

# THE COLLABORATION NETWORK WEB-EX ON MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

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# What is Peer Support?

- Peer support is the act of people who have had similar experiences with mental illnesses/substance use disorders giving each other encouragement, hope, assistance, guidance, and understanding that aids in recovery.
- Peer support is a recovery-oriented service.
- A recovery-oriented service system of care (ROSC) is a system of services that promotes the process of recovery by helping consumers develop broad lives that are not dominated by illness.
- It can be done anytime or anywhere when two or more peers are in a mutual, supportive relationship.

# A Perspective

"Any one of us could be affected by an unexpected life event or illness where peer support will be vital to our recovery and wellbeing"



# Peer Support Services

- Peer support services are programs, discussions, events, groups, etc. within the behavioral health system that are led by people in recovery and based on the philosophy of peer support.
- Take place within the structure of an agency or organization.
- Provided as a service by a trained and certified Specialist.
- Peer recovery support services stand in a long, well-documented, and copied evidence-based tradition.

# Peer Support Services

- Historically, the substance use disorder and recovery field led the way in recognizing the importance of peer support services for a person seeking to come to terms with a life-changing condition.
- Improved outcomes are particularly notable when peer support services are provided to people with chronic conditions that require long-term self-management.



# Who are Peer Support Specialists?

- Create recovery partnerships with the people we serve.
- Help those we serve identify their strengths and believe in their abilities to create the life they want.
- Experts in living with a mental illness/substance abuse disorder. (They demonstrate recovery.)
- Are concerned with what happened in their lives, not “what’s wrong with them.”



# Who are Peer Support Specialists?

- Figure out which stage of recovery an individual is in so they can use their recovery experience to understand what is going on with participants and avoid the dangers at that stage.
- Surround peers with the possibility of recovery.
- Help those we serve get in touch with their own inner wisdom.

**HELP ANOTHER MOVE FROM HOPELESSNESS TO  
HOPE!**



# Lived Experience

- Individuals can provide personal recovery stories and act as role models. Peer Support Specialists are in a position to help others in recovery from mental illness or substance abuse disorders by offering firsthand accounts of recovery.
- When Peer Support Specialists effectively communicate their personal recovery stories to others, they have the ability to instill hope and show clients – as “living proof” – that **recovery is possible**.
- Through daily interactions, Peer Support Specialists can also demonstrate to others how an individual in recovery deals with challenging situations and self-manages their condition.

As Peer Specialists, we create recovery partnerships with the people we serve. We don't push, we don't lead, and we don't stand over those we serve.

