the majority of CROs had multiple relationships developed (n = 4) or in development (n = 4), though comments also indicated a lack of local organizations with whom to develop relationships, particularly in rural areas. The more positive relationships with other helpful agencies and services in the community, the more likely the CRO would benefit regarding adaptive capacity.

Member Participation. Utilizing decision-making tools within an organization is also an adaptive capacity. This includes using the human resources found within members, such as their knowledge and skills, but it also includes gaining their input for the good of the organization. CRO leaders were asked if members were encouraged to participate in a variety of tasks. Responses were coded into five themes: 1) staff encouraged members to participate in a variety of ways (n = 5); 2) members help run the center, especially when staff is away (n = 3); 3) members develop their own groups based on interest (n = 2); 4) members are involved in planning activities (n = 3); and 5) staff have difficulties encouraging members (n = 2), see Table 23.

CRO 2, CRO 3, CRO 7 and CRO 8 discussed multiple ways in which they encouraged members to participate, including offering leadership roles and new opportunities for members. They also discussed trying to get new members as well as those members who typically were not particularly active to participate. For example, a leader from CRO 3 said,

> "In our goals we have it stated to try to identify a new person or a new emerging leader to be involved with what we're doing. Like when we went down to the CRO meeting, everybody wanted to go so I pointed out in goals that we wanted pick somebody who's never been to get new people involved and so that's what we're trying to do."

CRO 4, CRO 5, and CRO 7 responded that members were helpful in running the center when staff were not present, often discussing how members would take on these activities as needed. For instance, a leader from CRO 7 stated, "we have a lot of members that are excited about the CRO and they pitch in to wash dishes and clean up, watch the CRO when it's closed. They answer the phone for me when I'm not around, they will take over if I leave and watch everything for me." These CROs talked about how members would take on responsibilities that were usually the staff's responsibility. This included things like collecting membership information, completing quarterly reports, and leading groups when group leaders were absent. A leader from CRO 4 stated, "I try to get someone to help me

lead it or if I am going to be gone, I ask someone to lead this group for me because I won't be here and they are usually more than willing to step up and help."

Leaders from CRO 4 and CRO 8 also noted how staff encouraged members to develop groups based on their own talents and interests to share with other members, stating, "We are trying to get members to start groups," and "our activities are mostly that way, our members do [them]." Staff indicated that members starting or leading groups helps them greatly as that was often a responsibility of a staff member. This helped to get members more involved and invested in the CRO. For instance one staff member from CRO 4 noted, "They will step into the role of leadership."

CRO leaders also discussed how members would get involved in planning activities that occurred at the organization. Staff often encouraged members to help provide ideas about activities. For instance, a leader from CRO 3 reported, "when we have events and activities as a group we get together and plan the event all the way down to, you know, what's going to take place on that day." Staff encouraged members to be involved not just in participating or leading the activities, but also in the planning of activities, which helped members to have more of a stake in the CRO.

Finally, CRO 1 and CRO 6 reported difficulties when trying to get members involved. A leader at CRO 1 discussed how some members participated regularly, but they had trouble encouraging others to participate, "members don't really participate in activities here, but there are some faithful, helping members. When people come here they're tired and don't want to get too involved." A respondent from CRO 6 reported difficulties getting members to participate consistently, but also difficulties in finding ways to encourage the members, "They are off and on, and sometimes we get more people to help than we need and sometimes they leave it all to us and I don't know how to control that." See Table 23 for theme distribution.

TABLE 23

STAFF ENCOURAGING MEMBER PARTICIPATION

	CRO 1	CRO 2	CRO 3	CRO 4	CRO 5	CRO 6	CRO 7	CRO 8
Staff encouraged members to participate in a variety of ways	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Members help run the center when staff is away	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Members develop their own groups based on interest	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Members are involved in planning activities	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No
Staff have difficulties encouraging members	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No

Leadership Capacity

Leadership capacity is "the ability of the organization's leaders to inspire others, provide direction, and be innovative in order to achieve the organization's mission" (Connolly, 2006). To address CRO leadership, CRO directors were asked about the difficulty of six leadership activities; asking for help, interacting with others, delegating responsibility, motivating others, resolving conflicts, and increasing public awareness. Results indicated that CRO directors found interacting with others (mean = 1) to be the easiest activity. Some of the more difficult activities included resolving conflicts (mean = 2.63), and increasing public awareness (mean = 2.5). For a complete list of responses see Table 24.

TABLE 24

LEADERSHIP ACTIVITY DIFFICULTY

Question	Very Easy (1)	Easy (2)	Neutral (3)	Difficult (4)	Very Difficult (5)	Mean
1. How difficult is it for you to ask for help?	4	1	1	0	2	2.38
2. How difficult is it for you to interact with others?	8	0	0	0	0	1.00
3. How difficult is it for you to delegate responsibility?	4	1	3	0	0	1.88
4. How difficult is it for you to motivate others?	2	2	3	1	0	2.38
5. How difficult is it for you to resolve conflicts?	1	3	2	2	0	2.63
6. How difficult is it for you to increase public awareness?	1	4	1	2	0	2.5

These results indicated that half of all CRO leaders (n = 4) rated all of the activities "Easy" or "Very Easy." Only two leaders rated "asking for help" to be "Very Difficult" which was the only time this rating was used. The mean results showed that "interacting with others" and "delegating responsibility" were easier than "asking for help," "motivating others," or "resolving conflicts." Leaders may have found "interacting with others" easy because of the small, intimate self-help settings which characterize CROs. In addition, because of the shared leadership that exists in these organizations, "delegating responsibility" may also be an easier activity.

While "resolving conflicts" had the highest mean, 50% of CRO leaders rated this activity as "Easy" or "Very Easy." In addition, two CRO leaders found public awareness difficult, but the majority (63%) rated this task as "Easy" or "Very Easy" as well. Overall, CRO leaders responded positively to these leadership activities. To gauge the importance of public awareness at the CRO, leaders were asked if they were currently working on increasing public awareness (yes/no). The results indicated that seven CROs were currently working to increase awareness of their CRO, while CRO 2 was not. Leadership sustainability was also addressed through a yes/no question about having a leadership succession plan. Only CRO 4 currently had a leadership succession plan in place.

Technical Capacity

Technical capacity involves "performing key operational functions and delivering programs and services" (Connolly, 2006). Technical capacity includes many important components of operating an organization successfully. CRO leaders were asked about providing direct assistance to consumers, providing self-help activities, conducting member outcome surveys, increasing public awareness, hiring an accountant, having a computer, and fundraising. Overall building condition was also assessed for each CRO.

Direct Assistance. To address the service delivery capacity of CROs, leaders were asked in an open-ended format, "what direct assistance does your organization provide to consumers?" Responses to this question yielded six themes, including: 1) transportation (n = 7), 2) comparative shopping (n = 3), 3) personal hygiene (n = 3), 4) job training/assistance (n = 3), and 5) donations to members (n = 2). See Table 25 for a breakdown of services provided by each CRO.

Transportation included rides to and from the CRO and to necessary services and organizations (e.g., doctor's appointments, grocery store). Transportation was provided by seven CROs, with an

average of 42.5 rides provided per week. Transportation was often an issue, as many consumers do not have their own vehicles and public transportation can be difficult in urban areas or non-existent in rural areas.

Comparative shopping education was another service that CRO 4, CRO 7, and CRO 8 provided to consumers. Comparative shopping taught members how to compare prices on certain items between different stores. Personal health was also provided by CRO 2, CRO 5, and CRO 6 to consumers, both in the form of gifts and information. CROs also invited local agencies, such as the health department, to visit the CRO and provide information about personal health.

Job training/assistance provided at CRO 1, CRO 2, and CRO 3 included things such as writing references and job training. Some CRO members learned job skills through participating in their CRO. For instance, CRO members might learn leadership skills, organizing and planning skills, and teamwork skills through participating in the various groups and activities at CROs. CRO 1 had a unique job training opportunity for members, "we have a store at the CRO and we train members how to run the store." In addition to job training, CRO leaders assisted members in seeking employment by being a reference or helping members fill out applications for jobs.

Donations to members of CRO 2 and CRO 4 included both monetary gifts and physical items. These donations could be either need-based or given as a reward for participating. For instance, CRO 2 provided food baskets to those who were struggling to afford groceries, and $250 towards a deposit for a place to live.

Self-Help Services. CROs also provided self-help activities for members. CROs provided a place where self-help activities could meet, and also provided an atmosphere where people could be trained to lead groups, be a peer support provider, or staff a warm line. For these reasons, self-help activities were included in service delivery for CROs. Of a total of eight CROs, three indicated that they hosted

self-help groups (CRO 3, CRO 4, and CRO 5), CRO 3 also provided a warm line, and CRO 1, CRO 2, CRO 6 and CRO 7 provided peer support. These three activities were also discussed in the essential components of self-help groups section, but also reflect technical capacity and were therefore included (see Table 25).

TABLE 25

DIRECT ASSISTANCE

	CRO 1	CRO 2	CRO 3	CRO 4	CRO 5	CRO 6	CRO 7	CRO 8
Transportation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Number of Rides Provided Per Week	75	95	40	9	60	0	40	21
Comparative Shopping	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Personal Health	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Job Training/Assistance	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Donations to Members	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Self-help groups	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Warm line	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Peer support	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No

Member Outcome Surveys. Member outcome surveys provided a way for CROs to assess the impact of specific CRO activities on members, but also illustrated the evaluation capacity of the organization. The ability of an organization to evaluate outcomes is an important skill because it provides the organization with feedback on their programs and also provides data they can incorporate into future grants and reports to funders. When asked if they had conducted a member outcomes survey, six CROs indicated that they had conducted at least one survey. CRO 4 and CRO 6 did not report

conducting member outcome surveys. Table 26 below shows how many member outcome surveys each organization conducted, the topics on which they surveyed, and the results achieved.

TABLE 26

MEMBER OUTCOME SURVEYS

CRO	Number of Outcome Surveys	Topics Surveyed	Results of Surveys
CRO 1	2	Knowledge gained from speaker	100% reported knowledge gained
		Skills gained in training opportunity	100% reported skills gained
CRO 2	3	Knowledge gained from participation in educational opportunity	80% reported knowledge gained
		Knowledge gained from participation in training opportunity	80% reported knowledge gained
		Knowledge gained from participation in comparative shopping activity	75% reported knowledge gained
CRO 3	1	Members participating in support group would not experience hospitalization and would demonstrate improved health.	70% did not experience hospitalization and demonstrated improved health and self-care
CRO 4	0		

TABLE 26 (continued)

CRO	Number of Outcome Surveys	Topics Surveyed	Results of Surveys
CRO 5	2	Knowledge gained from educational opportunity	50% reported knowledge gained
		Knowledge gained from training opportunity	35% reported knowledge gained
CRO 6	0		
CRO 7	1	Knowledge gained from comparative shopping activity	100% reported knowledge gained
CRO 8	2	Knowledge gained from educational field trip	96% reported knowledge gained
		Skills gained from training opportunity	100% reported skills gained

As Table 26 shows, all but one of the member outcome surveys for all eight CROs yielded 50% or better results. Four member outcome surveys showed 100% of participants had positive outcomes after participating in activities. Overall, these results indicated that CROs have basic skills to assess the outcomes of their members following specific events.

