



Iowa Peer Support &
Family Peer Support
Training Program

Peer and Family Peer Support

HousingIowa Conference

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Iowa Peer and Family Peer Support Training Program





What is peer support?

- * Peer support services are delivered by individuals who have *common life experiences* with the people they are serving.
- * People with mental health or substance use disorders or experiences with legal systems have a unique capacity to help each other based on a shared affiliation and a deep understanding of this experience.



What makes peer support different than friendship or clinical services?

- * Shared lived experience
- * Specialized training on how to use one's lived experience to help others reach their goals
- * Not clinical services or case management, though often connected to these services through a team approach
- * Peer supporter is neither “expert” nor friend – places the peer's self determination and self-efficacy at the heart of the relationship




Types of support provided

- * Emotional support
- * Information and resource connection
- * Modeling recovery/resilience
- * Advocacy/coaching self-advocacy
- * Help peers set and reach their own goals
- * Provide opportunities for contributing to community



How is peer support delivered?

- * Volunteer one-on-one and/or group support
 - NAMI Iowa Family-to-Family and Peer-to-Peer
- * Peer support groups facilitated by a professional helper
- * Trained, paid peer support specialists working as part of a treatment team



For whom is peer support an evidence-informed practice

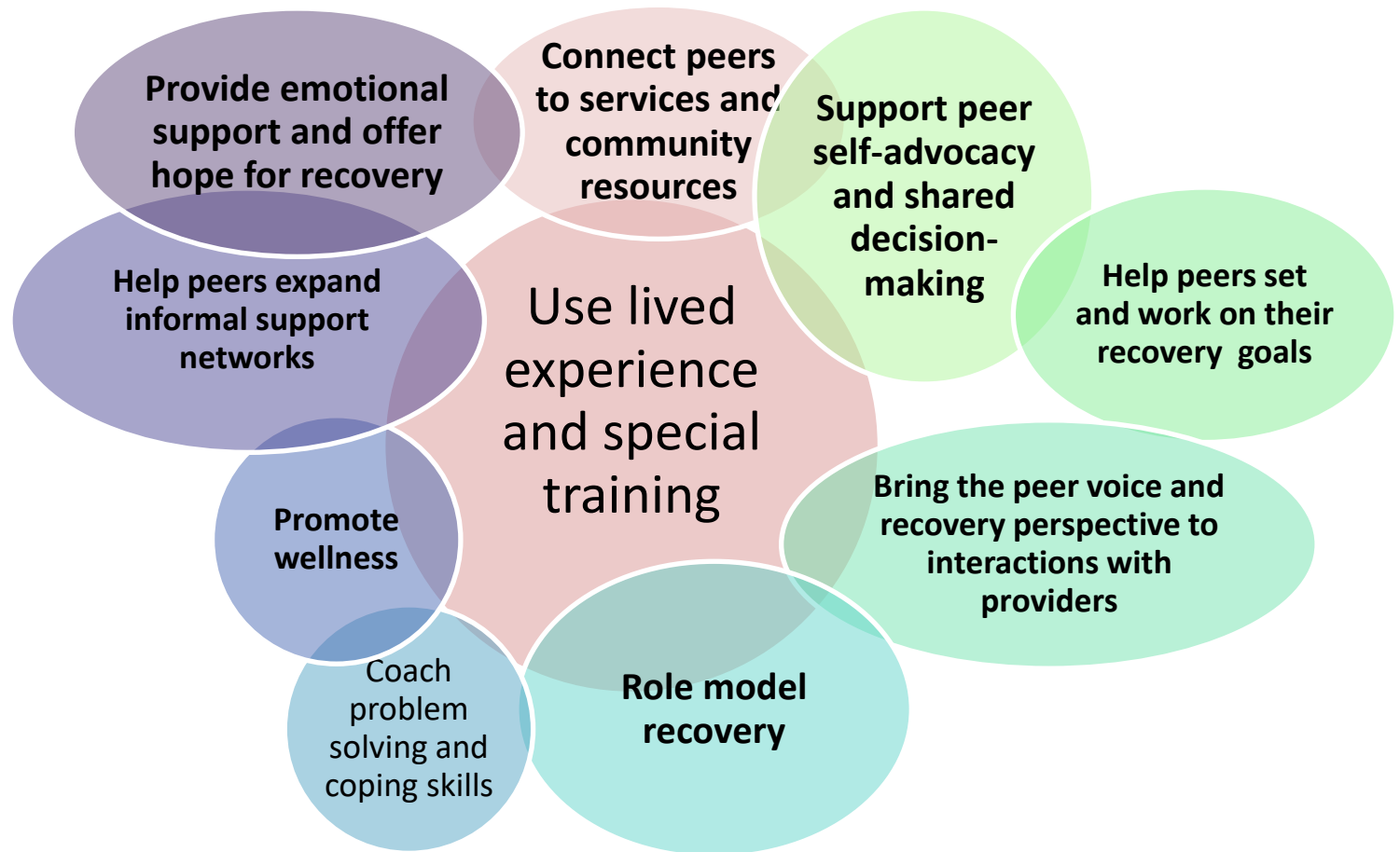
- * Individuals living with serious mental health challenges, including specialized populations such as
 - Veterans
 - Aging adults
 - Youth aging out of foster care
 - Individuals re-entering from incarceration
- * Caregivers of children with serious mental health challenges
- * Parents involved in the child welfare system
- * Individuals in crisis



