Peer Support: Implementation Best Practices and Challenges

Staci Bell     Skylar Berhim     Cherie Houchin

High Fidelity Wraparound

High Fidelity Wraparound is a team-based planning process. It is used to support the young person and families in creating individualized service plans.

High Fidelity Wraparound works because it brings people together to see the youth & family differently and uses a structured planning process to make new, creative, alternate agreements. It is way to make sure the young person's voice is heard and helps to help create a toolbox of tools.

The team will work together to discuss how to provide help that works.

High Fidelity Wraparound is divided into Four stages

- Engagement
- Planning
- Implementation
- Transition

Four Phases of High Fidelity Wraparound

- Engagement (Hello):
  - Bringing families into the process and establishing the team

- Planning (Help):
  - One or two facilitated meetings to establish family, needs, and strengths driven plan

- Implementation (Healing):
  - Refining and adapting the plan to improve the fit between "need" and "help"

- Transition (Hope):
  - Summarizing progress and determining the next level of support, if any
Goals of a “Youth Peer Support” in High Fidelity Wraparound

“Youth Peer Support Partners help youth to think through what they want to say and practice what they want to say and help them find their voice so that they can share it in a meaningful way.”

The goal is to help the youth develop their own abilities to advocate effectively for themselves, both in meetings and in the community.

http://www.nwi.pdx.edu/pdf/proj4-Youth-Peer-Support-Case-Study.pdf

Peer Support is not a new phenomenon – it has probably existed in some way since the dawn of human beings. It is a natural tendency for us to seek of those who have walked similar paths and can truly understand us.”

What is the importance of a Peer Support role?

The Evidence

- Decreased substance use among persons with co-occurring substance abuse issues (Rowe, et al., 2007; Sledge, et al., 2012)
- Decreased participants’ level of distressing symptoms (Tondora, et al., 2012)
- Decreased experience of depression (Sledge, et al., 2012)
- Reduced overall symptoms (Campbell, J. et al., 2004)
Things To Think About…

- Building a Foundation
- Reviewing Policies & Procedures
- Challenges

You may ask:
- What has inspired you to consider adding peer roles?
- What are the unique contributions you gain by bringing peer roles to the agency?
- What fears and/or worries do you have about this process?
- Where are those fears/worries coming from and what might we do to address them?

Adapted from the Western Massachusetts Peer Network’s ‘Myths & Misconceptions: Shedding the Misunderstandings as a First Step to Progress’ (2011)

Things To Think About…

- Think about places in the program or agency that natural supports already serve as staff and add to the richness of the organization
- Provide a series of opportunities that allow staff to participate in the planning and/or problem solving of issues or concerns about.
- Anticipate and be prepared to respond to questions about confidentiality, dual relationships, ethics etc.
- Do you have a champion at each level of the organization
Things To Think About...

- The identification of guidelines for developing appropriate and meaningful job descriptions.
- Providing a foundation upon which peer support core competencies can be identified.
- Creating a basis for peer support ethical guidelines.
- Gathering information that could be used to examine peer supporter training.
- Is documentation recovery oriented or deficit oriented.

National Practice Guidelines for Peer Supporters

Recovery is a process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential.

The belief that recovery is possible for all who experience psychiatric, traumatic, or substance use challenges is fundamental to the practice of peer support. The likelihood of long-term recovery is increased with effective support. Peer support has been demonstrated through research and practical application to be highly effective.

SAMHSA Working Definition of Recovery (Last updated in 2011).

Misperceptions & Concerns About Implementation

- If peer roles are all about developing relationships and sharing experiences then they won’t understand the importance of boundaries and confidentiality.
- Peer workers cannot work full time due to the level of responsibility and stress.
- Anyone can be a good Peer Support.
- Peer workers aren’t professional workers.
- People who have had similar experiences will ‘trigger’ peer workers.
- The big push for the use of peer workers combined with shrinking budgets means I may be replaced by a peer worker.
- Criminal History and Agency Policies.

Adapted from the Western Massachusetts Peer Network’s ‘Myths & Misconceptions: Shedding the Misunderstandings as a First Step to Progress’ (2011).
1. Peer support is voluntary
2. Peer supports are open minded
3. Peer supporters are empathetic
4. Peer supports are respectful
5. Peer supports facilitate change
6. Peer supporters are honest, transparent and direct
7. Peer support is mutual and reciprocal
8. Peer support is equally shared power
9. Peer support is strengths-focused

Peer Support is not designed to have a separate set of goals. The roles of Peer Support and clinical staff often align:

- Supporting people to experience less distress and isolation
- Supporting people to find satisfaction and contentment in their life
- Supporting people to have hope for moving forward

"The relationship between the peer worker and the peer they are working alongside is founded on learning rather than one person in the helper role and the other in the receiving end. The relationship is grounded in mutuality, this encouraging relationships that are equal, accepting and respectful."

Bradshaw
Peer support workers bring valuable skills to the organizations in which they work.

*In programs which hire [peer workers], numerous, desirable attributes and abilities of [peer] employees have been noted... system knowledge, street smarts, responsiveness, coping strategies, patience & flexibility, relational empathy, issue identification, engagement abilities, role modeling, advocacy against stigmatization, and educational activity with co-workers.* (Van Tosh, 1993, Dixon et al., 1994).