Other Technical Capacities. Seven CROs were currently working to increase public awareness of their organization (CRO 2 was not) as shown in Table 27. Increasing public awareness was included in both the leadership capacity section and the technical capacity of "outreach and advocacy skills." CROs

working on increasing awareness are spreading information to others in the community, which simultaneously advocates for people with mental illness and reaches out to new members.

Seven CROs had at least one computer (CRO 5 did not), as shown in Table 27. In addition, seven CROs had contracted with an accountant (CRO 5 did not). Like most other nonprofits, CROs wanted the expertise and credentials of a local accountant for their annual audit and for other business tasks.

When asked about fundraising, five CROs indicated that they had conducted fundraising over the past fiscal year (see Table 27). Of the five CROs that did fundraise, the amount raised ranged from $120 to $3125, with a mean of $554. Fundraising is an important technical skill, as it helps organizations meet financial needs that are not addressed by grant funding, such as funds to start new activities or buying supplies for activities. In addition, fundraising can involve members and increase visibility in the community. While five CROs did participate in fundraising, the amount fundraised was a small part of their total budget.

TABLE 27

OTHER TECHNICAL CAPACITIES

	CRO 1	CRO 2	CRO 3	CRO 4	CRO 5	CRO 6	CRO 7	CRO 8
Are you currently working to increase public awareness of your organization?	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Did you contract with an accountant?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

TABLE 27 (continued)

	CRO 1	CRO 2	CRO 3	CRO 4	CRO 5	CRO 6	CRO 7	CRO 8
Do you have a computer?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Did your organization fundraise?	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
How much did you raise?	$180	$3,125	$0	$0	$0	$120	$261	$747

Overall Building Condition. Overall building condition was assessed in this study to examine how well the CRO was at managing the facility in which their organization was located, which is an important technical capacity. Overall building condition assessed the features and amenities of the building the CRO inhabited, and also the condition of the building (i.e. cleanliness, adequate space, etc.). Overall building condition was assessed for each of the eight CROs using ratings that ranged from poor (1) to excellent (5). Overall building condition was assessed by independent raters using the scale described earlier. Of these ratings, CRO 5 and CRO 7 were rated “Adequate,” CRO 4 and CRO 6 were rated “Good/Above Average” and CROs 1, 2, 3, and 8 were rated “Excellent." No CRO received a rating below "Adequate," which indicated that CROs had facilities that met the basic needs of the members. Overall, CROs provided limited services to their population including self-help services and other critical, logistical services such as transportation and having adequate facilities.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

The results of this study examined CROs in terms of self-help characteristics and nonprofit characteristics. When examining the essential components of self-help, three CROs hosted self-help groups, one CRO had a warm line, and four CROs had a peer support program. Six of the eight CROs had one of these self-help activities, one did not provide any self-help activities, and one CRO provided both a self-help group and a warm line. Members were actively involved in the operation of three of the CROs, three CROs had members involved in consumer-driven programs and social activities, but two CROs reported inconsistent involvement from members. Regarding self-help values, six CROs were knowledgeable about the principles of recovery, and five CROs worked to promote recovery through posters, presentations, groups, and through the organization's newsletter. Three CROs also incorporated a strengths model approach, which recognized the assets of individuals while avoiding a focus on their deficits.

The self-help nature of CROs was reflected by shared leadership and member decision-making at most levels in most CROs. Members reported that the leadership of the organization was shared with them, and they also agreed that they had influence over decisions made at the CRO. Members participated at an organizational level through regular input to the board and executive director, deciding what activities would be held, and volunteering to help with activities at the organization. Reflective of the self-help ethos at most CROs, members were actively involved in different kinds of groups, learning opportunities, social activities, and many other events.

The high level of shared leadership and member participation reflected positively on self-help sustainability as 75% to 100% of members in each CRO participated in the programs and activities of the CRO. The nature of much of the member involvement included learning new skills by participating in member-driven groups, and members creating groups based on their existing skills and knowledge.

Regarding membership size as a measure of sustainability, four CROs had new members, three CROs had the same membership size, and one CRO had a smaller membership compared to the previous year. CRO leaders recruited new members by distributing information about the CRO in the community at such places as the mental health center, churches, the rescue mission, doctor's offices, and local parades. CROs especially kept health and mental health service providers informed about the CRO. All CRO leaders were working on developing relationships with local agencies, and four CROs had established multiple relationships with those community agencies.

When examining CROs as nonprofit organizations, CROs had incorporated some adaptive capacities. Seven CROs conducted member satisfaction surveys, and seven CROs hired at least one external consultant, most often an accountant. Another indicator of adaptive capacity was the level of knowledge of staff and members about services available and their confidence in addressing member needs as they arose. CRO members participated in a variety of ways, including helping actually operate the CRO, planning activities, and developing their own groups based on member interest. While CROs were strong on some adaptive capacities, the number of funding sources beyond the yearly SRS grant was not substantial, contributing only 9.74% of their budgets overall.

When examining CRO leadership as a nonprofit capacity, CRO leaders believed "interacting with others" at the organization was the easiest leadership activity, and "resolving conflicts" was the most difficult, although the majority of CRO leaders rated all tasks as easy, rather than difficult. The majority of leaders believed that raising public awareness was an easier task comparatively, and seven of the eight CROs were currently working on increasing awareness. Only one CRO had a leadership succession plan in place.

An examination of the technical capacity of CROs found that CROs provided a number of direct services to complement the self-help activities, including transportation, comparative shopping, and job training/assistance. Further, six of the CROs had conducted member outcome surveys over the past

year, reflecting technical capacity through monitoring and evaluation. Seven of the eight CROs indicated that they were working on increasing public awareness and had contracted with an accountant to audit their books and help with budget matters. Finally, overall building condition for half of the CROs were rated "Excellent" and no CRO received a rating below "Adequate."

As nonprofits, CROs showed strong member involvement in the organization, had developed self-help and direct services, and had developed the capacity to assess member satisfaction. The overall lack of funding beyond their SRS grants made these CROs vulnerable. At the same time, CROs stretched their budgets in part through member-provided direct services and self-help activities. Discussing CROs as self-help organizations and nonprofits will provide a better understanding of these unique settings.

CROs as Self-Help Organizations

Self-Help Groups

It was unexpected that the majority of CROs (n=6) provided only one self-help activity, considering that their missions were self-help and peer support in nature. Members and leaders of CROs have likely had exposure to groups in many settings. Campbell (2005) described how mental health consumers have experienced groups in treatment through therapy groups, education and skill building groups in rehabilitation settings, and then later self-help groups in the community and in CRO settings. Groups geared toward more natural settings have become more prevalent in mental health treatment in recent years, and address many topics, such as basic living skills and employment-related skills. There is also a history of mental health consumers participating in self-help groups of all kinds, including advocacy-based groups, groups that provide public education, and more individually-based groups, such as GROW, Recovery, Inc., and 12-step groups for those with co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse issues (Campbell, 2005; Chinman, Kloos, O'Connell, & Davidson, 2002; Bond & Graaf-Kaser, 1990).

The low number of CRO-based self-help groups was also unexpected considering that, as part of their SRS grant, many CRO leaders and members had participated in the "Perspectives of Self-Help Groups" class offered by the psychology department at Wichita State University. This class was cross-listed with the social work and nursing departments and promoted a multi-disciplinary understanding of the nature and diversity of self-help groups. The purpose of this course was to expose students to the concept of self-help groups, including increasing understanding of help giving and receiving, group and leadership dynamics, the many types of support groups available in the community, and how to access them. Students in this class learned practical steps in group development such as shared leadership, group facilitation, and group maintenance. Students of this class also experienced the emotions of being new in a group, the process of following group guidelines, and the benefits of utilizing others' knowledge and experiences to help them in their life circumstances through participating in classroom-based self-help groups and visiting local self-help groups. CRO leaders and members, as part of this course, participated in extensive supplementary sessions that provided specific planning and facilitation experience for those committed to starting a new group at their organization. These supplementary sessions included having the CRO leaders and members live in the university dormitory for the duration of the course (two weeks), attending morning classes that were specifically designed for CRO members focused on starting and maintaining groups, evening group visits to local self-help groups that also focused on how to design and lead a self-help group, and follow-up by technical assistance providers to support them in starting a group at their CRO. Considering that only CRO 4 and CRO 7 had not participated in this course, it was surprising that more CROs did not have self-help groups.

Despite the intensity of the "Perspectives on Self-Help Groups" class, it does not appear to be effective in starting self-help groups at CROs. This might be because CRO members initially signed up for the class because the idea of starting a self-help group was attractive, but they did not realize the amount of work involved. The National Mental Health Consumers' Self-Help Clearinghouse (2009) lists

five main steps in starting a self-help group, including 1) researching other groups; 2) enlisting the help of others (i.e. forming a core group); 3) creating a project plan; 4) setting the location, date, and time; and 5) planning the first meeting. Each of these steps has a number of tasks and it can take weeks or months to work through these steps and tasks. People wanting to start a self-help group find that the first meeting doesn't occur until several months after they start planning. As reported by Wituk, Tiemeyer, Commer, Warren, and Meissen (2003) there can be both satisfaction and frustration in starting a self-help group. Many self-help group founders reported having difficulties completing organizational tasks, such as finding a time for the group to meet that worked for everyone. Others described difficulties forming a core group and developing the leadership, and others also reported difficulties getting enough people to participate in the group. CRO members might not have had the time or motivation to invest in creating a self-help group, especially considering the majority of CRO members participating in the class were executive directors, staff, and other volunteers that had competing priorities at the CRO.

The timing of the "Perspectives on Self-Help Groups" class may have been another limiting factor in starting a self-help group. The class was held for two weeks in early June. A large statewide conference for mental health consumers, called the Recovery Conference, was also held every year in June, often right after the class. This conference was pivotal for people in CROs, as it provided opportunities to share knowledge, network, and promote CRO activities. In addition, many CROs led workshops and presentations at the conference, and attendance was encouraged by SRS. During this time, some CRO members were out of town for two weeks to attend the class, back at their CRO for a few days, and then out of town again the following week to attend the conference. This left little time at their CRO to share their ideas and information from their participation in the class, or to begin the crucial first steps of starting a self-help group (i.e. identifying others who are interested in helping).

They may have lost momentum for starting a group since they had many other things to attend to during this time of the year.

Kansas CROs receive technical assistance as part of their SRS grant through a one-on-one match with a staff person from the Center for Community Support and Research at Wichita State University. This technical assistance was for a broad range of issues, but encouraged CROs to provide self-help activities by providing assistance around beginning new self-help groups and activities. This assistance helped to supplement the existing knowledge many consumers had from their exposure to groups, and provided a resource for CROs when implementing self-help groups and other self-help activities at their organizations. However, technical assistance providers worked with CROs on a variety of topics, such as board development, capacity building, and strategic planning. If technical assistance providers and CROs had other projects that they were working on, it may have deterred attention away from starting a self-help group.

