Peer Support During the COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond

A webinar Series addressing how Peer Supporters have responded to social distancing restrictions and expanded the strength of their peer support relationships.

Wednesday, August 5, 2020 2-3:30 (EDT)

Peer Support in the Time of COVID: Technology Assisted Communications

Mary Kay Wagner, M.Ed., CPS, CPST, Peter Brucki and Peter Glowinski

COVID-19 has disrupted everything about daily life except our need for social interaction. Unfortunately, connecting socially is so difficult that isolation has become the new norm. Isolation increases the likelihood of mental health and substance use crises, straining our overwhelmed mental health system. There is good news. The role of the peer specialist is uniquely qualified to meet this ever increasing need. Unfortunately, most peer specialist courses focus on providing face-to-face support. What is missing is how to use 2-dimensional media to provide effective support. This presentation explores how we can adapt empathic listening and peer support for use with technology.

There are still many corners of the mental health system that do not know of or accept peer specialists. With COVID-19 overwhelming all sectors of healthcare, this creates opportunities for peer specialists and other peer support professionals to demonstrate how effective peer support is for individual consumers as well as the system as a whole. Peer specialists are the boots on the ground that make real differences. So too, peer specialists are the agents of change in mental health delivery. With our emphasis on person-centered, strength-based, and trauma-informed support, we are on the front lines of moving mental health treatment from dependency to advocacy.

Mary Kay Wagner assists organizations identify and solve performance issues by collaboratively working with clients, tapping into their knowledge and creativity. She adeptly
integrates strategy into the tactical to achieve goals. Ms. Wagner has a M.Ed. from U of Minnesota in instructional systems. She also works with WI CPSAC subcommittee developing trainer competencies and performance measures.

Peter Borucki and Peter Glowinski are veteran peer specialists at the R & R House, a peer run respite for veterans. They are intimately involved in the development of R & R House systems and procedures. Peter B. served in the U.S. Army from 2010 to 2013. He was stationed at FT. Wainwright, Alaska. He deployed to Afghanistan where He received a Purple Heart for injuries sustained during combat. Peter G. comes from a military family. His grandfather served in France during WWII and his father, in Vietnam. Peter joined the Marines after 9/11 and served from 2002 to 2007. He was stationed in North Carolina and was deployed once to Iraq. He earned a BA in 2015 from UW Whitewater. Peter has worked in sales as well as in government.

Register in advance for this meeting HERE
After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Wednesday, August 12, 2020 1-2:30 (EDT)

COVID-19 A Catalyst for Change

Clarence Jordan, MBA, CPS and Lisa Kugler, PsyD

During the COVID-19 pandemic, you may experience stress, anxiety, fear, sadness and loneliness. And mental health disorders, including anxiety and depression, can worsen. This workshop presents an innovative approach to delivering the much need peer support service to minimize the negative effects brought about by Covid-19 and social distancing. Virtual Support Groups differs significantly from traditional self-help groups. The structure and rationale for effective VSG is presented assist others who would like to replicate this innovative approach to peer service delivery.

The entire health care system is under a severe strain. Innovative approaches to health care delivery is critical in this era of social distancing. Peer support services too must be delivered that follows the guidelines for peer support while individuals experiencing behavioral health challenges practice social distancing.

Clarence Jordan is Vice President of Wellness & Recovery for Beacon Health Options. Clarence Jordan received the Consumer Leadership Award at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA) 2010 National Voice Award. In 2014, the National Council for Behavioral Health named him its Peer Specialist of the Year. Lisa Kugler, PsyD. is a licensed psychologist in the state of Pennsylvania. Dr. Kugler has been active in the field of substance abuse and mental health services providing direct care, executing administrative duties, and conducting research for over 25 years. Currently, Dr. Kugler serves as the Clinical Vice President with Beacon Care Services. This role leads the strategic vision for clinical team within the provider affiliate to Beacon Health Options and enterprise wide peer and integrated care programming. Previously she was the Vice President/ CEO of the Beacon Health Options Maryland Division. She led her team in the management of Medicaid benefits for over 1 million covered lives in the state of Maryland. She worked with the state, counties, providers, and oversight to make certain that individuals are receiving the appropriate treatment to assist them in their recovery journeys.
Dr. Kugler served as the Vice President of Clinical Services for Value Behavioral Health of Pennsylvania (VBH-PA) where Dr. Kugler oversaw all clinical operations. Prior to her position at Beacon Health Options, Dr. Kugler was head of the behavioral health and physical health integration team for a community based out-patient clinic and team lead for the Center for Treatment of Addictive Disorders at the Pittsburgh Veteran’s Administration. Dr. Kugler has provided services to adults, veterans, inmates, adolescents, and children. She has been involved in research endeavors that focused on repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation (rTMS) and Dr. Kugler completed a study that examined the impact of methadone maintenance therapy on executive functioning. Dr. Kugler has presented locally, regionally, and nationally on topics focused on substance abuse concerns, motivational interviewing, peer supports, and recovery and resiliency.