Mental Health Peer Support Specialists

- * Are personally living well in recovery from a serious mental illness.
- * Promote self-determination and support peers in maintaining relationships and increasing a higher level of control and satisfaction over their lives.
- * Use their recovery story to instill hope.
- * Provide support to other peers and assist them in reaching and maintaining their personal recovery goals.
- * Serve as an advocate, provide information, help access community resources, and model competency in recovery and wellness.

The Role of the Peer Support Specialist



Iowa Peer Support and Family Peer Support
Specialist Training Project



**Peer and family peer support are
EMERGING PRACTICES**



Researched benefits of peer support

- * Participants in **drop-in centers** experienced increased quality of life, social support and problem solving (Mowbray and Tan, 1993).
- * **Mental health self-help groups** decreased symptoms, increase coping skills and life satisfaction (Davidson, 1999; Chamberlin, 1996, Humphrey, 1997; Raiff, 1984).
- * **Peer specialists** successfully engaged people into treatment (Sells, 2006; Solomon, 2004)
- * **One-on-one peer support** for persons with co-occurring MI and SA resulted in fewer hospitalization, improved social functioning, reduced substance use (Klein et al, 1998)



Peer Support as Best Practice

- * SAMSHA recognizes peer support as one of 6 principles of a trauma-informed approach
- * Pilot studies of peer support have shown:
 - Increased utilization of a primary care provider
 - Improvements in medication adherence
 - Reduction of health problems and overall bodily pain
 - Fewer prescribed medications
 - Decrease in emergency room use; more outpatient and primary care use.



Researched benefits of family peer support (FPS)

- * Increased child's early engagement with health resources
- * Reduced rate of missed appointments
- * Reduced premature terminations from treatment
- * Reduced need for placement and length of stay in foster care
- * 4x higher likelihood of successful parent-child reunification
- * Decreased school drop out
- * 86% reduction in juvenile justice recidivism and 90% reduction of relative risk of out of home placement



Iowa Parent Partners

- * Trained, employed peer mentors who have successfully navigated the child welfare system, made progress in recovery, and have reunified with their children
- * Parent Partners:
 - Orient families to the child welfare system
 - Share their experiences
 - Provide one-on-one support to parents
 - Attend meetings, court appearances, appointments to act as a support for birth parents
 - Work collaboratively with child welfare workers and other professionals involved with the family



Opportunities

- * Workforce Development Initiative funded by Iowa DHS
- * Free, high quality training
- * Regional funding
- * Identifying workforce opportunities:
 - Managed care organizations
 - Drop-in centers
 - Corrections, jail, re-entry programs
 - Homeless outreach team
 - Hospital Emergency Rooms, Inpatient Psychiatric Units
 - In-home services
 - Mobile crisis response
 - Nursing homes
 - Pediatric outpatient clinics
 - Peer-run respite
 - Supportive housing



Certification

- State certification is available for mental health and substance abuse peer support specialists through the Iowa Board of Certification
- Family peer support specialist certification is under development
- Iowa Parent Partners have their own training program for PPs and supervisors



Best Practices for Implementing Peer/Family Peer Support

- Variety of settings – where is the need in your region?
 - In what situations are people not getting the services they need to thrive?
 - Do you have populations that are not being engaged by traditional mental health services?
 - Could peer support help people manage crises/remain in less restrictive settings/achieve more stable family reunification?
 - Could peer/family peer support improve connections with other services?



Supervision and Teaming

- Supervision is key to staff retention, job satisfaction, quality service provision, and legal/ethical risk management



Best Practices for Implementing Peer/Family Peer Support

- Embedded in a program with a strong infrastructure
 - Policies
 - Ethics and conduct
 - Confidentiality
 - Mandatory reporting obligations
 - Job descriptions
 - Regular supervision
- Peer-to-peer support to prevent isolation



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