Technical assistance providers were also very busy during the Recovery Conference, which was right after the conclusion of the "Perspectives on Self-Help Groups" class. Technical assistance providers were instrumental in organizing the conference, including organizing the lodging and transportation accommodations, meeting rooms, presentation schedules and other tasks related to conference attendance for both their individual CROs and the conference as a whole. Technical assistance providers' time was consumed before, during, and after the conference, which may have interrupted some of the self-help group plans developed in the class.

Finally, even though CROs received training and support around developing groups, it was possible that CROs did not have enough member interest to begin or sustain a group over time. Schutt and Rogers (2009) reported that CRO members in their study discussed receiving support during informal activities, such as group outings or activities, playing cards, or even while watching television together. It is possible that CRO members in the current study did not have a strong enough need for

formal self-help activities because they were receiving sufficient peer support through their daily activities at the CRO. It may have seemed unnecessary or even unnatural to form a "traditional" self-help group that met at a specific time and day to more formally deal with mental health and related issues. It might have also been viewed as more typical of the professional mental health system that typically uses group settings for all kinds of issues and purposes.

Recovery and Self-Help

Recovery is becoming the dominant approach in the public mental health system. Ralph, Lambert, Kidder, and Muskie (2002) discussed that recovery is not only for consumers, but also for federal and state mental health funders, policy makers, researchers and providers. CROs are part of a recovery-oriented system in that they provide an atmosphere in which consumers can become empowered, establish social connections, and work on building their skills in multiple areas (Mowbray, Robinson, & Holter, 2002). In addition, Hodges, Markward, Keele, and Evans (2003) found that consumers who use self-help services and organizations are more likely to be satisfied with other traditional mental health services.

Recovery regarding mental health and CROs is different than recovery as defined by Alcoholics Anonymous. Recovery for mental health consumers is a guiding philosophy that one can and will recover from their illness. This is unlike "recovering" for Alcoholics Anonymous, which is about maintaining a lifetime of sobriety, though one will always be an alcoholic and always working on their “recovery.” Recovery for mental health consumers is not synonymous with "cure," but is rather "a way of living to make the most out of life" (Ralph, Lambert, Kidder, and Muskie, 2002).

Recovery for mental health consumers includes four components: internal factors, self-managed care, external factors, and empowerment (Ralph, 2000). Internal factors include having hope that recovery is possible, and self-managed care is when consumers take control over their treatment,

manage their mental illness successfully, and cope with barriers and challenges they face. The third component is external factors, which includes social relationships and being a part of the community, and the fourth component is empowerment, which is a combination of internal and external factors.

CROs play an important part in the recovery process, especially in empowerment. Empowerment is a combination of having both internal factors, such as symptom management, having control over one's treatment options, and having hope in recovery or believing that recovery is possible; and external factors, such as being connected to others and having friends or family that believe recovery is possible. By combining the internal and external factors of empowerment, consumers help each other through peer support and advocacy. CROs can be important to this process because they can help to 1) build internal skills by exposing new members to other consumers that believe recovery is possible and are managing their illnesses successfully; 2) provide an environment where consumers can make external connections with people who believe in recovery; and 3) provide an environment in which consumers can help others through peer support, group leadership, organization leadership, and the opportunity to participate in advocacy events.

In the current study, most CROs reported a "recovery" orientation, but addressed recovery in different ways. Some CROs had group meetings that informed their members about recovery. Other CROS promoted recovery through posters, writings, newsletters, and other sources of information. The majority of CROs also had staff that were knowledgeable about the principles of recovery and shared that information with members. The results showed that, for the majority of CROs, the language and philosophy of recovery was promoted to the membership and had become a powerful context within CROs.

Shared Leadership

Shared leadership and member decision-making are related to the empowerment of consumers (Zimmerman, 1995). By giving consumers the opportunity and responsibility to participate in the organization through decision-making and shared leadership, CROs provide unique opportunities for consumers to be genuinely involved in organizational or community settings. Being able to participate fully in the CRO is empowering because it gives members choice, control, and autonomy (Mowbray, Robinson, and Holter, 2002). In addition to the benefits shared leadership and member decision-making have related to recovery and empowerment, these factors are more likely to sustain a group over time because more members are involved in the leadership of the group (Maton, 1994).

Members of the two CROs that did not report using principles related to recovery rated their CROs as average on shared leadership and decision-making. This indicates that while CRO leaders did not emphasize recovery when talking about the values of the organization, CRO members felt that shared leadership and member decision-making still existed within these organizations. It was also interesting that CRO 8 was especially strong in the areas of shared leadership, member decision-making, and values/principles of recovery, but did not provide self-help groups, a peer support program, or a warm line. The shared leadership and member decision-making were the highest scores of all of the CROs, and CRO 8 reported all three of the positive values/principles of recovery themes of staff knowledge of recovery, CRO promotes recovery, and CRO focuses on individual strengths. This small CRO with a strong recovery orientation might not have had enough people or needed more formal structures to provide peer support, similar to the participants in the Schutt and Rogers (2009) study who received peer support through their day-to-day social interactions and participation in informal activities.

Sustainability as a Self-Help Organization

Participation was high for the CROs in this study. High participation in self-help groups has been linked to sustainability (Wituk, Shepherd, Warren, & Meissen, 2002), as well as positive member outcomes (Kyrouz, Humphreys, & Loomis, 2002). Reinhart, Meissen, Wituk, and Shepherd (2008) found that participation in a CRO was related to better member outcomes, and Trainor, et al. (1997) found that participation in a CRO was related to a 91% decrease in the use of inpatient services.

Mowbray, Robinson, and Holter (2002) discussed the involvement of consumers in CROs, and found that larger CROs and/or CROs with more resources tended to have higher consumer involvement, and CROs reported working on recruiting new members once or twice per week. In the current study, with the exception of CRO 8, the two CROs that had the highest number of new members were both in urban areas and were larger CROs.

By their very nature, membership organizations including self-help groups and CROs have fluctuation in their number of members, so it was surprising that three CROs (CRO 1, CRO 6, and CRO 7) reported the same number of members over a one year period, and CRO 4 reported only one new member. Through an examination of their quarterly reports, these four CROs that reported no change in membership size did see some fluctuation in membership over the year, with members dropping out at the same rate that others were joining. All three CROs (CRO 1, CRO 6 and CRO 7) were actively working on recruiting new members. CRO 1 and CRO 7 reported that they distributed information to the community, and CRO 1 and CRO 6 reported keeping service providers informed about their CRO.

CRO 3, a large urban CRO, reported a decrease of 49 members, which was a substantial decrease in average membership over one year. Upon further examination of individual quarterly reports, the significant drop in the number of members occurred between the fourth quarter of 2006 (n = 180) and the first quarter of 2007 (n = 125), and then more members joined the CRO by the fourth quarter of 2007 (n = 155), leading to a substantially smaller average membership size for 2007. The

executive director reported that CRO 3 discovered that it had several members (n = 55) at the end of 2006 that had not attended the CRO in a number of months, and were therefore dropped from the membership list during the first quarter of 2007, resulting in a new membership of 125. This helped the CRO keep an accurate account of members that were actively participating, rather than those people who only attended the CRO a single time or had stopped attending which explains the significant and sudden drop in membership. This organization reported working on recruiting new members, including distributing information to the community at the mental health center and hospital as well as local food kitchens and housing developments. This additional information showed that CRO 3 had in fact increased their real and accurate membership from 125 members in the first quarter to 155 members at the end of the fourth quarter, for an increase of 30 members. CRO 3, CRO 2 (increase = 46), and CRO 8 (increase = 26) had actually increased their membership substantially helping to sustain their organization.

Sustainability and Member Participation. CROs had 94% of their total membership participate in a variety of ways throughout the year. Not only did most members participate in their CRO, they were involved in high-level activities, such as decision-making, planning, voting, and being on the board. Mowbray, Robinson, and Holter (2002) also found that members were highly involved in consumer-run organizations in Michigan, including being involved in planning, budgeting, and other operational activities. In CROs, members often get "promoted" to higher-level positions, such as being a staff member, based on need, their interests, and competency performing tasks in other roles, such as leading a group, planning activities, or being on the board.

The level and nature of member participation in the operation of a CRO is important for a variety of reasons. First, it reflects the scope of leadership at a CRO. If only one or two individuals are operating the entire organization, the organization is at higher risk for not meeting the needs of most of

the members (Maton, 1994). Active participation increases the members' ownership of the organization. More members filling multiple roles in a self-help organization can also groom future leaders. If multiple people are invested in the organization, there are more people available and willing to step up and fill roles when leaders transition off the board and staff.

Further evidence for members being highly invested in their CRO can be seen in the large number of members who provided input on organizational and program issues, and believed that their input was acknowledged and used by the staff and board. Several CROs had impressive percentages of members who had provided input to the board or staff about what they thought could be changed or improved; CRO 3, CRO 4, and CRO 5 had 70% or more members report that they had provided ideas to enhance their CRO. Members also participated in groups to learn and develop new skills, and some members took the initiative to form new groups based on their own knowledge and skills because they wanted to help other members.

Developing groups based on existing knowledge and skills to help others illustrates the helper therapy principle or "being helped by helping" self-help characteristic first hypothesized by Riessman (1965). Research on self-help groups (Kurtz, 1990; Riessman & Carroll, 1995; Ralph, Lambert, Kidder, & Muskie, 2002) has consistently found that members themselves were helped while helping others. The helper therapy principle is important in CROs, because it is an underlying component of peer support. Similar to the “interchangeability of roles" concept developed by Riessman and Carroll (1995), people in self-help settings can change their role from helpee to helper at appropriate times, unlike in hierarchical and power-defined professional helping relationships. Seeking help and being able to give back is normalizing and can make members feel adequate, less stigmatized, and empowered (Borkman, 1999). CRO members were motivated by and provide peer support because they value giving and receiving help to each other.

Borkman (1999) describes three stages that people in peer support environments move through as they develop from helpee to helper. The first stage is victim. People in this stage are vulnerable, needy, have many negative feelings, and often need more help than they can give. People who first enter peer support settings are most often in this stage, but through the support of the group, they can move to the second stage, survivor. In this stage, the person has enhanced their experiential knowledge and coping skills from the group. People in the second stage have both positive and negative feelings. They provide help to others, but still have some needs of their own. Mature, the final stage describes people who have gained confidence in their experiential knowledge over time from participating in the group. People in this stage often take a leadership or advocate role, and are likely to provide help to others on a regular basis. People in peer support settings like CROs may begin their participation as a "victim" but, in Borkman's framework, can become more knowledgeable and confident in their skills, which motivates them to take on leadership roles, including leading the group.

Member participation is important for CROs both as self-help and nonprofit organizations, because it is empowering for members and it is beneficial for the sustainability of CROs. Schutt and Rogers (2009) explored participation in consumer-run organizations and found that many members initially joined for tangible resources, such as food and transportation, but continued their participation because of the less tangible benefits that CROs provided. Participants in Schutt and Rogers' study specifically reported the social relationships they developed, feeling a sense of community, and being surrounded by others with mental illness as positive experiences. In addition, having staff that were also consumers and helping others became important reasons for their continued membership and for taking on leadership roles at their CRO. Participants in the current study and in the work of Schutt and Rogers (2009) believed that they had opportunities at CROs that they did not have in other mental health settings, particularly the opportunity to use their own experiences with mental illness and recovery to help others.