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Wednesday, August 26 2020 1-2:30 (EDT)

**Supporting Peers through a Pandemic: How Technology Can Make Peer Support Accessible Right From Home**

Amanda Stoddard, CPRS, BA and Bill Brown

Our presentation will provide important information on how you can utilize social media effectively to reach out to your peer community. COVID-19 has brought to light something peer support needs now more than ever, telehealth access, and at-home support. Through this workshop, we will show you how to transition peer support to an online platform, how to implement these changes, how to reach out to your community, and best practices to ensure implementation runs smoothly. In addition, we will provide personal accounts of how our online peer support has made a difference to our community.

Social Media is the ultimate way to connect to others. There’s always a community you can find online that provides you with a sense of personal connection. During times of crisis such as the current pandemic, it is important those communities are highlighted and utilized fully. By using social media and technology as online peer support, we can connect individuals in ways we never could before. Individuals in underserved communities have so many barriers to accessing resources, some of which include transportation and home-bound disabilities. So providing those individuals with the ability to have that peer support and that connection directly from home could make a huge difference to them and the peers who support them. It can also be a way to share new information, get connected to other peer centers, and provide community support at a larger scale.

**Amanda Stoddard** is a graduate of the University of Cincinnati where she received her BA in Communications. She is the Director of Communications at The Recovery Center of Hamilton County where she also spearheads an after-hours event series for Transitional Aged Youth. In March of 2020, she received her Peer Recovery Supporter Certification in co-occurring substance abuse and mental health.

**Bill Brown** is the Program Manager at the Recovery Center of Hamilton County in Cincinnati, OH, a Peer Run Organization with a curriculum-based model. He and his staff produce over 30 hours of online programming each week focusing on wellness, recovery,
and peer support. He is also a facilitator for the state of Ohio’s Certified Peer Recovery Supporter training.

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**Wednesday, September 16, 2020 1-2:00 (EDT)**

**Creating Online Peer Groups**

Katie Wilson and Ryan Tempesco

This webinar brings you through both the technology skills necessary to set up and run online groups and provides you the added facilitation skills necessary to translate the skills we rely on for in-person engagement to an online environment. It’s both the how-to’s and the why’s of online relationship building including check-ins, debriefs, and wellness-oriented activities to support empowering groups while being physically distant. This will enhance skills for offering peer support online. This is a critical skill for peer specialists in our current times.

Katie Wilson is the Director of Operations at the Copeland Center. She lives in Southern VT with her spouse, child, and cat. Ryan Tempesco is the National Youth Program Coordinator, NTAC Doors To Wellbeing Program of The Copeland Center for Wellness and Recovery. Katie Wilson and Ryan Tempesco collaborate to produce Doors to Wellbeing's monthly Peer Specialist Webinar Series attended by 1000+ peer specialists each month.

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**Wednesday, September 23, 2020 11-12:30 (EDT)**

**The Future of Peer Support is Here**

Vince Caimano, PhD and Rosemary Weaver, CPSS

As with previous pandemics, COVID-19 has fundamentally changed the way that people act, think and feel. It is no different with peer support. The way that peer support is provided will be changed forever – in many ways for the better. This workshop will discuss how the 2020 pandemic has begun to alter the role and practice of peer supporters. The presenters will discuss the pandemic-driven acceleration in the adoption of new tools, technology and programs. A survey will be presented about peer supporter readiness for change and the implications for the practice of their work going forward. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated and increased the number of opportunities that Peer Supporters have. This workshop will help the Peer Support workforce to be more aware of those options and be prepared to capitalize on them.
Vince Caimano is the Co-Founder and CEO of Peer Support Solutions. In 2003, as a peer, he was one of the first instructors of Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy for Depression in the United States. The next year Vince started a successful face-to-face support group. In 2009 he pioneered the use of video-chat based meetings for peer support. PSS now helps individuals from over 130 countries.

Rosemary Weaver is a peer facilitator who has supported people living with various mental health and substance use disorders on their recovery journey for over 12 years. As a Certified Peer Support Specialist in North Carolina, she has personal lived experience with mental health challenges including depression and anxiety and is a family member of an individual with substance use disorder. Her formal peer support work began in 2008 includes employment with a Center for Independent Living (CIL) and an inpatient psychiatric facility that serves adults, youth, forensic, and geriatric patients. She also founded and served as executive director of North Carolina's very first mental health drop-in center from 2012-2014. Her professional certifications include Copeland Center trained Wellness Recovery Action Planning (WRAP) facilitator, a Mental Health First Aid trainer for both adults and youth, an Employment Peer Mentor for the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model, a North Carolina approved peer support specialist trainer, a presenter for NAMI's "In Our Own Voice" and "Peer-to-Peer."

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