Hope is reflected in the following types of attitudes:

- When people believe in each other
- When they feel better about themselves
- When they feel optimistic about their future
- When they are making positive changes in their lives

Peer Support Competencies:

- A competency is “the capability of applying or using knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviors, and personal characteristics to successfully perform critical work tasks, specific functions, or operate in a given role or position” (Ennis, 2008, pp. 4-5). These are gained through experiential and academic learning, as well as through factors that may be beyond the person’s control, such as talents and gifts with which someone may be born. For example, some people are naturally extraverts and may be more comfortable in a “people” field than another.
**Peer Support Competencies**

- Believes that everyone can progress, heal and move forward in life.
- Values choice and self-determination.
- Can describe the peer role in relation to both people using services and those providing services.
- Values the peer role as a new non-clinical position to augment and not duplicate traditional services.
- Recognizes the relationship of the peer role to the peer and self-help movement.
- Has the ability to “stand up” for people being served, but with respectful and effective communication.
- Recognizes the importance of “hope” in healing.
- Has the ability to describe a healing process through the use of personal story.
- Has the ability to use personal story to describe strategies toward healing.

**Proficiencies**

- Knowledge of “peer” movement
- Knowledge of “peer” principles
- Self-determination
- Supporting dream centered life planning
- Community Resources
- Empathic listening
- Knowledge of the Social Determinants of health
- Diversity & Inclusions
- Honest & Direct
- Strengths Focused

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**Peer Support Knowledge**

- Knowledge of “peer” movement
- Knowledge of “peer” principles
- Self-determination
- Supporting dream centered life planning
- Community Resources
- Empathic listening
- Knowledge of the Social Determinants of health
- Diversity & Inclusions
- Honest & Direct
- Strengths Focused
Where is the support?

Supporting Someone to Evaluate and Communicate Their Concerns and Discuss Changes with Medication

Meetings

- Meet when the individual requests or when you offer mutual agreement (scheduled weekly or time)
- When present, open to talk about the individual's relationship with the provider and the client
- Reading files to help the person understand what is in their file and treatment plan

Emphasizing Self Care

- Recognizing compassion fatigue
- Forming new habits
- How to work new self-care habits into a busy schedule

Support Skill Set

- Maintaining boundaries
- Guiding the conversation
- Intentionality

Professional Growth & Opportunities

- Connecting to mentors and others doing the work
- Preparing for the next step in their professional career
- First professional role: base into and expand the time to develop professional competencies, time management, professional times, professional communication, documentation & note-taking skills.

Websites / References

- www.naops.org (home page, current events, quick access to forms and links)
- http://na4ps.wordpress.com (NA4PS main website/WordPress site, includes detailed explorations of the International Association of Peer Supporters organization and its projects and initiatives)
- http://na4ps.wordpress.com/7th-annual-national-conference/ (National Peer Supporter)
- http://na4ps.wordpress.com/national-standards/ (National Practice Standards site – information about the efforts to establish Practice Guidelines for peer support providers)
- www.nwi.pdx.edu/NWI.../Walker-4a.1- (phases and activities).pdf
Websites / References

http://na4ps.wordpress.com/library/ (Resource Library with training materials and other resources that can be helpful for peer supporters and those who are receiving support)

https://www.facebook.com/NA4PS (Like us on Facebook – and join the ongoing discussion about peer support)

https://www.facebook.com/NA4PS (View posts about Recovery to Practice page on the NA4PS website, with information about the SAMHSA-funded Recovery to Practice continuing education program for peer support providers)

Foundation for Excellence in Mental Health - A website dedicated to raising funds, but, also disseminating information and research about the best practices in mental health care.

Hearing Voices USA - A website full of information on the Hearing Voices movement and nationally available trainings and resources.

Intentional Peer Support - A website focused on Intentional Peer Support (IPS) training, its Basic concepts, values and resources.

International Association of Peer Supporters - A website focused on peer roles, trainings and resources.

Mad in America - A website full of personal stories and perspectives on peer roles and the mental health system.

Madness Radio - A website full of radio interviews on mental health, peer support and other relevant topics.

Mind freedom International - An international organization focused on the stories, rights and strengths of people who have ‘been there’.

National Coalition for Mental Health Care - A website offering resources and information on a variety of related topics, webinars and beyond (including a listing of statewide peer-to-peer organizations).

National Empowerment Center - A national technical assistance center website offering resources, trainings, webinars, etc.

Peerlink - A national technical assistance center website offering resources, trainings, webinars, etc.
Websites/References

PeersTV—A YouTube channel with lots of relevant interviews and personal stories—www.youtube.com/user/peersTV

Transformation Center—A Massachusetts-based peer-to-peer organization that offers a supervisory training for individuals supervising peer roles—www.transformation-center.org

Western Mass Recovery Learning Community—A peer-to-peer organization offering nationally available trainings and resource information—www.westernmassrlc.org

- Enhancing the Peer-Provider Workforce: Recruitment, Supervision, and Retention, National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors Jorgenson, J., Schmook, A., (2014)