The high levels of participation in CROs might be attributed to the benefits that consumers feel are related to attending an organization that is staffed only by mental health consumers. Schutt and Rogers (2009) reported several comments made by participants in their study about feeling comfortable at the CRO because it was a place where they were surrounded by other mental health consumers. Schutt and Rogers also reported that people at the CRO being helpful and friendly were important motives for joining the CRO. Finally, some participants compared their experiences in traditional mental health services versus participation in the CRO and reported that because the CRO was run by people with mental illness, they felt less stigmatized and alienated and were able to find valuable support from the people at the CRO (Schutt & Rogers, 2009).

In addition to member participation, CROs also had relationships with other community agencies, or were working to develop these relationships. These relationships are important for CROs as self-help organizations because they provide avenues for which CROs can promote their organization to others, learn about new resources and funding, and recruit new members through "word-of-mouth" which contributes to sustainability. While these results showed that half of the CROs had multiple relationships developed and half were currently developing these relationships, a different perspective emerges when examining with whom the relationships were developed in these communities. For instance, the majority of relationships reported by CROs are organizations that serve similar populations with and without mental illness, such as mental health centers, hospitals, soup kitchens, or specialized church programs. While having these relationships is important, there are other avenues that have not yet been explored by CROs, such as the Veteran's Administration Center, the United Way, and universities. CROs expanding their local relationships to these other organizations could enable CROs to have a more diverse membership, including veterans and college students.

CROs as self-help organizations can be described as a behavior setting infused by peer support. CROs have a focus on recovery, shared leadership, and member decision-making which have resulted in

involved and invested memberships. CRO members may find that socializing with others with mental illness provides the peer support they need in a more informal manner than formal groups and meetings. CRO members may also find it supportive and empowering to be around a group of people that support and believe in recovery. Based on the findings in this study, it is evident that CROs provide a self-help atmosphere infused with peer support.

CROs as Nonprofit Organizations

Adaptive Capacity

There are a number of insights related to adaptive capacities. All but one CRO conducted a member satisfaction survey which can provide information helpful for adaptive organizational change (Hodges, Markward, Keele, & Evans, 2003). CROs in the current study were required by SRS, their funder, to conduct member satisfaction surveys. These surveys were developed by SRS and the CROs, and then CROs were responsible for conducting and reporting their results to SRS in their quarterly reports.

While CROs were required to conduct member satisfaction surveys at their organizations, they also contracted with the University of Kansas and SRS to conduct consumer satisfaction surveys at local SRS funded mental health centers. These surveys assessed consumer satisfaction with traditional mental health services. While assessing satisfaction within their organization was required by their funder, CROs also extended these skills to use in other areas, which showed adaptive capacity. Contracting to conduct the consumer satisfaction surveys of local mental health centers was the largest source of income for Kansas CROs beyond their yearly SRS grant.

External Consultants. Seven CROs used external consultants, most of whom were accountants. Using accountants was also strongly encouraged by SRS, who provided 90% of funds to these CROs. It

was also encouraged by the technical assistance providers that helped CROs. Beyond doing a yearly audit, local CPAs helped CROs manage their finances, provided budgeting help, and an understanding of how banks operate. According to Connolly (2006), the ability to hire external consultants is important for any nonprofit organization, as consultants not only provide specific services they can also help nonprofits build skills in a variety of capacity areas. The ability to enlist external resources, such as accountants, is especially important for CROs. They may not have the opportunity to recruit a CPA to their board with the hope of getting a "pro bono" audit, as their boards are composed of members, unlike traditional nonprofit organizations, whose boards typically include local professionals that can donate their services (i.e., CPA, lawyer, PR professional).

Diversity of Funding. The CROs in this study were exclusively or almost completely funded by SRS. Many CROs relied solely on the yearly SRS funding they received, with other grants, contracts, and fundraising making up only a small portion of their total budgets. Larger CROs tended to have more outside funding than smaller CROs; however, these CROs would not stay open without SRS funding. Six of the eight CROs were completely reliant on SRS funding, and had no other substantial funding. CRO 1 was dependent on SRS and one other funder, the local community mental health center (92% of their total budget). CRO 2 was the only CRO with diversity of funding sources, but would still have difficulties without SRS funding, which makes up 80% of their yearly budget. Funding challenges appear to be common among consumer-run organizations. Mowbray, Robinson, and Holter (2002) reported that 45% of the consumer-run organizations in their study reported funding as a problem for their organization, with the majority of the other CROs reporting problems that would also require more funding (i.e., needing more paid staff, transportation, or a larger space).

Diversity of funding is directly related to organizational sustainability (Connolly, 2006). Without diversity of funding, organizations become overly dependent on one funder, and if they lose that

funding the organization closes. Bielefeld (1994) conducted a study on the mortality of nonprofit organizations and found that nonprofits that closed had less diversified funding streams and had fewer strategies for identifying funders. Funding issues and funding diversity are common problems for many nonprofit organizations, including CROs.

Community Connections. Regarding the connection CROs had with their community, all eight CROs reported that staff and members were knowledgeable about available services in the community, half of CROs had relationships with other agencies in the community, and some CROs reported bringing partners into their organizations to speak and spread knowledge of other services. However, as previously discussed, these relationships with other agencies in the community were often limited to mental health centers and a few other agencies serving low income populations.

Having community connections reflects the adaptive capacities of environmental learning and new resources acquisition (Connolly, 2006). Environmental learning is enhanced by having relationships with other organizations to learn about the community and to keep up with current issues and opportunities. New resources acquisition is an adaptive capacity that examines how well an organization partners with others in the community to identify new resources or funding streams. For these reasons, these are highly beneficial capacities for nonprofit organizations. Arnett, German, and Hunt (2003) found that having social relationships and an established identity within the community is related to supportive behaviors such as referrals and funding. In addition to new funding sources, community connections help organizations identify opportunities for partnerships and collaborations, which can lead to new or shared resources other than funding (e.g., staff time, equipment, space).

Of the CROs in this study, CRO 2 was the most successful at developing community partnerships. CRO 2 developed a relationship with a local church, and was able to relocate and run their organization in the church basement rent-free. CRO 2 also had relationships with other community agencies that

resulted in both in-kind donations and funding opportunities. While CRO 2 was successful in building community connections and enjoying the benefits of those connections, the other seven CROs were not receiving such benefits from their relationships with others in the community.

It is possible that these relationships were either too new or too underdeveloped for partnerships and collaborations to be built; CROs may have only been working on relationships recently or did not have the time or opportunity to collaborate further. CRO directors, staff, and boards tend to focus internally on supporting their own memberships using a self-help approach, rather than promoting the CRO to the community and developing relationships with community agencies. This relates to CROs being recovery-oriented peer support organizations. In addition to the lack of focus on developing these relationships by CROs, there may be a lack of awareness in the community about CROs, which is a problem for many new, small nonprofit organizations. Moreover, CROs, unlike other nonprofit organizations, might also encounter stigma in the community in addition to lack of knowledge. These are just some of the possibilities that may be barriers for CROs when developing relationships with other community agencies.

Leadership Capacity

The activities rated easiest by leaders were interacting with others and delegating responsibility, which could be related to the self-help nature of these organizations. The context of social interaction, peer support, and flat hierarchy allow for easy interaction between leaders and members. Schutt and Rogers (2009) reported in their study that members found CRO leaders to not be judgmental or stigmatizing, and were a source of support. Delegating responsibility may have been an easier task for CRO leaders because of the shared leadership and member involvement that exists within CROs. One of the participants in Schutt and Rogers' study reported that the ability to take on responsibility and help others in the CRO gave them "something to look forward to" (pg. 705).

CRO leaders rated motivating others, resolving conflicts, and asking for help to be more difficult. According to Schutt and Rogers (2009), participants in their study emphasized their appreciation for staff efforts to solve problems and engage people in the organization, but a small number of responses reported that some staff developed a more hierarchical approach. Being a consumer leader can be a difficult balance between being in a position of responsibility and authority but also being a member and part of a peer support environment. Salzer (1997) discussed the concern that consumer leaders in mental health centers adopt traditional mental health center practices over time, losing their unique consumer perspectives. Brown, Shepherd, Wituk, and Meissen (2007[b]) also discussed cooptation that can occur between funding agency requirements and CROs, noting that the vertical hierarchies and more rigid structures of formal nonprofit organizations could compromise the mutual support atmosphere in CROs. The three activities that CRO leaders found more difficult may be related to this idea in that, resolving conflicts, asking for help, and motivating others are more suited to a hierarchical approach as a leader. It is possible that consumer leaders in the current study believed that these activities were more difficult because they wanted to avoid a hierarchical approach in their work, which is inconsistent with the context of CROs.

Public Awareness. As a leadership capacity activity, seven CRO leaders indicated that they were currently working on public awareness. Public awareness of any nonprofit organization is important, but important for CROs for some unique reasons. First, public awareness can lead to new members. Potential new members could become aware of the CRO through a CRO public activity, from a service provider at the mental health center, or from seeing posters and brochures about the CRO. Second, public awareness is especially important for a CRO because it can help reduce the stigma associated with mental illness. It is empowering for CRO leaders and members to tell their stories, while increasing awareness about mental illness and their CRO. When people learn that consumers are successfully

operating a nonprofit organization, it counters negative stereotypes about mental health consumers and has the potential to improve the public's perception of people with mental illness (Link and Cullen, 1986). Similar to any nonprofit, public awareness can also help with funding in the future, through both developing connections and being known by funding agencies in the community (Arnett, German, and Hunt, 2003).

Leadership Succession. The majority of CROs (n = 7) indicated that they did not have a leadership succession plan in place for the executive director or other staff. There were board leadership succession plans as part of the CRO by-laws, including officer elections and term limits. While these by-laws helped the CROs with board members leaving, they did not cover the transition of an executive director or staff members. While CROs have highly involved memberships, it is still difficult to replace the executive director in any nonprofit, especially a small nonprofit. Additionally in CROs, only consumers can be the executive director or staff, and these positions have low salaries. Holter and Mowbray (2005) reported that directors have an average salary of $20,000 per year and work on average 35.5 hours per week. Furthermore, if the executive director leaves and someone within the organization replaces them, the person who fills the position may leave another position open. A leadership succession plan would allow CROs to plan in advance for the absence of a leader and would increase leadership stability.

While CROs did not have leadership succession plans in place, this is relatively common for nonprofit organizations. According to Chapman and Vogelsang (2005), a study done by the Annie E. Casey Foundation revealed that 70% of executive directors of nonprofits were planning on leaving over the next five years. Chapman and Vogelsang also noted that with the baby boom population reaching retirement age, this number is likely to increase. At the same time, 75% of nonprofits surveyed did not

have a leadership succession plan. Leadership succession plans, while potentially helpful, do not seem to be present in CROs and many other nonprofit organizations.

Technical Capacity

Some of the services provided that relate to the technical capacities of CROs provide insights about CROs as nonprofits. Technical capacity refers to the ability of staff to perform the organization's operations, such as accounting, evaluation, program and service delivery, and managing facilities. Many of the technical capacities explored in this study are unique to CROs and self-help organizations, as most self-help group settings do not have an organizational structure but a group structure.

Member Outcome Surveys. The results indicated 75% of organizations reported conducting member outcome surveys. Member outcome surveys are useful for nonprofits because they provide feedback about the functioning and effectiveness of programs and also provide data to include in publications, reports to funders, or in future grants. While it is impressive that so many CROs conducted member outcome surveys, it is important to note that SRS first encouraged CROs to include these surveys in their yearly grant as an allowable expense and included technical assistance in the grant with the Center for Community Support and Research to help with the development and implementation of these surveys. It is unlikely that CROs would have conducted member outcome surveys themselves. CROs, as developing organizations, do not have the organizational sophistication, maturity, or available funding to conduct member outcome surveys nor would CROs have given an outcome survey a high organizational priority.

Member or client outcome research has become increasingly important as many funders require evaluation of projects. Works (2008) reported that, of 125 nonprofits surveyed, 80% used outcomes evaluations and 55% used evaluations for all of the programs they provided. Further, 67% of

these organizations had at least one funder that required outcome evaluations. Outcome evaluation has become the norm for grant funded projects complimenting the process evaluation used to report data such as the number of people served, volunteers recruited, or number of hours open (Morley, Vinson, & Hatry, 2001).

At the same time, CROs may simply have conducted these surveys to primarily satisfy their funder. Funding agencies requiring CROs to monitor their member outcomes and/or requiring programs can lead to cooptation of CROs as they likely feel obligated to change their programs to fit with funding requirements (Brown, Shepherd, Wituk, and Meissen, 2007[b]). CROs, like any nonprofit, also feel pressured to report positive results. SRS, in an attempt to strengthen CROs and sustain the work that they do, requires activities related to the CROs' funding that are more technical and less about peer support, such as report writing, conducting surveys, and tracking activities. Brown, Shepherd, Wituk, and Meissen (2007[b]) discussed how goal tracking can take away from the unstructured feel of a peer support organization, and that more required tasks and rigid structures imposed by funders can be the beginning of CROs becoming a more formally structured nonprofit organization.

Transportation. A majority of CROs provided transportation to members, which served two purposes: 1) getting members to the CRO, and 2) getting members to service providers and other essential services. Many members did not drive or did not have a vehicle, so without transportation to the CRO, many members would not be able to participate as public transportation did not exist in five of the communities and was inadequate in the other three, especially after hours when CROs were open. Transportation provided by CROs increases their membership and also helps to serve the needs of their membership regarding other community services. Holter and Mowbray (2005) reported that transportation in rural areas is especially challenging and may limit participation in rural CROs, so providing transportation is essential to the survival of CROs.

Providing transportation to fill other basic needs is a benefit of membership. CROs were also providing services such as comparative shopping, job training/assistance, personal health, and donations to members. Some CROs provided members with personal hygiene and health products as gifts and others kept such products to hand out when needed. Mowbray, Robinson, and Holter (2002) also reported that CROs in Michigan provided some basic services, including a food bank (47%), job training/assistance (69%), and transportation (72%). Schutt and Rogers (2009) reported that some members initially came to the CRO for help in filling basic needs, and then remained members for social reasons and peer support. Providing some basic services helps attract people to the organization, increases membership size, and contributes to the atmosphere of recovery.

Consultants. The majority of CROs contracted with a local accountant which not only helped ensure the financial operations of the organization were in order, but was normalizing in that the CRO as a nonprofit was purchasing local services. The majority of nonprofit organizations use consultants. Works (2008) reported 12 different areas in which nonprofits hired consultants for help, including grant writing, marketing, research, and information technology. However, Works reported that the number one use of consultants in nonprofits was for accounting, as 43% of consultants were accounting consultants.

Contracting with a local accountant was strongly encouraged by both SRS and the technical assistance provider. Contracting with local services can help CROs gain recognition with local agencies, and build their community connections. It also helps establish CROs as legitimate nonprofit organizations within their communities. Contracting with an accountant has many benefits, but the primary reason CROs used an accountant was to avoid fiscal issues that could lead to financial problems as recommended by their funder.

Fundraising. While five of the CROs had funds beyond what SRS provided, the amounts were a small percentage of their total budgets. Fundraising and fund development ranges from selling crafts, to capital campaigns, to planned giving, to pursuing individual donors. It is different than writing grants and doing contracts as it can not only help raise additional funds but increases public awareness.

Having sufficient dollars is the number one need of nonprofit organizations, and always has been. A study by Works (2008) found that the top three issues affecting nonprofits were increased operating costs, fundraising effectiveness, and an increased need for services. Out of the 125 nonprofits studied by Works, over half identified government grants or contracts as a major source of income, but fundraising accounted for less than 10% of revenue. The Works study showed that most nonprofits have difficulties with fundraising and over the last 50 years nonprofits have become increasingly dependent on government funding and foundations. CROs in Kansas are dependent almost exclusively on state funding.

The funding provided by the yearly SRS grant essentially satisfied basic needs for CROs. It provided just enough funding for CROs to stay open, but not enough to grow, much less thrive. Despite their meager budgets and encouragement from SRS to fundraise and write other grants, CROs have not been able to decrease their dependence on SRS funding. CROs in this study were young, underdeveloped nonprofit organizations, and the executive directors did not have background or training in nonprofit management, much less fundraising or grant development. No CRO had staff time dedicated to these activities as their time was spent on CRO operations or activities. Additionally, members and staff of CROs were self-help and peer support oriented and were not experienced or interested in fund development, so they may have had difficulty starting, helping with, or leading a fundraising project. CRO members were more passionate about helping other members. Finally, the SRS grant did not provide enough funding to hire a fund development consultant, which typically costs

between $500 to $2500/day. The majority of traditional nonprofits do not have enough funding to hire such a consultant, as less than 25% reported hiring fundraising consultants in a study by Works (2008).

Traditionally self-help groups do not fundraise. For example, when Alcoholics Anonymous was first beginning, they accepted small donations until they were able to build a market for their books and other materials (Online Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous, n.d.). They ultimately turned down funding from the Rockefeller Foundation in 1943. Alcoholics Anonymous, like other self-help groups, has self-sustainability as one of the principles of being a self-help group. Many self-help groups feel that it is empowering to be self-sustaining, and do not want to jeopardize their self-help nature by having funders. In addition, most self-help groups do not need much funding to survive, because they typically find free space for meetings and do not have staff or operating hours to maintain.

Self-help organizations, unlike self-help groups that meet once per week or once a month, do have funding needs like CROs that include a building, staff, and hours of operation to maintain. Humphreys et al. (2004) discussed that while self-help organizations vary widely in terms of size, mission, and structure, some self-help organizations still refuse to receive outside funding, for the same reasons that self-help groups do not elect to receive outside funding. For grassroots, faith-based, and self-help organizations that do accept outside funding, there are concerns about cooptation and professionalization.

Kalifon (1991) studied how several small NAMI (National Alliance for the Mentally Ill) groups evolved into a formal nonprofit organization over time. The groups came together because they wanted to address housing needs and to develop a group-care home for their adult children with mental illness and others in the community. Shortly after forming, they opened a group-care facility, hired staff, and worked on developing an apartment program. Over time, the group began to have troubles keeping family members and consumers as facility managers, and ultimately ended up hiring a professional to run the group-care home. Some members of the group were in favor of expanding and becoming more

professionalized, but some were not. Later, conflict arose between the original members of the group and the group members that wanted to become professionalized around evicting an unruly member. Many participants in this study believed the change began when the member was evicted, and many of the original members decided not to continue their participation because they felt the group had lost its self-help and mutual support atmosphere and had instead become a professional organization, similar to traditional services of which they were attempting to be an alternative.

As CROs expand their services or acquire more funding, certain needs and restrictions often come with these developments, such as having more paid staff, staff that are knowledgeable about completing grant requirements, and programs that meet the funding requirements. In the case of the NAMI group studied by Kalifon (1991), the group needed someone who could manage the group-care home full-time and turned to a professional. While the CROs in this study are mandated to be 100% consumer-run, there may come a time when they also need the help of a professional beyond the role of consultant. For these reasons, CROs may be resistant to applying for new grants and engaging in fundraising as they are concerned about losing their self-help and peer support environment.

Overall Building Condition. As a technical capacity, the overall building condition was assessed for each CRO. The majority of CRO facilities (75%) were rated "Good/Above Average" or "Excellent" in overall building condition, which showed that CRO facilities were meeting the basic needs of their members, including providing adequate space for meetings, and other amenities, such as a kitchen. The majority of CROs also had a computer for staff and separate computers for general use. The facilities for a CRO are a large part of their overall budget and are very important to the mission of the organization. Since CROs have relatively small budgets, they often rent their space or have it donated by other agencies. CROs often move to improve their locations over time. For instance, some CROs have moved to a more central location, to increase their accessibility. Others have moved to larger locations, to

provide more space for their activities and members. Facilities are important for organizations because the space determines how much growth the organization can accommodate and the types of activities and meetings the organization can host.

The physical setting of a CRO is critical to its ability to serve the population. Unlike other nonprofit organizations, the setting of a CRO contributes to the mission of the organization. CROs strive to provide comfortable settings in which members are able to relax and socialize. Barker (1968) described the factors that influence a person's behavior or willingness to participate in behavior settings, and some of those factors are related to the physical features of the setting. Many of the CROs have comfortable furniture, like couches and living room furniture, because they want participants to feel "at home." Another factor discussed by Barker is the perception of physiological processes, such as crowding or noise. CROs strive to provide facilities with multiple rooms and adequate space. Having a facility that meets the needs of the organization is important because having less than adequate facilities may limit the socialization that occurs in these behavior settings. CRO members have helped contribute and control some aspects of the CRO's setting. CRO members have asked for and raised money for pool tables and other activities, and members have also helped to find furniture to furnish the CRO. The value of having a comfortable and appropriate setting that encourages social interaction is an important part of CROs.

The technical capacity section included some notable insights about CROs as nonprofit organizations. While CROs were successful in assessing member outcomes, hiring consultants, and maintaining their facilities, other technical capacities, particularly fundraising, need more development. Interestingly, some of the technical capacities and funder requirements seem to contradict self-help principles.

CROs as Recovery Driven Peer Support Behavior Settings

Maintaining a balance between being a nonprofit organization and a self-help organization is challenging. As a grant funded nonprofit, CROs are able to provide services and opportunities that traditional self-help groups cannot nor would want to provide. CROs provide a unique and powerful behavior setting available daily for a number of hours, based in peer support that also provides opportunities for employment or volunteerism available only to consumers.

Genotypes and Phenotypes

Understanding that CROs as behavior settings differ from one location to another, it is important to consider the differences that exist between settings. The concepts of genotypes and phenotypes, developed by Luke, Rappaport, and Seidman (1991) described genotypes as a group of settings with a similar structure in which a person could transfer from one setting to another without greatly disturbing the setting. Considering this, CROs can be thought of as one genotype in that they are all under the same basic structure of being a 501c3 nonprofit organization and a peer support setting. As a genotype, members could transfer from one CRO to another and quickly identify the overall structure of the setting. Phenotypes, as described by Luke, Rappaport, and Seidman, are the actual patterns of observed behavior and differ across genotypes. Based on this concept, different CRO settings have different phenotypes and will therefore produce different member outcomes.

Luke, Rappaport, and Seidman (1991) found different group characteristics with GROW self-help groups that were related to higher or lower member outcomes. For instance, members in more personal groups that shared stories instead of providing factual information were found to have higher member improvement over time. Interestingly, these groups were also smaller in size, and the authors suggest that limiting group size may help improve outcomes for members in the future. Applying the concepts of genotypes and phenotypes to CROs as peer support nonprofit organizations supports the

importance of recognizing and examining the different characteristics that exist in individual settings, as these characteristics can potentially be understood to maximize member outcomes.

In addition to activities within CROs, CROs as organizations may have other characteristics, such as size, resources, and location that could also affect members. Rural CROs have unique concerns in that they are often smaller organizations with smaller budgets, and have less outside resources available in the community, including transportation for members. These organizations may also be housed in residential settings rather than a business district. Related to this, larger CROs tend to have more resources and are able to provide more activities for members. However, these organizations also have more people to fill leadership roles and some members may not have the opportunity to participate in leadership because of the large size of the organization. Moreover, Luke, Rappaport, and Seidman (1991) found that people in smaller groups had a more personal intimate setting which encouraged sharing and discussion.

Another factor to consider is the length of existence of a CRO. CROs that have been in existence for many years may have fewer concerns related to setting up the leadership structure of the organization, networking and developing relationships with other organizations, and promoting the CRO. While more established CROs may have less concerns related to development, they may also have existing structures within the leadership that discourage newer members from participating at higher levels. Overall, there are several variations of characteristics for CROs, including their size, location, length of existence, types of activities provided, and resources that can change the way that members are affected within the setting.

Another theory to consider when examining the characteristics within CROs is activity setting theory. As previously discussed, activity setting theory was developed by O'Donnell, Tharp, and Wilson (1993) and takes into account the purposeful participation and planned activities that occur within settings. In CROs, activities provided can vary from one organization to the next, as activities are

tailored to members' needs, requests, or are even developed and lead by members. Members of different CROs may have very different needs, skills, or ideas for the development of activities. Furthermore, the resources that CROs have related to the seven setting characteristics described by O'Donnell, Tharp, and Wilson (1993) vary from one organization to the next, including the skills that people in the setting have, the positions these people fill, the funding available for activities, the time available, the culture of the organization, and other factors may influence the number and types of activities provided in these settings. The social processes and relationships between members can also affect if and how members choose to participate in the available activities. Related to different phenotypes having different member outcomes, different activities within CROs may affect member outcomes as well. It would be beneficial for CROs to examine the activities provided and the results discovered through evaluation of these activities to determine if some activities produce higher member outcomes than other activities.

Understaffed CROs and Member Participation

CROs as a behavior setting were "understaffed" as described by Barker (1968) as having more roles than people to fill them. The level of participation and involvement in CROs was high and there are many roles that only members can fill including staff and board when compared to a typical nonprofit. While some of the CROs in this study were larger organizations, all the CROs have small staff (n = 1-6) and boards (n = 6-12), which left many formal and informal volunteer roles to be filled by members. This encouraged high participation and involvement in the organization. CROs were typically "understaffed" in that when all of the roles are filled, there may have been few regular attending members left. Since CROs were typically "understaffed" there were considerable influences on the members in these settings. According to Luke, Rappaport, and Seidman (1991), in underpopulated settings, the setting influences the members to fill more roles and participate in more activities to carry

out the mission of the organization. Members of these settings have been shown (Wicker, 1983) to feel more responsible, feel more important, and feel better about their work.

Standing patterns of behavior or norms (Tseng & Seidman, 2007), are the typical behaviors or perceptions in a setting, and may also include approval or disapproval by others in the setting. According to Brown, Shepherd, Wituk and Meissen (2007[a]), roles help people clarify their expectations, and what they can expect of others. In a CRO, these expectations include that each member has experienced mental illness firsthand, that members should provide informal peer support to others, and that members should participate in activities at the organization.

In addition to roles and expectations that exist within behavior settings, people use selective interaction to choose which component in which to be involved and what roles they want to fill that are consistent with their identity (Brown, Shepherd, Wituk, & Meissen, 2007[a]). For instance, a consumer might choose to enter a CRO because they identify with being a mental health consumer, and they might choose to lead an art group because they identify themselves as an artistic person. CROs provide ample opportunity for people to participate in ways that reflect their identity and who they are as a person. Any member of a CRO can aspire to fill any of the available roles, or create new roles that are consistent with their identity. In addition, since most CROs are "understaffed" settings, the majority of the members are encouraged to participate in either formal roles, informal roles, or both, encouraging a high level of participation that CROs experience.

CROs, as a behavior setting, have norms, roles, and expectations for people participating in the setting that encourages participation. At the same time, CRO members are meeting their needs by participating in activities and roles that are consistent with their identity. Luke, Rappaport, and Seidman (1991) discuss this in terms of person-environment interaction and how this affects the behavior in the setting. CROs, as underpopulated behavior settings, influence members to participate by having multiple roles to fill and by providing an environment that encourages all members to participate.

Nonprofit Capacity and Member Participation

CROs provide opportunities for members to learn new skills beyond a self-help group as they are also functioning nonprofit organizations. The SRS grant that CROs in Kansas received required all CROs to become 501c3 nonprofit organizations. The SRS grant and being a nonprofit required CROs to report on their activities, have budgets, elect boards of directors, and have operating hours and facilities. The SRS grant also strongly encouraged nonprofit capacity building through various grant requirements and technical assistance providers that focus on nonprofit capacity. This arrangement between CROs and SRS required CROs to become functioning nonprofit organizations, which made CROs different from self-help groups.

The SRS grant for CROs included many capacity building activities. SRS encouraged these capacity building activities for CROs through requiring such things as member outcome surveys, satisfaction surveys, and hiring consultants. One way that SRS also encouraged capacity building in CROs was through the technical assistance agreement with the Center for Community Support and Research (Wituk, Vu, Brown, & Meissen, 2008). Each CRO had a technical assistance provider, and nonprofit capacity building was one of the main activities which included grant writing, board development, business management, and research. This assistance was provided in two ways for the 20 CROs in Kansas. One was through various workshops that were available to CROs throughout the year and customized technical assistance workshops that often focused on grant writing, which assisted CROs with searching for and applying to grants, including the reapplication of the SRS grant on a yearly basis.

In addition, technical assistance providers also provided customized capacity building activities on an individual basis with CROs. Wituk, Vu, Brown, and Meissen (2008) reported that technical assistance providers work with the leadership of CROs to develop and implement various changes in the CRO to build the capacity in the areas of adaptive, leadership, technical and management capacity. Assistance with board development, volunteer recruitment, policy development (such as by-laws), and

business management were some of the topics that the Center for Community Support and Research addressed with CROs. Technical assistance providers were also available to CROs to help with grant writing and report development. Based on the partnership between CROs, the Center for Community Support and Research, and SRS, CROs were able to maintain their nonprofit organizations while also learning valuable skills about running an organization and being responsive to funders.

Some of the benefits, particularly for the leaders of CROs, would not be possible if they were not also a nonprofit organization. For instance, having responsibilities related to running a nonprofit organization, such as managing elections, hiring staff, maintaining operating hours, and writing grants and reports builds skills for CRO members that they can use both inside the CRO and in other job-related settings. Brown, Shepherd, Merkle, Wituk, and Meissen (2008) reported that socially supportive participation and empowering participation experiences are both related to recovery for CRO members. An empowering participation experience includes volunteering, organizational decision-making, planning and organizing activities, and participating in formal leadership roles. While socially supportive participation had a stronger relationship with recovery, an empowering participation experience was also an important component. According to Ralph (2000) participation in empowerment-related activities helps to develop external factors of recovery such as relationships and community connections, and empowerment of the individual. CROs as nonprofits are able to provide an environment where members can participate in many activities that build skills including leadership capacity. While self-help groups and organizations, like CROs, can provide an environment where people can have a socially supportive participation experience, CROs as nonprofits can also provide an empowering participation experience.

CROs as recovery-driven peer support behavior settings have the ability to form an organization that serves the recovery needs of mental health consumers, by providing an atmosphere where consumers are truly in charge and peer support is the norm. Many people recognize the importance of

having peer support as part of a recovery-driven system, and encourage the use of peer support organizations in recovery (Mead & Copeland, 2000; Sowers, 2005). CROs provide a behavior setting that encourages socialization with others, working on important skills related to job training and leadership, and provides the opportunity for community integration. CROs framed as a recovery-driven peer support behavior settings provide a formal setting to organize local mental health consumers around advocacy and public awareness, provide needed services that may be lacking in the community, and also be a resource for consumers to learn about other community agencies. There are advantages and challenges of being both a self-help and nonprofit organization and these are reviewed below.

Advantages

CROs as recovery-driven peer support behavior settings provide advantages on three ecological levels; individual, group, and community. Individual benefits include providing a setting where consumers are able to interact with peers and develop new relationships (Brown et al., 2008; Nelson, Ochocka, Janzen, & Trainor, 2006[a]). This opportunity for socialization can be an important component of recovery for mental health consumers. In the current study, CROs had high member participation in activities, which encouraged socialization and the development of relationships with other members. The benefits that CROs provide by having a recovery-driven peer support setting is evidenced by the literature around the improvement of the daily lives of consumers (Nelson, Ochocka, Janzen, Trainor, Goering, & Lomotey, 2007). A potential benefit is the decrease in the use of inpatient services and hospitalization (Trainor, et al. 1997), which is one of the main goals of participation in a recovery-driven peer support program.

Unlike a traditional self-help group, CROs also provide opportunities at the group level to get involved in a nonprofit setting and learn new skills. CROs provide a variety of services and activities, including increasing awareness about mental illness, advocacy, outreach, social support, and

opportunities for leadership within the CRO (Brown et al., 2007[a]; Mowbray, Moxley, Jasper, & Howell, 1997; Silverman, Blank, & Taylor, 1997). In the current study, CROs provided both direct services to consumers as well as self-help activities. They also worked to increase knowledge about recovery both inside and outside the organization. CROs in this study provided leadership opportunities for members in multiple ways, including the ability to become a board or staff member, opportunities for group leadership, and encouraging consumers to be involved in the operations of the CRO through member input, decision-making and important tasks such as grant writing, report preparation, evaluation activities, and representing the CRO at local and statewide meetings. CROs are powerful behavior settings which help orient new members so they can quickly take on leadership roles, such as a peer support provider, group leader, board member, or staff member. Experienced CRO members educate new members through a peer support approach for participation in leadership roles. These opportunities work in combination with the recovery-driven peer support setting to not only provide a supportive environment, but also provide opportunities that do not exist within traditional self-help groups.

These opportunities also get consumers more involved on a community level (Mowbray & Tan, 1993), which helps to increase awareness of other community activities and supports. By increasing community awareness and integration, CROs are helping consumers to identify supports in the community available through other organizations, and also providing opportunities to meet people outside of the CRO. In the current study, CROs were working on developing relationships with other community agencies, and some CROs had relationships with other service providers in the community. These relationships made it possible for CROs to both refer consumers to other types of services, and to invite other service providers into the CRO to educate the members about available services and activities in the community. Community integration can be an important benefit for mental health

consumers, as it can help "normalize" having a mental illness, while also educating the community about mental illness, which can in turn reduce stigma (Link & Cullen, 1986).

Challenges

While there are advantages of having both self-help and nonprofit characteristics in a recovery-driven peer support setting, there are also challenges. These challenges include having a limited population available for participation and leadership, members with limited formal education and experience for board and staff roles, and stigmatization as a result of their participation.

CROs being 100% consumer-led and attended organizations can be limiting in terms of having enough members to sustain the organization. CROs, especially in rural areas, may have difficulties identifying enough members to participate. There may not be enough mental health consumers in the immediate area that are willing to participate or who know about the CRO. Many of the rural CROs in the current study were quite small, with memberships averaging around 35 people. Considering that every member did not attend the CRO on a daily basis, this left few people to operate the CRO. In addition, some of the rural CROs in this study served a large geographic area consisting of multiple counties. While the majority of CROs provided transportation, it was likely not feasible for CROs to provide transportation for someone living 50 or more miles away from the organization's location. Therefore, CROs primarily had members living in the immediate area.

While being 100% consumer-led and attended is an empowering and important component to these organizations, it is also limiting in that traditional nonprofit organizations often fill board positions with powerful community figures from established organizations, institutions, and businesses. A traditional nonprofit organization serving the mental health consumer population might include people such as service providers, physicians, psychologists, lawyers, CPAs, media/advertising experts, and other recognizable community figures. These board participants provide many advantages for traditional

nonprofits in that they provide their expertise and influence to the organization and also help promote the organization to the community. Having a board member that works for the local newspaper or television station may be beneficial to a traditional nonprofit organization because this person would be able to do a story about the organization, thereby increasing public awareness and advertising for the nonprofit organization.

CROs are typically limited in the type of training or skills that their board or staff members have had prior to their participation in the organization. Traditional nonprofit organizations include people on their board that have experience in areas valuable to the organization, such as a CPA who might also be the treasurer on the board. Other nonprofits are able to hire staff through advertising positions, interviewing applicants, and selecting the best choice for the positions available. Traditional nonprofits often have people come into the leadership of the organization with higher education degrees and/or skills from previous employment. However, since CRO staff positions are limited to their membership, they do not have the opportunity to fill their board and staff roles with highly trained or recognizable community figures beyond those in their membership.

In any nonprofit including CROs, there are still some skills that are not possessed by current staff and board members. To counteract this, CROs hire people when they find that needed skills are lacking in their organization, while other nonprofit organizations can secure needed skills through pursuing prospective board members. CROs approach this problem differently, in that they hire external consultants. As the results of this study have shown, several CROs hired external consultants, especially accountants, to help manage their finances. In addition to accountants, CROs have also enlisted the help of professional fundraising consultants and grant writing consultants when their budgets allow. When available, CROs also participate in conferences, presentations, and workshops to increase their skills.

One final challenge that some CROs encounter is stigma in the community. By participating on the board or being a paid staff member of a CRO, the person is in the public's view and is identified as a mental health consumer. In traditional nonprofit organizations, someone can be on the board of a nonprofit or working for a nonprofit while not having a personal connection with the issue being addressed. For instance, a person in the community may participate on the board of directors for an HIV/AIDS organization to help a worthy cause, while not actually having the disease or knowing anyone with the disease. However, since CROs are open about their leadership being 100% consumers, those that participate on the board of directors or as paid staff members are essentially self-identified as mental health consumers. While the majority of CRO members in Kansas are comfortable self-identifying as mental health consumers, it can be a difficult step to make. Unfortunately for CROs, this may be a challenge that prevents recognizable community figures that are deeply into their recovery from participating in the organization, especially if these persons were never or not recently part of the public mental health system.

Implications of the Current Study

The current study was a preliminary investigation of the organizational nature of CROs as behavior settings. It was hoped that this study would provide a framework for better understanding and future study of CROs. Based on the theories of behavior settings, genotypes and phenotypes, and activity settings, it is important to consider the characteristics that exist in different settings and how those characteristics vary from one setting to another. The characteristics described in the current study can influence the ways in which members participate in CROs and members can influence the degree to which these characteristics are emphasized in different organizations. Overall, the setting of CROs varies widely from one location to the next and also varies within the organization as people and activities change over time.

The nature of CROs includes both nonprofit organization characteristics, such as writing reports, conducting evaluations, and managing finances and facilities; and self-help characteristics, such as focusing on recovery from mental illness, asking for member input, and encouraging participation in the operations of the organization. Recognizing that CROs contain both of these unique frameworks within one organization may help to organize thinking around the two facets of participation that members can utilize. One of the primary goals of a CRO is to benefit members in multiple ways and assist members in developing their recovery, both internal and external. This includes working on developing skills related to coping and symptom management through participating in peer support activities (internal recovery); and participating in knowledge and skill building activities to increase social network size and develop capacity for future employment or educational opportunities in the community (external recovery). Considering the two facets that exist in CROs and the characteristics that accompany each facet may provide a framework from which to examine CROs in the future to determine which characteristics are most likely to maximize member outcomes.

Limitations of the Current Study

This was a preliminary investigation of eight CROs in Kansas. One of the most significant limitations to this study was the small sample size. The sample size of eight limited the types of analyses and conclusions that could be drawn from this data. While sample size was a limitation, this study looked at the characteristics of 40% of all CROs in the state of Kansas. A related limitation was that the unit of analysis was the organization. This study provided a preliminary review of the nature of these unique behavior settings as nonprofit mental health self-help organizations. This study was able to examine a focused set of characteristics and capacities, rather than a more broad examination of interactions between nonprofit and self-help characteristics.

This study only examined characteristics of CROs in Kansas, and is not representative of other CROs or other self-help organizations that may exist in different states. Kansas CROs are unique in terms of their relationships with their state funder, SRS, and their technical assistance providers. CROs in other states have different funding streams and some are not required to be 501c3 nonprofit organizations. Finally, Kansas CROs are also unique in that many exist in rural areas which are powerfully and uniquely influenced by the local context.

The data for this study was collected at a single point in time, and it could be beneficial to examine characteristics over time. The current study used archival data collected as part of a larger set of research studies. Collecting data over time would allow for analyses of changes in membership size, changes in leadership, and member involvement in activities.

Finally, the method of collection for the data in this study was primarily self-report surveys and interviews. Since CROs have high levels of participation and members are highly invested in their organizations, there may be some social desirability to their responses. Other forms of research, such as across-time comparisons or independent observations would have less impact due to social desirability.

Future Research

Future research on CROs should consider the unique settings in which CROs exist. It is important to consider the variations in activities, people, and resources across organizations. It would be beneficial to examine these characteristics in terms of which characteristics increase member outcomes and which do not. Future research could determine which activities provide the highest outcomes with the lowest cost or time investment for CROs. This research would help CROs focus on those activities and characteristics that are benefitting members, while reducing the time and resources devoted to activities that are not having an impact on members.

It would also be beneficial to conduct longitudinal research on CROs over time to see how these organizations develop and change as they become more sophisticated and mature. Connolly (2006) discussed the organizational life-cycle of nonprofits, and it would be important to examine how being at different stages impacts self-help and nonprofit characteristics in CROs. An extensive study of CROs as recovery-driven peer support organizations focused on the interaction and special considerations posed by being both a self-help behavior setting and also a nonprofit organization could yield some important data about how to best serve CROs and other self-help organizations. Future research could also provide information about how these unique settings are beneficial to a recovery-oriented service system, especially collaborations between CROs and professional mental health service organizations.

Future research that examines the impact of CROs on member outcomes is critical. Considering CROs as behavior settings and the standing patterns of behavior that exist in these settings, it would be important to determine which of these standing patterns of behavior are associated with successful organizational outcomes, but most importantly positive outcomes for members. This would also provide valuable information for the development of future CROs and other consumer-led initiatives.

Conclusions

This study is a preliminary look at the characteristics that exist in CROs as behavior settings, which operate as both nonprofit and self-help organizations. It is hoped that this study will begin to provide a framework for better understanding and future study of these organizations. It appears that some tension exists for CROs as both self-help and 501c3 nonprofit organizations. CROs are striving to maintain the valuable peer support and socialization that occurs in their organizations, because these characteristics help members with their recovery over time and is associated with higher member outcomes. CROs are focused on peer support, experiential knowledge, and consumers having control over the organization as part of their mission. However, CROs also provide benefits to members that

contribute to recovery by being a nonprofit organization, including several community and work-related skills that cannot be found in traditional self-help groups. Recognizing that there are benefits to members by being both a peer support recovery-oriented behavior setting that is also a well-functioning nonprofit organization, it is important to examine the successful balance of these two characteristics while avoiding professionalization and cooptation of CROs.

CROs as peer support recovery-oriented behavior settings provide many benefits, but operating and sustaining the organization over time requires funding. However, funding for CROs comes with certain requirements that can threaten the consumer-controlled peer support nature of these organizations. Funding agencies have requirements around program implementation, services provided, and outcomes research that CROs need to address. It is interesting to note that in this study, CROs did not provide many of the formal self-help activities, which may be related to the idea that consumers are receiving support through the actual operation and nature of CROs. While peer support may naturally occur within the setting, a funding agency would likely want CROs to provide information about the specific structured or formal activities that they are providing to their members. It is important to continue to examine the tension and the balance between nonprofit characteristics and self-help environments to help CROs maintain their peer support recovery-oriented behavior setting, while also providing a nonprofit organization that includes other benefits for members and communities.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Essential Self-Help Questions

CRO Leader Questions

1. We'd like to talk about the values centered around recovery, personal growth, and development.

   - Probe 1.1 - Does the CRO recognize individual consumers' progress and/or achievements, or talk about movement toward renewed meaning and purposes in life?

     _____

     _____

     _____

   - Probe 1.2 - Does the CRO talk about recovery with members (including newsletter articles)?

     _____

     _____

     _____

   - Probe 1.3 - Is recovery discussed in optimistic or pessimistic ways? As an abstract possibility or a concrete and achievable reality?

     _____

     _____

     _____

2. What can you tell us about member involvement in overall leadership at the CRO?

    - Probe 2.1 - Are consumers engaged in tasks integral to the running of the center?

    _____

    _____

    _____

    - Probe 2.2 - Are there tasks that staff reserve for themselves?

    _____

    _____

    _____

3. Does your CRO currently have any support group meetings?

    ☐ Yes ☐ No

4. Does your CRO offer a warm line?

    ☐ Yes ☐ No

5. Does your CRO have designated peer counselors?

    ☐ Yes ☐ No

CRO Member Questions

1. To what extent is leadership shared at this organization?

    ☐ None ☐ A little ☐ Some ☐ A lot

2. To what extent do members have control over decisions made here?

    ☐ None ☐ A little ☐ Some ☐ A lot

Organizationally Mediated Empowerment

People participate in different ways at places like this. The following is a list of things that might be true about what you have done here. Please tell me if you have done these things or not here. Many people have not done any of the things on this list so do not feel bad about what you have or have not done.

1. Have you voted in an election for board members? Yes No
2. Have you served on the Board of Directors here? Yes No
3. Have you helped set up any meetings here? Yes No
4. Have you been responsible for preparing meals or bringing refreshments here?

   Yes No
5. Are you a volunteer on a regular basis here? Yes No
6. Have you been a paid staff member here? Yes No
7. Have you helped lead a discussion or support group here? Yes No
8. Have you taken part in deciding what activities will be held here? Yes No
9. Have you taken part in deciding whether to add a new program or service here?

   Yes No
10. Have you taken part in deciding whether to hire someone? Yes No
11. Have you taken part in deciding what rules people need to follow here?

    Yes No
12. Have you taken part in deciding what to do if someone breaks the rules here?

    Yes No
13. Have you suggested to the Board or director what you think might be changed or improved here? Yes No

14. Have you taken part in writing the yearly grant here? Yes No

15. Have you taken part in writing the quarterly reports here? Yes No

16. Have you helped with cleaning or building maintenance here? Yes No

17. Have you helped organize a fun activity or party here? Yes No

18. Have you taught a class here? Yes No

19. Have you designed or helped collect survey information (e.g. satisfaction survey, KU survey)?

    Yes No

20. Have you attended an external meeting or conference for this organization?

    Yes No

21. Have you made a presentation at an external meeting or conference for this organization?

    Yes No

Self-Help Sustainability Questions

CRO Leader Questions

1. How many people participated in activities offered at the CRO?

   _____Unduplicated number of members

2. How many new members did you have join the organization over the past year?

   _____ Members

3. How long has your CRO been in existence? _____years

4. Is there an appropriate level of meaningful activities at the center that considers individuals' needs and abilities, or are all activities aimed at one particular skill set and level?

_____

_____

_____

5. What are some of the things your CRO does to reach out to new members?

_____

_____

_____

- Probe 3.1 - Does the center attempt to have the mental health center spread the word about the center to their clients?

_____

_____

_____

- Probe 3.2 - Does the center do anything to increase their visibility in the community- distribute flyers, an information booth, etc?

_____

_____

_____

6. Does the CRO have relationships with other helpful agencies/services?

_____

_____

_____

CRO Member Questions

1. Have you served on the Board of Directors here? ☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Have you been a paid staff member here? ☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Have you suggested to the board or director what you think might be changed or improved here?

☐ Yes ☐ No

4. This organization makes changes based on member input and satisfaction. (Circle One)

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

Adaptive Capacity Questions

1. Do you have any non-consumer or external consultants other than SHN (ex. accountants, grant writers, etc)? ☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Has your organization completed a member satisfaction survey?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please explain the goals you set, the goals you achieved or did not achieve, and the percentage of satisfaction.

_____

_____

_____

If no, did you set any goals to conduct surveys? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please explain the goals you set.

_____

_____

_____

3. Beyond your yearly SRS state grant, how many funding sources does your organization have?

Source of Revenue	Circle Yes or No		If Yes, Please Indicate Amount Below
Fundraising	Yes	No	$
Contracted Services	Yes	No	$
Other Grants	Yes	No	$
Food Donations in Kind	Yes	No	$
Other Donations in Kind	Yes	No	$
Other, Please List _____	Yes	No	$

4. Does your CRO have relationships with other helpful agencies/services?

_____

_____

_____

5. How knowledgeable is your organization about necessary services available to consumers (e.g. housing, transportation, job placement/training, education, food pantries/soup kitchens, clothing distribution sites, Medicaid or Medicare, social security benefits, self-help and support groups, shelters, low income resources, social recreational opportunities, etc.)?

   _____

   _____

   _____

6. Do staff encourage consumers to participate in the variety of tasks necessary to run the center?

   _____

   _____

   _____

Leadership Capacity Questions

For the following questions, please tell us how difficult it is for you to do the following on a scale from 1 to 5 (*with 1= Very easy and 5= Very difficult*).

How difficult is it for you to…

1. Ask people to help you with tasks

   ☐ Very Easy (1) ☐ Easy (2) ☐ Neutral (3) ☐ Difficult (4) ☐ Very Difficult (5)

2. Interact with others at the CRO

   ☐ Very Easy (1) ☐ Easy (2) ☐ Neutral (3) ☐ Difficult (4) ☐ Very Difficult (5)

3. Delegate responsibility

   ☐ Very Easy (1) ☐ Easy (2) ☐ Neutral (3) ☐ Difficult (4) ☐ Very Difficult (5)

4. Motivate others to increase their involvement in the organization

   ☐ Very Easy (1) ☐ Easy (2) ☐ Neutral (3) ☐ Difficult (4) ☐ Very Difficult (5)

5. Resolve conflicts

   ☐ Very Easy (1) ☐ Easy (2) ☐ Neutral (3) ☐ Difficult (4) ☐ Very Difficult (5)

6. Raise public awareness of mental illness

   ☐ Very Easy (1) ☐ Easy (2) ☐ Neutral (3) ☐ Difficult (4) ☐ Very Difficult (5)

7. Are you currently working to increase public awareness of your CRO?

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

8. Is there a succession plan?

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

Technical Capacity Questions

1. Does your CRO currently have any support group meetings?

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Does your CRO have designated peer counselors?

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Does your CRO offer a warm line?

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

4. Does your CRO assist members with transportation to and from your CRO?

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

5. If YES please estimate how many rides are given to members in a week. _____ rides

6. Now we'd like to ask you about the direct assistance that your CRO provides to consumers for daily needs.

   - Does the center actively help consumers obtain housing, education, job or job training, or provide transportation to consumers for *daily* needs (e.g. to the grocery store, Laundromat, etc. - regularly enough to enable consumers to depend on this service to meet their needs)? Please list all services the center provides directly to consumers, ***not referrals to other sources of help***.

     _____

     _____

     _____

     _____

7. How much did your organization fundraise over the past year? $_____

8. Did your organization hire an accountant?

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

9. Does your CRO have at least one computer? ☐ Yes ☐ No

10. Are you currently working to increase public awareness of your CRO? ☐ Yes ☐ No

11. Did you conduct a survey assessing member outcomes over the past year?

    ☐ Yes ☐ No

    If yes, please explain the goals you set, the goals you achieved or did not achieve, and the outcome goals you set for your members.

    _____

    _____

    _____

If no, did you set any goals to conduct surveys? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please explain the goals you set

_____

_____

_____

12. Overall physical environment of CRO

☐ Excellent/satisfactory

The CRO is clean, comfortable, attractive, furniture in good condition, well laid out, and large enough to accommodate some growth in membership. Bathrooms are clean and contain necessary supplies. It has a functional kitchen and enough space to handle meal preparation for large celebrations. Interior is fully wheelchair accessible.

☐ Good/above average

The physical environment at the CRO is satisfactory, not uncomfortable, perhaps not pleasing in its general upkeep, design or amenities. It may be slightly dingy, poorly lit, or barely large enough to accommodate the current membership. The CRO has a functional kitchen and enough space to handle meal preparation for members of the center, if not larger celebrations. Perhaps there are some barriers for consumers using wheelchairs, though they can access the areas of the center where most activity happens.

☐ Adequate

The physical environment at the center is somewhat unpleasant and may be somewhat smoky, too hot/cold, may lack comfortable furniture, or be crowded, and/or have minor maintenance problems. The kitchen may not be large enough of have the necessary equipment to handle much meal

preparation. Perhaps there are some barriers for consumers using wheelchairs- though they can access the areas of the center where most activity happens.

☐ Fair/below average

The physical environment does not necessarily pose a health risk, but definitely uncomfortable; too dark, too hot/cold, may lack comfortable furniture, crowded, bathrooms may not be clean, smoky, limited kitchen space or kitchen is difficult to use. Perhaps there are barriers for consumers using wheelchairs- they may not be able to access areas of the center where most activity happens.

☐ Poor

The physical environment at the center is potentially unhealthy or very unpleasant and may include the following: heavily smoke-filled, filthy, foul odors, furniture in disrepair or uncomfortable, bathrooms dirty and/or not supplied with toilet paper/soap/paper towels, extreme heat/cold, leaking roof, cramped and crowded, non-working appliances or toilets. Perhaps there are barriers for consumers using wheelchairs- they may not be able to access areas of the center where most activity happens.

APPENDIX B

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STATEWIDE IMPLEMENTATION OF CRO'S IN KANSAS PROJECT

The Center for Community Support and Research in collaboration with the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services is conducting an investigation of the impact of CRO participation on their members. As a new member of a CRO you are invited to participate. The purpose of the research is to understand how people's lives change because of their participation in a CRO.

This project involves interviewing you twice. If you agree to participate we would like to interview you now. This interview includes questions about your participation in the CRO, your use of services, employment and educational history, social support, daily activities, and personal outlook on life. This interview will take about 60 minutes to complete. We would also like to re-interview you one year from now to see how your life has changed. This interview will ask the same questions.

In addition, we would like your permission to contact persons and agencies that you identify as usually knowing your whereabouts to help us locate you for your follow-up interviews.

The information from people you identify and all the interviews will be confidential and only available to the research staff affiliated with this study. The forms will be kept at the Center for Community Support and Research at Wichita State University. One year after the project has ended, all forms will be destroyed (by shredding) and all information (such as your name) that might identify you will be destroyed.

The risks associated with your participation in this study are: having confidential information collected, being asked personal questions, and being inconvenienced by the time spent in the interviews (a total of two hours over a one year period). The benefits associated with your participation in this study are: learning about yourself from the interviews, receiving a $15 payment for participating in each study interview, and helping us learn how to improve CROs for people like yourself.

I understand that as a participant in this project:

- My participation is voluntary. I am not required to participate; I can choose to quit at any time.
- My participation in my CRO will not be affected in any way by my answers to the interview questions.
- My identity will not be revealed in any publication or document resulting from this study, or to anyone outside of the evaluation study without my written permission.

(1) Authorization for Participation: I have read or had read to me the above, and I have decided that I will participate in the project described above. Its general purposes, the particulars of involvement, and possible risks and benefits have been explained to my satisfaction. My signature also indicates that I have received a copy of this consent form.

Participant's Name (print):_____

Participant's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Investigator's Signature: _____

(2) Permission for research staff to be informed of my whereabouts: I give permission for the research team to be given information about my whereabouts by specified friends and family members (listed on the attached sheet) in order to conduct the follow-up interview _____Initial here

If you have further questions about this project or your rights as a research subject or if you have a research related inquiry, please contact the Principal Investigator, Greg Meissen Ph.D. 1-800-445-0116; Wichita State University, 1845 N. Fairmount, Campus Box 34, Wichita KS, 67260. If you have questions pertaining to your rights as a research subject, or about research-related injury, you can contact the Office of Research Administration at Wichita State University, Wichita, KS 67260-0007, telephone (316) 978-3285.